

## Youth Home Leaving and Conversion to Pentecostalism in the Anglo-Saxon University Neighbourhoods in Cameroon

Mungwia Francis Yuh, Fomba Emmanuel Mbebeb \*, Bonnwing Bruno

### Abstract

*Youth home leaving to study and stay independently is a major transition marker to adulthood. It is a big step toward adulthood that influences existential crisis among young people. This crisis often leads to religious contemplations and conversion. The question is whether home leaving influences youth religious conversion to Pentecostalism among young students in university neighbourhoods in Cameroon. Within the theoretical framework of moral development theory, the study investigates youth home leaving, as a marker of youth transition to adulthood and conversion into Pentecostalism. Participants were 400 youths in university neighbourhoods in Buea and Bamanda, recruited from legalized traditional and Pentecostal Churches in youth residential areas. The purposive non-probability sampling technique was used to collect the data. An instrument with a determined reliability coefficient was used to collect information. Data were entered into SPSS and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The analysis reported that youth home leaving was able to predict variations in perceived youth conversion into Pentecostalism. Findings showed that youth home leaving as an extrinsic determinant of religious conversion is critical in transforming young people into Pentecostalism in University neighborhoods in Cameroon. Recommendations were made on how to help the youths and their parents navigate their transition into adulthood successfully without confusion or duress in their spiritual ventures.*

**Keywords:** Home Leaving, Existential crisis, Conversion, Pentecostalism

### 1. Introduction

The transition to adulthood is a period of significant developmental changes that alters youth living conditions and shapes the nature and quality of young people's future lives (Mendes, 2009). Home leaving often facilitates the process of youths joining other groups or associations through conversion. This draws from the spirit of independence and self-reliance as young people feel they are growing into maturity and can take care of their own business. According to Tomas (2022), youth home leaving as a transition marker in youth transition to adulthood involves coming to terms with separation from the beliefs, values and relationships of the past and establishing new ones. According to Schwartz, Côté, and Arnett, (2005) *all young people* across the globe who are becoming adults across cultures and societies experience this adulthood transition marker. Thus, for almost every youth, there is a leaving of the parent's home that happens once they learn that they do not always think and act in the same ways as their parents. Youth home leaving is not only important but also a normal and natural phenomenon in which young people's cognitive reasoning and leaving conditions are altered (Baanders, 1996), and this is more or less a rite of passage into maturity and responsibility, which is characterized by adulthood. It is therefore possible that through interactions with non-family members young people inculcate other ideas and convert into other groups where they feel their aspirations will be satisfied.

To Aassve, Billari, Francesco, Stefano, & Fausta. (2002) Youth home leaving is not only an important youth transition marker but also a very challenging transition milestone because of its interdependencies and or connectedness with other youth transition markers. It is connected to other youth transition markers and allows the youths to be more independent and to focus on their studies and extracurricular activities rather than home responsibilities. Focus on studies and extracurricular activities exposes young people to new ideas, values and beliefs. Good & Willoughby (2008) explained that since youth home leaving involves exposure to new values and beliefs, it has the potential to influence youth conversions, de-conversions, and reconversions. Good & Willoughby further observed this stage of life to be a sensitive period for religious conversions, de-conversion and reconversions across cultures and societies. Taking into consideration the state of youth transition markers in Cameroon, the present study is designed to investigate whether youth Home leaving constitutes a core determinant of Conversion to Pentecostalism in the Anglo-Saxon University neighbourhoods in Cameroon. However, the psychological causes and effects of leaving one's parental home, especially their interplay with youth religious choices in the Cameroonian context, have seldom been addressed. Since youth home leaving is hypothesized to have an influence on youth religious conversion, there is therefore the need to know how home youth leaving influences their religious conversions.

### 2. Review of Literature

#### 2.1. Youth Transition Markers

Over the years the youth transition markers have been conceptualised in varied ways by psychologists. Beginning with Greeson, (2013) has identified the following markers which make the transition successful for young people:

employment, independent living, economic self-sufficiency, and uptake of post-secondary education, adult role-taking and social participation. Fish (1986); quoted in Mitchell, (1999) identified a number of markers of adult status, including employment, useful work and valued activity, personal autonomy, independent living, social interaction and social and spiritual community participation. Mitchell & Kuczynski, (2010) advocated a more flexible notion of transition, which acknowledges gradual changes within the life course and respects the ideas and aspirations of families and young people. However, transition markers vary with different youth in different cultural settings. However, youth transitional markers vary by culture (within and across societies), gender, and historical era, among other considerations (Hogan & Astone, 1986; Furstenberg & Kmec, 2000). From the conceptual viewpoint of youth transition markers, the experience of these markers often leads to changes in social networks including religious congregations and other community organizations (Lall, Selod, & Shalizi, 2006). Most often, youth transitional markers encourage continuity or change, reinforcing developmental patterns already established in childhood and adolescence (Elder & Caspi, 1988). Lloyd (2005) argues that, for young people to transition to successful adulthood, young people need to be adequately prepared and manage these transition markers.

Empirical studies on these youth transition markers have mainly been based on large-scale quantitative studies. Berrington, Stone, & Falkingham (2010), in a landmark study, examined the life course dimensions of youth in the transition to adulthood in the UK. The study revealed four life course dimensions for youths on the transition to adulthood namely: leaving education and the transition to work; leaving the parental home; entering into a partnership and becoming a parent. Gender differences in the nature and speed of transitions are highlighted. Berzin, Singer, & Hokanson, (2014) in a qualitative study found that youth challenges with transition markers to be youths lack an understanding of the effects of transition markers to adulthood and resilience. They concluded that the implication for such a lack of knowledge was a disconnection from parents and family beliefs. In another related study, Lamb & McKenzie, (2001) carried out a qualitative study on the youth transition markers on youth life during the transition to adulthood. The study indicated low academic achievement, and the adoption of new values and beliefs to be some of the main effects of youth transition markers on youth life during transition to adulthood. However, what is less well known about youth transition markers is the effect of these developmental milestones on religious conversions by gender and country of birth.

## **2.2 Youth Home Leaving**

Arnett, (2000) was the first to identify youth home leaving as a transition marker in his 38 Markers of Adulthood (MoA). Since then others have studied the effects and influence of youth home-leaving transition markers on other youth transition markers to adulthood among youths in different cultural contexts around the world (Schwartz, Côté, & Arnett, 2019, Good and Willoughby, 2008). Youth Home leaving refers to significant economic independence, personal responsibility, and emotional separation from parents by the youths (Goldscheider & DaVanzo, 1985). According to, (e.g. Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1993; and Kerman et al., 2009) Most theorizations of home-leaving conceptualized youth home-leaving as a personal choice or an independent decision of the young person concerned to leave the parent's home. Youth home leaving is an important concept in the youth stage of human development because of its influence on other youth transition markers and young people's personal choices, especially religious choices (Aassve et al., 2003). Billari, (2007) highlighted youth home-leaving as a focal point for other critical developmental tasks or markers and youth transitions to adulthood.

Empirical studies over the years have revealed a lot of useful information about youth home leaving necessary for the study. Goodkind, Schelbe, Lisa, Jeffrey (2011) in a landmark empirical study on the effects of youth home leaving on the youth home leaver in the US. The study indicated that securing a supportive, personal relationship with people and institutions that matter to the social and spiritual lives of the youths is one of the most challenging endeavours for the youth home leaver. As a result, he concluded that youth home leaving influences youth religious conversion and religious affiliation. In another but similar study, Templeton & Eccles, (2006) found that youth home leaving to be particularly influential to youth religious de-conversions and conversions out of or into different cults and religious institutions. Egondi et al., (2013) in a qualitative study, found that youth home leaving was a focal point for other critical youth developmental tasks and transitions to adulthood in Africa. Following these studies, there have been a number of important theoretical contributions to the understanding of youth home leaving and religious conversion. Among the theories on youth home leaving the Problem Behavior Theory-framework guided the investigation of the association of home leaving with behavioural and psychosocial variables and with other transitions, particularly youth religious conversion. This no doubt justifies the current interest in the influence of student youth conversion into Pentecostalism in the Anglo-Saxon university neighborhoods in Cameroon.

## **2.3. Conversion into Pentecostalism**

Young people who have left home and are leaving away from their parents engage in religious contemplation which often leads to religious conversion (Lofland and Stark, 1965). Conversion is the religious phenomenon of

change in religious ideologies, Values, beliefs, and identity. From the viewpoint of psychology, Webster, (1927), Staples & Mauss, (1987) conversion is the religious phenomenon of de-conversion and reconversion as a change in ideologies, Values, beliefs, and identity.

According to De Sanctis (1927), this conceptual meaning of conversion in religious psychology differs from the meaning of the same term in theology. Conversion as a concept of religious psychology implies a 'mutation' or change of conscience as well as a cult, regarding the sentiment and practice of a religion. This mutation must be complete - that is, there must be a change in intellectual attitude, sentiments, and morals. Paloutzian (2005) show the meaning system that comes along with conversion, especially the meaning expressed in classical spiritual language. Most empirical studies on religious conversion have criteria for conversion analysis: firstly, conversion is a kind of inner change. Secondly, the change is not only about maturation, but it is a process (sudden process or gradual one). Thirdly, the change is radical. Fourth, this new existence is considered "higher" than before. So, religious conversion is identified as self-realization or self-organized, where one finds a new self (Hood, Hill and Spilka, 2009). Starbuck (1914) gave prominence to youth as a cause of conversion which he believes to be a natural phenomenon of adolescent youth. According to Starbuck, conversion occurs almost exclusively between the ages of ten and twenty-five years, parallel with the greatest development of the organism and of the mind. It would seem then from the psychological standpoint that conversion corresponds to the decline of the sensory elements in consciousness, and the birth of rational insight" -namely, at about the age of eighteen and beyond.

The psychological concept of conversion finds more empirical support from religious psychologists. Raja, & Tumanggor, (2016) researched the causes (motivation) as well as the process of religious conversion and how it affects the behaviour of a person who reviewed from the perspective of the psychology of religion. The study indicated five motives of religious conversion Motives; (1) the motives of intellectual (intellectual), (2) the motives mystical (mystical), (3) the motives of experience (experimental) (4) motif affectional (affectional), (5) the resurrection motif (revivalist), (6) the motive force (coercive). According to Jalaluddin, (2000), these various motives of religious conversions occur because a powerful soul master centres one's habits so that in itself appears a new perception in the form of an idea that blossoms on a steady basis. Schnitker, Felke, Thomas, Barrett, Justin, Emmons, and Robert (2014) in another significant study investigated the epistemic, intrapsychic, and moral sociability functions of youth conversion. The study revealed personal growth (self-growth), transformation and the need for replacement (compensatory needs), as motives for youth religious conversion. Paloutzian et. al. (1999) in another research proved that some aspects of personality seemed to change following the conversion to religion and some did not. Therefore, religious conversion does not always result in a total change of the whole personality (Paloutzian, 2005). But based on the theory of system of meaning developed by Paloutzian related to religious conversion, the conversion of religious and spiritual transformation that happens to a person is due to a difference in the lives and there is no doubt in a person's good about values as well as the teachings of their religion. This makes building a new meaning, which then leads to changes in the things that are connected to the system of meaning that doubted it.

According to Frisina (2010), young people who leave home convert to different religions or cults because they seek to make a distinction between cultural customs inherited from parents and grandparents and what they see as the authentic or 'pure' principles of religion. Collins,(2010) suggested that religiously active youth are attracted to and converted to religious movements or cults to afford three things: First, the sense of an authentic and personal relationship with God that is not curtailed by a religious institution. Second, a sense of belonging to a community of like-minded believers. Third, an outworking of belief so that faith 'makes a difference' to how they live their lives, for example in terms of ethical choices, and civic engagement. Observing youth conversion from post-boomers, Flory and Miller (2010) viewed conversion as 'expressive communalism.' These subjective aspects of conversion – intimacy with God, communal belonging and service – feed into each other. Minganti (2010) described a similar approach to religion among young Italians seeking to work out what Islam means to them. She writes: "Religion conversion for young people appears to be a way by which young people connect themselves to spiritual resource, which calls them to feel at peace with themselves and helps them in moments of difficulty, but also becomes a source of ethical commitment, of responsibility and social commitment." Being with fellow believers can, in the Day (2010) sense, sensitize individuals to spiritual experiences. Conversion to religiously authentic communities or movements is likely to enhance communal belonging and social capital; and affirm the sense that belief matters. Among the Christian churches that the Cameroonian youths convert to in the university neighborhoods is the Pentecostal congregations which seem to have been most successful at fostering these dimensions of subjective spirituality among the youths.

#### **2.4. Theory and Model of the Study**

Youth home leaving can be an influential youth transition marker to youth religious conversion. The Problem Behavior Theory PBT (Jessor & Jessor, 1977) informs the interlinkages between the protective and risk factors of youth home leaving and youth conversion to Pentecostalism. PBT is based on the assumption that behaviour results from dynamic and continuous interactions between the person and the environment. According to Jessor and colleagues, PBT consists of three independent but interrelated major systems that define the relationship between a

person and his environment. These perceived systems are the personality system, which includes all social cognitions, personal values, expectations, beliefs, and values.

The perceived environment systems further consist of proximal and distal social influence factors such as family and peer orientation and expectations regarding behaviours; and the behaviour system, which includes both conventional (e.g., church attendance and or identification with a religious movement) and unconventional (e.g., substance use and abuse).

Attraction and conversion to any of these perceived environment systems are based on three types of protective factors: model protection, control protection, and support protection. The model protection comprises three systems of psychosocial influences: the personality system (all social cognitions, personal values, expectations, beliefs, and values), the perceived environmental system (family and peer expectations), and the behaviour system (problem and conventional behavioural structures that work in opposition to each other). The demographics, socialization and spirituality variables of every perceived environment system have an impact on youth transition markers particularly youth home leaving and consequently conversions. Thus, personality and demographic, socialization and spirituality variables of the perceived environment systems can be viewed as proximal or more direct determinants of youth conversion. This concurs with Charon, (2010) that social context or circumstances are assumed to have particular significance for an individual's self/religious-development: family, friends, and society. The ideas of parents, family, friends, the youth culture, school and society are thus of great importance for youth self/religious development and imply that youth culture, societal expectations and school values become very important for the youths when relating to questions about religion and conversion. Youth conversion could result from a combination of strong social incorporation of new belief systems, a pattern which simultaneously fosters strong initial commitment and creates blocks to long-term affiliation. Thus, youth home leaving may likely necessitate youth religious conversion as religious rites, prayers, and church meditation upon establishing and keeping a personal relationship with the divine Being may be considered a protective factor from a problem behaviour theory point of view. Considering that the study seeks to investigate the influence of youth home leaving on youth conversion into Pentecostal churches in the Anglo-Saxon university neighbourhoods in Cameroon, the theory provided basic information on youth personality/environmental characteristics that influences youth conversion into Pentecostalism in the university neighbourhoods in Cameroon.

## **2.5. Background and Orientation of the Study**

Youth home leaving is an important but very challenging transition milestone for most Cameroonian youths because of its interdependencies and or connectedness with other youth transition markers. The decision by youths to leave home is usually based on their age rather than their readiness or preparation and as such it is flawed with many challenges (Arnett, 2019). According to Buck & Scott, (1993) during the last decade, the mean age of emancipation from the family home has stabilized in the second half of young people's 20s during the last decade. Stein, (2008) youths are often required to start living on their own aged 18–21 years old in most countries. The scientific mean age for youth home leaving is the University age for most Cameroonian youths. This means that most university students in Cameroon are faced with the challenges of emancipation such as education or employment (Valle, Lázaro; López; and Bravo, 2011), leading them to poorer choices and greater difficulties in reaching adequate levels of social integration and well-being as emerging adults, according to international research (Alonso-Bello et al., 2018; Atkinson & Hyde, 2019; del Valle et al., 2008, 2011, Martín et al., 2020; Montserrat et al., 2013).

The challenges of this stage are further compounded by a multitude of psychological and social conflicts generated by the existential crisis which encompass fear of failure, anger, guilt, self-doubt, and greater feelings of helplessness and dependence. Following this, some of the student youths in Cameroon have drifted away from family values and beliefs and have converted into some questionable religious institutions with unbiblical and or questionable religious beliefs and practices. Most of these student youth conversions into Pentecostalism have led to youth conflicts with their parents and families. Some of the parents have abandoned their children and this has led to school dropout. Some of these school dropouts have either joined gangs or gotten involved in scams and other vices. This is delaying a successful transition to a successful adulthood. This no doubt justifies the current interest in the influence of youth home leaving on youth religious conversion to Pentecostalism in the University neighborhoods in Cameroon. The findings of the study will inform the parents and youths of the complications of youth home leaving and its influence on youth existential issues in the Anglo-Saxon university neighborhoods in Cameroon.

## **3. Methodology**

### **3.1. Design and Participants**

Employing a quantitative design, the study was realized with youths in the Anglo-Saxon university neighborhoods in Cameroon. The youths living in these neighbourhoods have left their parents' homes and are exposed to

Pentecostalism. A sample of 369 youths in these university neighborhoods were recruited in Buea and Bamenda university neighborhoods in Buea (N=164) and Bambili (N=205) neighborhoods. Furthermore, the sample constituted 154 males (41.7%) and 285 females (58.3%) indicating low rate of participation of males in the religious conversion.

In relation to age, 62 (16.8%) were of the age range 12 to 21 years, 230 (62.3%) were of the age range 22 to 25 years and 77 (20.9%) were of the age range 26 to 30 years. 150 (40.7%) of the students were undergraduate, 102 (28.1%) were graduates and 115 (31.2%) were postgraduate. 74 (20.1%) were Baptist Christians, 67(18.2%) were Catholics, 37(10%) were Presbyterians and 191 (51.7) indicated that there from other churches. As concern the number of years in the present church, 48 (13%) have been there for less than 3 years, 37 (10%) have been there for 3 to 5 years, 284 (77%) have been there for more than 5 years. In relation to their status in their present churches, 22 (6%) were youth leaders, 55 (14.9%) were part of church leadership and 292 (79.1%) were floor members. The Purposive non-probability *sampling* technique was deployed to recruit participants in order to collect the necessary information that will determine the influence of youth transition markers on youth conversion to Pentecostalism in the Anglo-Saxon University neighborhoods in Cameroon.

### 3.2. Data Collection Measure

The self-report scale for youth home leaving was designed to measure the level of youth home leaving on conversion to Pentecostalism, and indices were drawn from literature ( Lofland & Stark, 1965; Jessor & Jessor, 1977; Gyekye & Salminen 2009; O'Connor et al. 2014). The measure included 7 items including matured consciousness, readiness for responsibilities associated with home leaving, the relationship of home leaving and the exercise of personal rights, The review of family beliefs, review of childhood religious beliefs, the choice of religious/social groups, and the influence of important people on religious choices, The items were coded with four possible alternatives “strongly disagree”, “disagree”, “agree” and “strongly agree” with numerical values of 1, 2, 3 and 4 respectively. Higher scores indicated a high value placed on safety education and practice by the enterprises, while lower scores implied the reverse. The internal reliability analysis for the influence of youth home leaving on conversion to Pentecostalism was performed ( $M = 2.97$ ,  $SD = 0.92$ ), which is above the hypothesized average of 2.5 and determined with Cronbach’s alpha value of 0.90, which was excellent (George and Mallary, 2003), and collected reliable information from the participants.

In order to collect information for the study, a close-ended questionnaire was used. The primary section of the instrument was designed to collect socio-demographic information on the sex of participants, age, educational qualifications, Church of membership before university, the present church of membership in the university, number of years of being a member, the distance between residence and church, posts of responsibility and membership status. The instruments were pilot-tested on a sample of 30 youths and two religious youth workers from the Dschang University neighbourhood who had similar characteristics to the sample of the study. 369 respondents all religious youths living in the Anglo-Saxon university neighborhoods in Cameroon participated. Cronbach's Alpha was used to determine the reliability of the scale. The calculation was done using SPSS version 26. The highest reliability, a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.87 was realized for the youth conversion while the lowest Cronbach’s alpha of 0.75 was realized for the youth home leaving.

The instruments were administered personally to the participants. The Purposive non-probability sampling technique was used in the collection of data needed. The homogenous purposive sample technique was used to select the sample. This was done in such a way that the accessible population was stratified according to legalized churches and religious movements, and the respondents were proportionately selected from the strata by purposive non-probability sampling techniques. A pool of youth participants for the study was generated through a snowball sampling technique where referrals were made by individuals who share a particular characteristic of the research interest with the target population. The referrals involved youth aged 18-30 years. The participants encompassed three categories of youths living in the Anglo-Saxon university neighbourhoods in Cameroon: (1) those who are active members in the legalized churches; (2) those who are not members of the churches but who attend services in any of the identified legalized churches (3) those who have been members and have withdrawn or change their churches of membership. The process of conducting the study was guided by the ethical standards of the American Psychological Association (APA).

### 4. Results

In this section, results for descriptive statistics were presented followed by inferential statistics. Findings for the prevalence of home leaving and conversion among youths in university neighbourhoods have been presented in Table 1

**Table 1: Prevalence of home leaving and conversion among youths**

Prevalence of home leaving	M	SD	State of conversion	M	SD
Felt mature to live alone	2.64	1.15	Teaching of prosperity.	2.74	1.03
Ready for home leaving responsibilities	2.56	1.05	Adopting to changes.	2.64	1.07
Need to exercise my rights	3.17	.74	Feelings about their beliefs.	2.68	1.03
Review some of my family beliefs.	3.15	.85	Religious expressions	2.54	.95
review some of religious beliefs	3.12	.83	Friendly programs.	2.44	.99
freely choose my social/religious groups	3.01	.84	Hopeful teachings	2.59	.99
closer to important people in my life	3.14	.98	Ministering to personal life	2.63	1.09
<b>Aggregate</b>	<b>2.97</b>	<b>.92</b>	Pentecostal discipline	2.60	1.07
			Spiritual transformation	2.63	1.10
			<b>Aggregate</b>	<b>2.61</b>	<b>1.03</b>

According to table 1, majority of 212 out of the 369 (57.5%) respondents agreed that they left their Parent's home to live on their own because they felt they were mature while 157 (42.5%)

Disagreed. In like manner, 208 (56.4%) of the respondents agreed that they were ready for the responsibilities associated with leaving home while 161 (43.6%) disagreed. The trend continued with an overwhelming majority of 319 (86.5%) agreeing that leaving out of their Parent's home helped them to exercise their rights but 50 (13.5%) disagreed. Furthermore, 288 (78%) agreed that leaving out of their parent's home has helped them to review some of their family beliefs however, 81 (22%) disagreed. A whopping majority of 304 (82.6%) agreed that leaving out of the home has helped them to review some of their religious beliefs, conversely, 64 (17.3%) disagreed. In like manner, a majority of 287 (77.8%) agreed that leaving their parent's home has helped them to freely choose the social/religious groups to which they belong while 82 (22.2%) of them disagreed. The repeated with 295 (80%) agreeing that leaving home has brought them closer to people they consider important to their life but 74 (20%) disagreed.

Summarily, from the multiple response set, 1913 (74.1%) of the responses on leaving home were positive while 669 (25.9%) were negative. The mean for leaving home was ( $M=2.97$ ;  $SD=0.92$ ) $>2.5$ . Thus, it was inferred that the prevalence of leaving home was quite high among the respondents. The standard deviation for leaving home was 0.92 meaning the responses were similar. Table 1, brings to limelight the fact that a majority of 207 (56.1%) respondents agreed that they were converted to Pentecostalism because of the teaching of prosperity being preached but 162 (43.9%) disagreed. Similarly, 188 (50.9%) agreed that they made the choice to become Pentecostal Christian because they are always adapting to changes but 181 (49.1%). In like manner, 199 (53.9%) agreed that they changed to Pentecostal because of strong feelings about their beliefs however, 170 (46.1%) disagreed. The trend continued with 185 (50.1%) agreeing that they changed because they loved the Pentecostal way of religious expressions 184 (49.9%). The trends changed with a minority of 159 (43.1%) agreeing that they chose to become Pentecostals because of the youth-friendly nature of their programs while 210 (56.9%) disagreed. Similarly, a minority of 184 (49.9%) agreed that they were moved to join Pentecostals because their teachings promise hope but 185 (50.1%) disagreed. Furthermore, a minority of 182 (49.3%) agreed that they joined the Pentecostals because their preaching ministered personally to their lives while 187 (50.7%) disagreed. Still, a minority of 182 (49.3%) agreed that they abandoned the former denomination because they believe in Pentecostal Spiritual disciplines while 187 (50.7%) disagreed. In like manner, 179 (48.5%) agreed that they changed to Pentecostalism to have a strong spiritual transformation while 190 (51.5%) disagreed.

A bivariate linear regression analysis was conducted to verify the strength of youth home leaving on conversion to Pentecostalism in the Anglo-Saxon University neighbourhoods in Cameroon, and findings have been presented in Table 2.

**Table 2: Regressing home leaving on conversion to Pentecostalism**

Predictor (Home leaving)	R <sup>2</sup>	Unstandardized Beta (B)	SE B	Standardized Beta (β)	t-value	DF2	sig
constant		9.396	1.340		7.010		.000
Home leaving	0.211	0.614	.062	.460	9.911	368	.000

NB:  $R^2=.460^a$ ; Adj. .209; Sig F = 0.000; F-value = 98.2327; Conversion;  $p < 0.05$

The coefficient of determination was 0.211 indicating that 21.1 % of the variance in conversion to Pentecostalism was accounted for by youth home leaving. The regression equation Predicted conversion to Pentecostalism = 9.396 + 0.614youthhome leaving. When youth home leaving is zero, conversion to Pentecostalism will be 7.01 and for each additional unit change in youth home leaving, conversion to Pentecostalism will increase by 0.614. The constant term is positive meaning that there are still some factors not included in the model that aggregately

influenced conversion to Pentecostalism in the Anglo-Saxon University neighbourhoods in Cameroon within the period of study. Results have a good fit ( $F\text{-value}=98.2327$ ) considering that the change is significantly different from zero. Consequently, the alternative hypothesis was accepted, confirming the influence of youth home leaving on conversion to Pentecostalism.

## **5. Discussion**

The objective of this study was to find out whether youth home leaving influences youth conversion to Pentecostalism in the Anglo-Saxon University neighborhoods in Cameroon workers and the results were significant.

After testing all the seven indicators of the study variable a majority of the respondents living out of their parent's homes in the Anglo-Saxon university neighbourhoods in Cameroon reported the effects of home leaving on their religious contemplation.

The findings of the study revealed that independent leaving leads to new experiences and exposure to new ideas that give room for the evaluation of the former ones. The findings of the study concurred with Goldscheider & Goldscheider, (1993) on the outcome of youth residential independence found to be associated with exposure, evaluation and adoption of new ideologies, values, and beliefs. Youth exposure to new ideologies, values and beliefs often necessitates youth conversion -the change of social/religious groups and movements in the university neighbourhoods in Cameroon. The results are also consistent with Kitchener, (1978) significant results on the relationship between a review of family values and beliefs, and compliance to relativistic thinking. Findings corroborated the claim that youth conceptions of the nature of knowledge, the nature of reality, and their concepts of justification change over age/educational levels. The understanding is that personal judgment is critical to religious conversion. In the same vein, findings are consistent with Arnett, and Jensen (2002) on youth's sense of becoming adults and the right to make personal choices of all kinds including religious choices. Consequently, individual youths who are living independently in the university neighbourhoods in Cameroon away from their parents placed great importance on thinking critically about spiritual issues rather than accepting an existing dogma in its entirety from their parents. Thus, conversion or the right to choose the aspects of religion and or religious institutions or religious movements that they think suit them best.

The findings revealed youth home leaving armament as a social phenomenon that involves three agents of religious socialization: the family, the church, and peers. This corroborated with the PBT on the perceived environment system proximal and distal social influence factors such as family and peer orientation and expectations regarding religious behaviours; and the religious behaviour system, which includes both conventional (e.g., church attendance and or identification with a religious movement) and unconventional (e.g., substance use and abuse). Charon, (2010) social context or circumstances are assumed to have particular significance for an individual youth's self/religious-development: family, friends, and society. According to traditional conceptions of socialization: the family is the principal agent of religious socialization (Erikson 1950; Freud 1933), while peers and the religious institution are secondary agents of religious socialization. In the broader sociological literature, Acock (1984) has suggested that parent-child similarity may be as much a product of the intergenerational transfer of social status as the product of individual psychosocial influence. Glass, Bengtson, and Dunham (1986) have provided evidence to support the hypothesis that parental socialization also involves the "successful intergenerational transmission of class, race, religious affiliation, marital status, and other prominent social statuses that structure life experience and mould social attitudes." Cornwall (1988) suggested the need to broaden our thinking about the socialization process. Socialization includes the transfer of attitudes and social statuses, as well as a process whereby individuals are channelled into friendships and experiences that maintain the beliefs and attitudes of the former generation. While the religious socialization variables had little direct impact on religious behaviour. Cornwall 1987, (1988) stated, parental attendance and home religious observance have a significant direct impact on adult belief and commitment. In addition, parental attendance and home religious observance also have a significant impact in that they channel individuals into friendship networks during the teen and young adult years which support and sustain the religious values taught in the home. Friendship patterns during the young adult years have a direct impact on the nature of personal community relationships as an adult.

Against expectations, the results of Pew Research Center survey data (2020) and Petts, (2009) were in disaccord with the present study since when it comes to religion in developed countries like the United States of America and other developed countries, youths and their parents tend to have a lot in common. This might have been due to the parent's intentional indoctrination of their children's religious behaviours in these countries. It is evident that when parents intentionally work with their children on the eminent challenges of transition to adulthood their young children are religiously stable. This is in disaccord with Valle, et al. (2011), that failure to prepare children to face the transitional challenges leads them to poorer choices and greater difficulties in reaching adequate levels of social integration and well-being as emerging adults. This concurred with the results of the current investigation that the youth transition marker of home leaving influences youth conversion to Pentecostalism away from Parent's Churches.

## Conclusion

Recognizing the fact that youth home leaving is a major youth transition marker of adulthood and the fact that transition markers are interdependent (Aavessve. et al, 2003), youth home leaving has the power to influence youth religious conversion into Pentecostalism. This equally builds on the premise that youth home leaving exposes youths to new ideas, values, beliefs and belief systems that are different from those of their parents (Good & Willoughby, 2008), and thus, can influence youth religious conversions, de-conversion and reconversion. This at the same time questions the reasons why most of the students leaving out parents' homes convert to Pentecostalism in the Anglo-Saxon university neighborhoods in Cameroon.

Two of the greatest and most important youth social institutions are the public school and the church. These institutions have shaped a significant amount of youth culture, as the right to worship and the right to education are cornerstones of youth experience on their way to becoming responsible adult citizens. Both schools and churches are deeply interested in helping people learn and work toward wholeness and better character. It makes sense for these two great institutions to work together to facilitate successful youth transition to adulthood.

The findings stand to contribute to the body of knowledge in the domain of youth home leaving in the context of the proliferation of Pentecostal churches. Nonetheless, Parents and adolescent youths stand to learn about the influence of youth home leaving on youth conversion to Pentecostalism in the university neighborhoods in the Anglo-Saxon university neighborhoods in Cameroon. This concurs with the recognition that the University neighborhoods are student-youth residential areas with lots of Pentecostal churches that offer the youth's diverse religious options of affiliation (Mendes, 2009). Consequently, Parents and student youths need clear education on the challenges of youth staying in the university residential areas amid Pentecostal Churches. The situation is even more critical given the existential crisis of the youth age (Good & Willoughby, 2008), this goes a long way to increase the questioning of orthodoxy and conversion to Pentecostalism. These newer religious movements in Cameroon are promising quick fixes to the many problems facing the youths en route to adulthood, but established churches are concerned that the newcomers are offering people false hope. In addition, the government is having trouble controlling the spread of illegal churches. The constitution provision provides for freedom of religion and the administrative tolerance of illegal churches even though religious values and beliefs are the core of moral behaviour and good citizenship. With the current findings, stakeholders can forge ahead with responsive strategies that will promote youth home leaving and successful transition to adulthood. One thing necessary in promoting youth health staying out of home and a successful transition to responsible adulthood is for the government to enforce the legalization of churches before they establish worship houses in the student residential areas in Cameroon.

They used Problem Behavior theory PBT, (Jessor & Jessor, 1977), to appreciate the interdependencies of youth transition markers, which had demonstrated relevance in the local context and the systems of psychosocial influences in explaining the influence of youth home leaving on conversion to Pentecostalism in the university neighbourhoods in Cameroon. Therefore, the more the parents and their young children learn about the influence of home leaving on youth conversion the more the youths will succeed in transitioning to adulthood. Another interesting observation on youth home leaving and conversion to Pentecostalism is youth self-determination (Ryan and Deci, 2000). Kins et al., 2009; stated that actions like religious choices based on autonomous motivations rather than controlled motivations promote well-being and satisfaction. Considering home-leaving, young individuals' motivations may be vital to the overall moving-out experience and may influence their experiences in emerging adulthood such as university adjustment and performance, relationship with parents, and well-being. Moreover, SDT identifies autonomy, relatedness and competence as basic psychological needs, and emphasizes that social contexts such as parents promote these needs. Ample research showed that autonomy-supportive parenting encourages autonomy compared to controlling parenting (Kins et al. 2009; Soenens et al., 2007). Parents holding power may pressure and be less emphatic with their children, and hinder their autonomy needs. While parental warmth promotes children's need for relatedness, high levels of parental conflict can undermine it. Therefore, parent-child relationship quality may be related to adolescents' motivation and investigating this association may help the youth to understand the connectedness of youth home leaving to religious conversion.

The instrument through items adapted, was valid and reliable considering that the internal consistency measure for the overall component had an aggregate alpha of 0.92, which to George & Mallery, (2003) was excellent. This shows that the information collected to test the influence of youth home leaving on youth conversion to Pentecostalism was trustworthy, since the measure for religious conversion, locally developed was also excellent. In recent years awareness of the importance of successful youth transition to adulthood has increased and offers a means of effective management of youth transition markers that enables the youth to navigate the challenges associated with the youth stage of life. This is important for parents, youths and religious youth workers. Although the study sample was drawn from student youths in two Anglo-Saxon universities in Cameroon, the results are generalizable to them and other youths in similar neighbourhoods under the same conditions.



## Limitations

Some limitations must be considered when interpreting the findings of this study. Firstly, the study did not collect information on the relationship of youth with their parents after they leave home. Therefore, further empirical studies may be helpful in this respect because they may shed light on the influence youth parent relations and the transition to adulthood. Secondly, although the inclusion of psychosocial variables such as protective and risk factors advances the understanding of the concept of home-leaving, most of these psychosocial variables did not capture parental, peer, or individual attitudes and beliefs about the desirable timing of independent living that might be more directly linked with conversion. Thirdly, parental and peer psychosocial factors were obtained from the perceptions of adolescent youths themselves; this could introduce bias in the reporting of youth conversion.

The study only included students living in the Anglo-Saxon university neighborhoods in Cameroon which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other institutions. The study did not consider the impact of individual differences, such as gender differences on conversion to Pentecostalism. The study only included a specific demographic group (e.g., young adults) and may not be generalizable to other populations with different preferences or needs. The study relied on self-reported measures of youth converts and potential converts, which may be subject to social desirability bias or measurement errors.

Despite these limitations, the study has provided an enlarged understanding of the influence of home-leaving among youth in the Anglo-Saxon university neighbourhoods in Cameroon. These findings may have implications for initiatives to ensure positive youth development especially those in university residential areas (Lloyd 2005). Although the influence of youth home leaving on conversion into Pentecostalism may differ in different youth residential areas, the present account of home-leaving on youth conversion into Pentecostalism by psychosocial risk and protective factors, based as it is on theory, should have generality.

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