

PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF THE FACTORS THAT BRING ABOUT AN INCREASE OF DROP OUT RATE OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS OF UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA, NSUKKA.

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ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of university dropout is met in all universities in the world, but overtime has been recorded higher amongst countries that make up the global south, with much reference to the African continent of which Nigeria is located. This social crisis has gradually progressed especially in this 21st century in Nigeria, alongside the already existing social problems such as unemployment and most recently crime. To this end, this study is aimed at those factors that have exalted the rate of undergraduate drop out in University of Nigeria, Nsukka, taking into cognizance variables such as unemployment, sex, age, level of study, crime as an alternative option to education and possible measures that could be adopted both at the micro and macro level in order to mitigate the rapid increase of students withdrawal from schooling, especially at the University level. The study comprised 150 respondents who were undergraduates students of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka from 5 faculties within the main campus of the University; namely: the faculty of Social Sciences, Arts, Physical Sciences, Biological Sciences and Education. The quantitative method was adopted in this study, making use of questionnaires as instrument for data collection, and a cross-sectional survey design. The study also utilized the simple probability sampling technique to select qualified respondents for the study from the chosen faculties of the University. The study found that the major contributory factor to the increasing rate of undergraduate dropout within the University was financial constraints, that gainful employment was a major motivator for investing in education, that male undergraduate students made up more of the population of undergraduate dropouts compared to their female counterparts, the alternative option to investment in education mostly considered by these dropouts was enrollment in apprenticeship, in terms of crime; undergraduate dropouts engaged more in cybercrime(yahoo-yahoo) and finally the appropriate measures to be adopted to mitigate the phenomenon of undergraduate drop out include; creation of comfortable job opportunities, reduction of fees and cost of living within the University and awarding of scholarships. The researcher recommends that both measures at the macro and micro level be adopted i.e measures at the societal level being adopted such as the availability of gainful employment, awarding of scholarships and rewards to individuals who achieve academic success by both government and non-governmental organization or private well known individuals, especially in form of public showcasing, and a shift from sponsorship and promotion of the entertainment industry to education so as to re-ignite the quest for scholarship among youths and those yet unborn who are the future of tomorrow. The conclusions of this study can enable the necessary personalities, as well as authorities in the educational sector both at the micro and the macro level to identify those factors that have served as the contributing factor to the increase in the rate of undergraduate drop out in the Nigerian society and the best measures to implement them in order to reduce the

increasing rate by promoting and generating more of those identifiable motivations that retain students in school.

INTRODUCTION

Education being a social process involving teaching and learning has been interpreted by different people in different ways. Some people refer to it as formal schooling or to lifelong learning. Some others refer to it as acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes. Some say that education is nothing, but training of people's mind in a particular direction to bring about desired changes. This is to hold that the term "Education" has no single precise universally acceptable definition. It has various meanings as well as functions, depending on the point of view of analysis. According to the National Council of Educational Research and Training (2014), education seeks to develop the innate or inner potentials of humans. With this point of analysis, we can say that education seeks at providing a nourishing environment that will facilitate, expose and develop the potentials of an individual. According to Good (1973), education is defined as "the aggregate of all the processes by which a person develops abilities, attitudes and other forms of behavior of practical values in the society in which he lives; the social process by which people are subjected to the influence of selected and controlled environment (especially that of the school), so that they may obtain social competence and optimum individual development". Some experts such as Stallmann and Johnson (1996), have used the human capitalist theory to show the relationship between income and investment in education or employment and investment in education. The prospects of having better job opportunities and of achieving improved lifetime earnings are major incentives for people to stay in school and invest more in education. Education contributes significantly to employment success, and those with education are both more likely to be employed and earn a higher income.

According to Ortiz and Dehon (2013), in the countries of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), graduates earn, on average, twice as much as those with only elementary education. The completion of upper education is also related to the increase in life expectancy, improvement in personal and professional mobility, increase in social status, increase in the practice of leisure activities, improvement of the children's quality of life, and reduction of the risk of unemployment (Nes et al., 2009; Ortiz & Dehon, 2013). Despite the obvious advantages attached to educational attainment, not all individuals have been able to acquire or invest in education due to inevitability of social inequality which is manifested at various degrees across nations, regions and continent all over the globe. It was on this note that Adrian (2017), opined that representatives of the lower social class are most likely not to invest in education compared to those of the middle or upper social class. And the inability to invest in education, or not being able to see through this investment in education, especially taking into cognizance the recommended standard i.e. tertiary education, shall be the focus of this study, which takes us to the act, 'Dropout'. Today's society is characterized by an increasing rate of complex changes, uncertainties, challenges and problems (Barnett & Coat, 2005; Jackson, 2005) requiring individuals to possess certain skills. It is a society filled with disorders, complexities and ambiguities with environmental social, political and economic pressures. The labor market is also dynamically competitive, demanding employees who can meet with work place challenges, innovate and proffer solutions to problems yet unknown. This type of society encourages the learners to possess creativity, collaboration, communication, a critical thinking skill which has been described as the 21st century skills to be able to cope and contribute

positively to the society. This has attached so much importance to formal education attainment on individuals. In the bid to acquire the required prerequisites of the society such as the skills and knowledge as well as qualifications, so many factors surface and affect the educational achievements of individuals that may leave them with no other option but to drop out of school. Some scholars like Rumberger (2008), Adrian (2017), Moore (2017) to name a few, have highlighted majorly two broad factors usually responsible for students dropout, they include; personal factors and the institutional factors, jointly comprising poor academic performance, low social economic status, ethnic minority, single parent families, gender (where the males suffer more usually due to combination of work and studies), unfavorable educational policies and environment, communities etc. Apart from the above listed reasons for students withdrawal from school as identified and acknowledged by various researchers which are generally obtainable and cut across the global society, there have been a shift from just these factors to students now willing to withdraw from their academic pursuit as it seems, to engage in other alternatives, giving up on education. It was on this note that Kem (2018), postulated that if the cost of finishing one's University education exceeds the expected benefit of earning a degree, then there will be little reason for staying in school even at the University level, especially in the Nigerian society where there has been persistent rise in the rate of unemployment in recent decades, discouraging investment in education (Omonijo et al., 2015). For Nwambam and Ezeh (2017), they opine that young people in developing nations, after completing different levels of schooling, do not find gainful employment which apparently defeats the aim of investing in education. With these reasons, coincidentally, there has been increase in the withdrawal of students from higher institutions to explore other productive investment which could be inform of skill acquisition that may not be relevant to economic venture (Tabotndip, 2010), because an undeniable fact remains that the bottom-line for all of this is the acquisition of a better socio-economic status in the society. This study will be focused on those factors that have increased the rate of undergraduate dropout in relation to the increasing rate of unemployment in the society and quest for wealth, as well as the alternative upheld by these individuals who have considered education as an alternative foregone, the effect age and level of study of these students have in influencing their decision to drop out, and finally, the sex that mostly engage in this act as a result of the unrealizable benefits of education with regards to socio-economic status.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Prior to this era of increase in the rate of dropout, or loss of faith in education as it seems in our society, especially with regards to its rewards such as gainful employment, better chances of survival and socio-economic status etc, there once existed a time when the ideas of the human capital theorists were predominant, stating that, "People make investment on themselves in terms of education with the expectation of future returns". According to Watchel (1984), an individual will invest in human capital through education as long as the expected stream of returns from the investment exceeds the cost incurred by making the investment. The prospects of having better job opportunities and of achieving improved lifetime earnings are major incentives for people to stay in school and invest more in education. Education contributes significantly to employment success, and those with education are both more likely to be employed and earn a higher income. It is in this same light that Okobia et al. (2013), opined that education is not just the machinery for transmitting cultural heritage but a means through which the entire person is developed so as to live successfully in the society. In the view of Delacroix (1978), education has multiple

functions to perform; passing cultural values, developing critical minds, training specialized skills, but noted that the promise of education cannot be fulfilled if school leavers and University graduates become dissatisfied, disillusioned and abject because they cannot put their ability to work, which is a true reflection of our society where unemployment has become the order of the day and meritocracy is downplayed for factors such as nepotism, clientelism, and other forms of corrupt activities associated with allocation of resources and opportunities such as employment. Although there were records of dropouts in time past that were beyond the students, but researchers opine the following to be reasons for students to leave school which is still obtainable in the society today, foregoing the benefits attached to educational attainment. For Moore (2017), some of these reasons include: economic reasons, incarceration, race and gender among others were the causes for students withdrawal. beyond these stated reasons, students decision to withdraw from schooling has been influenced in recent times by the uncertainty associated with the reward of education and would rather explore other options more assuring of better life opportunities, regardless of its legality. It was on this note that Obasan and Yomi (2011) observed that the younger generations are no longer interested in human capacity building due to the 'Get rich quick' syndrome which inhibits youths from being alienable to employability skill acquisition and development. This has exposed them to various forms of social vices such as armed robbery, cybercrime, banditry, kidnapping, human trafficking, political thuggery, militancy, insurgency, terrorism etc (Musa, 2018; Nwanbam & Ezeh, 2017). Similarly, Delacroix (1978), argued that when the educational system is not in sufficient harmony with the ability of the economy to absorb educated youths in productive works, the following conditions are bound; high social and economic costs, inequality gap in wealth which sees the rich get richer, and the poor get poorer, rural-urban migration, juvenile delinquency and crime, physical ill health, mental disturbance and resort to drugs. However, whichever way dropout occurs, it does not have only an adverse effect on the students but also on the economy of the nation resulting to increase in illiteracy, poor work force, deviant behavior and crime as well as increased dependence on the government (Moore, 2017). Owing to this conceived facts, students consider the University education a waste of time, since they stand the same chances of survival as those who see through school and graduate, which is in sharp contrast with the postulations of the human capitalist. In the eyes of many, dropping out of school sounds ideal because those who leave do not have to attend school, and often think they can still be successful. Unfortunately, life for most dropouts does not always play out as well as it did for successful renowned individuals such as Albert Einstein, Henry Ford, John Rockefeller, Peter Jennings, among others who for one reason or the other had reasons to drop out of school at different stages in their life (Moore, 2017). Though, in reality, some individuals that do not complete higher education end up living just below the poverty line, it is not in all cases, as some of them end up appearing to be more successful, regardless of the legality of the source of their success, compared to their educated counterparts who we know today in our society, still live below the same poverty line, maybe as a result of unemployment or low paying jobs that ordinarily would be a fitting slot for the former. Drop out is one of the multiple indicators of the quality of an educational system (Araque et al., 2009). This is only traceable to the socio-economic and political system of the Nigerian society which has continued to depreciate overtime. All these data show the need to accomplish studies which identify the causes of the increase in the rate of drop out, therefore, it has become a main concern for me to discover why the alarming increase of drop out has become so prevalent, particularly in relation to the increasing rate of unemployment in the country and the "Quest to make it quick", and also to take into

account the more dominant gender in this act, especially due to the patriarchal structure of our society as well as the alternative options they engage in, after dropping out.

Research Questions

The following questions would serve as a guide to this research.

What factors may bring about undergraduate dropout in UNN?

Does increase in unemployment rate bring about student's decision to drop out of the University?

Are male undergraduate students more likely to drop out of the University than their female counterpart?

Are younger undergraduate students more likely to drop out than their older counterparts?

Are undergraduate students who are in their first and second year of study more likely to drop out of school than those in their penultimate and final year?

Do the male undergraduate dropouts resort to kidnapping in order to earn a living?

What can be done to combat the withdrawal rate of undergraduate students from Nigerian Universities, especially UNN?

Research Objectives

In this study, the general objective is to identify the causes of the increase in drop out of undergraduate students in Nigerian universities. However, the specific objectives are highlighted below as follows:

To ascertain the factors that may bring about undergraduate dropout in UNN.

To identify if increase in unemployment rate bring about student's decision to drop out of the University.

To identify if male undergraduate students are more likely to drop out of the University than their female counterparts.

To find out if younger undergraduate students are more likely to drop out of school than their older counterparts.

To identify if undergraduate students in their first and second year are more likely to drop out of school than those in their penultimate and final year.

To establish if the male undergraduate dropouts resort to kidnapping in order to earn a living.

To discover what can be done to combat the withdrawal rate of undergraduate students from Nigerian Universities, especially UNN.

Significance of the Study

This research work contains both theoretical and practical significance.

Practical significance

There is an alarming increase in the rate of dropout among University undergraduates; this study is geared towards supporting the already existing literatures addressing the issue of student's dropout from the University. The primary aim here is to unravel the underlying factors that have brought about the increase in the rate of undergraduate students dropping out in University of Nigeria Nsukka in relation to the increasing rate of unemployment in the country and the desperation for quick money.

Theoretical Significance

This study will enlighten members of the society not only on the factors that result in the increase of dropout, but also the negative effect it has on not only the educational sector but

the entire social system. It will enable parents who are the primary instructors of children who are the future of tomorrow to improve in the way they build up their children through the processes of socialization so as to enable them strive hard that they may secure for themselves better opportunities in life and chances of survival in the competitive labor market of our society by encouraging their wards to engage in skill acquisition programs aside from the regular educational qualification, that will be of economic importance to both the individuals and the society at large. This study would also help the school authorities of different universities to devise better means plausible enough to expand the academic curriculum by introducing skill acquisition programs that could encourage entrepreneurship and business creation and also review policies that could seem unfavorable to student's academic success such as availability of hostel accommodation especially for the males students who seem to be more at risk of dropping out and realistically adaptable examination policies in order to defeat the idea of schools being responsible for student's withdrawal. This research would also re-orientate the public, especially fellow students on the essence of family relationship among each other to enable platform for different form of support from each other to overcome challenges that may seem difficult or warrant dropout. The study will enable those at the helm of affairs or leadership of the Nigerian educational system to realize the growing need to curb the increase in the rate of drop out in the state by taking drastic measures such as diversification of the institution's calendar so as to control the situation that this study would unveil as the cause for the increase. It will also enable those in demographic and population studies provide necessary data regarding rate of drop out of undergraduate students as well as the factors that facilitate the increase in the rate of drop out among University undergraduates in Nigeria. It will also be of great importance to anti-corruption agencies, especially in the undue allocation of resources such as employment and job opportunities, to enable them adopt measures that could eliminate such practices that are carried out on the bases of favoritism, nepotism, ethnicity, bribery, job sale and purchase etc, at the expense of merit and credible qualifications of individuals as it obviously has contributed to the increase in the rate of crime, corruption and unemployment in the country, and recently, dropout of undergraduates. It will also enable an average Nigerian out there to come to terms with the fact that investment in education alone is not a guarantee for life success in the Nigerian society today.

Operationalization of Terms

In the course of this study, I would be examining the following concepts:

Active students- this will refer to those set of students who prioritize educational achievements, and therefore actively participate in school activities, especially academics where they invest most of their time. Drop out- this refers to a situation whereby one suddenly withdraws from any task which they purposely or willingly enrolled into, usually associated with academic studies in a University as a result of inability to adapt to the academic environment, disappointment with the social system, financial challenges etc. Dropout- this simply refers to those set of individuals who engage in the act of drop out. Employment- These are resources, opportunities or processes through which jobs are made available to the public but are attained basically through degrees or one's experience. Graduate- this is an individual who has completed a course of study, acquiring the basic skills and knowledge, and has earned a degree or certificate from the University. High paying job- This simply means a reliable sufficient source of income earned by qualified certificated individuals which could be inform of salary or wage within the range of 100,000 – 500,000). Illiterate- this is a term used to refer to a non-literate individual specifically one

who has little or no certification for job qualification. Inactive students- this refers to a categorization of students who really do not find schooling worthwhile, and so therefore engage less with academic activities of the school. Low paying job- These are insufficient income realized/generated from work or job an individual engages in which could be in form of salary or wages (i.e within the range of 10,000 – 30,000). Older undergraduates- this refers to undergraduate students who fall within the age bracket of 26yrs and above. Undergraduate- This is any individual admitted and enrolled into the academic session of a University. Unemployment- this refers to a situation or social problem characterized with a state of unavailability of job opportunities for the large number of job seekers with the requisite skills and are willing to work, in the labour force of the society. University- This simply refers to a type of tertiary or higher institution which awards degrees or issues certificate to its graduates and is headed by a Vice chancellor. Younger undergraduates- this refers to undergraduate students who fall under the age category of 16yrs-25yrs.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review of Literature

Education

Education is a process through which individuals acquire adequate and appropriate knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and behavior necessary to function optimally as a citizen (Ogiri, 2016). Globally, it is an unarguable fact that the progress of a nation is highly dependent on the education of their citizens. It is widely acknowledged that education is the most important factor contributing to poverty alleviation (Latif et al., 2015). Education plays a central role and has a cross cutting impact on all aspects of human life. It is a vital investment for human and economic development. Quality education can play dynamic role in productivity, social and economic growth of a country. Wood (2010), described education as the key factor in the development of the nation, communities and individuals with regard to employment opportunities, economic empowerment and social accomplishment. Education is considered as the bedrock of all facets of development of any nation, and a strong tool in development of human capacity. In developing countries such as we have in Africa, less attention is paid to improve quality of education and provision of education to average citizens who can only manage to afford the public higher institutions. Figures of dropout rate reflected that Subcontinent region is top second region, where children do not get quality education and mostly end up dropping out of school. Sub-Sahara Africa is on the top of list by dropping out rate (Latif et al., 2015). According to Moore (2017), an education or diploma is vital to living a successful life. They further added by stating that education is important in the global marketplace. In today's society if people want to have middle to upper class incomes then most of them must have post-secondary education. Furthermore, one of the most notable Nigerian president, Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan known as an ambassador of Peace, who in his best capacity fostered development in the Nigerian economy, emphasized on the necessity of education in his book titled, "My transition hours" written in 2015 especially in the northern part of Nigeria to which he supported the educational system by investing billions of Naira in the belief that it was an indirect way to fight the challenge of insecurity and poverty alleviation that could be as a result of illiteracy, unemployment, youths dropping out of school etc. Jonathan (2015), in reaction to achieving a better literate public, opines that at least 26percent of a country's budget should be invested in her educational system which is the general prescription drafted as a measure to improve educational systems in the third world countries by United

Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization(UNESCO). Various researchers like Latif et al. (2015), and human capital theorists such as Welch (1975), have identified the direct relationship between education and development, inferring that most under-developed or third world countries parade majority of their citizens as illiterates. For them, it in turn amounts to other social problems such as an unhealthy population, poor adaptation to changes in the society (science and technology), an uneducated/unskilled labour force amongst others.

Educational attainment may enhance the economic attractiveness of a state and thus contribute to employment growth. According to Goetz (1993), as cited in Owusu et al. (2015), a society with greater stocks of human capital formation may be in a better position to innovate technologically, thereby creating faster income growth. Educational attainment of workforce remains a key factor in influencing industrial location decisions as investors and corporations evaluate the economic attractiveness of a community by assessing the availability of skilled labour and other factors which affect their labour, because an educated work force is indicative of a skilled and a more productive labour in the work force which cannot afford an underdeveloped economy and consequently, an overall growth and development in all sectors of the society.

Drop out

Moore (2017) argued that the conceptualization of the term “Dropout” is relative to state, citing an accounting report on Dropout and Truancy in 2005 in the state of Tennessee in the United States of America. For them, according to the state, a dropout is an individual who: was enrolled in a school at some time during the previous school year; was not enrolled at the beginning of the current school year; has not graduated from or completed a state-approved educational program; and does not meet any of the following exclusionary conditions: transfer to another public school system, private system, or specifically approved state school; temporary absence due to suspension or excused illness/death. Arhipova (2013), giving a slightly different conceptualization of the term “dropout” in terms of the period of the drop out act defined student’s dropout as a situation when a student who had registered for a study program leaves the university during the first academic year. Dropping out is defined by National Center for Education Statistics as leaving school without completing a education or equivalent credential such as a General Educational Development (GED) certificate (Latif et al., 2015). Student dropout problem is faced by all developed and developing countries of the world. In developing countries dropout rate are remarkably high, even for the basic school going children. This definition indicated that absconding of the program of the school by the students is called school dropout. For this conception, Latif et al. (2015), conclude that students drop out means discontinuing schooling either for financial reasons and disappointment with their social system and examination results. Saleh (2015), sees dropping out of school as leaving without completion to a formal qualification awarded. This indicates the abandonment of an education before the expected minimum number of courses has been completed. The potential dropouts are those students that are likely to totally abandon their studies. In essence, dropping out refers to the students quitting school programs before they graduate. Cabrera et al. (2006), have made various categorizations of drop out. This category includes:

Involuntary drop out (for administrative non-fulfillment or violation of regulations)
Leaving the degree program to begin another in the same institution

Leaving the degree program to begin another in another institution
Leaving one university to go to another to complete initiated studies
Giving up university studies to begin training itineraries outside of the university, or to join the workforce

Interrupting studies with the intention of returning to them in the future.
Furthermore, Owusu et al. (2015), citing Voss (1966) stated that it was exhibited in United States; that school dropouts did not form a homogeneous group, identifying three categories of school dropouts. The first type is involuntary dropouts that are those who leave school as a consequence of personal crisis. Secondly are retarded dropouts, which are those who lacked sufficient ability to handle academic pressure and as a result retarded in their grade placement and are poor readers. Finally is the third known as the capable dropouts that are those who terminate their education prior to secondary school graduation despite the fact that they had the ability to do the required academic work. By this, these students tend to be regarded as being less privileged compared to their other colleagues who graduate with their certificates in terms of access to scarce opportunities and resources, as well as chances of obtaining them. Graduates are perceived to be at an advantage due to the basic societal requirement that qualifies one for employment, and on the other hand, Moore (2017), cited Herbert (2005), stating that dropouts are more likely to be unemployed, unlikely to vote and more likely to be imprisoned. This is usually the outcome of these dropout students because in dropping out of school, majority would usually engage in criminal or illegal activities in order to acquire the necessary resources for survival for themselves and sometimes, their families. Researchers have shown that there are several reasons that push or pull students out of school, but the major factors responsible for this phenomenon will be analyzed below.

Factors That May Lead to Drop out

Factors that could be highlighted as being responsible for the cause of drop out have been posited by many researchers in their various studies, classifying them into internal(push) and external(pull) related factors reaching almost an absolute convergence in their findings. Lanham (1999), was cited in Latif et al. (2015), postulating that a study on USA identified that many student dropped out of their school because students found their classes boring, absence from school for long time and unable to manage their work, consuming time with those who are not interested in study, unnecessary freedom to do everything and failure in class were the main reasons for which student left their school during their education. Some researchers examined that mostly the students who belonged to poor family background were more at risk of dropping out of school and this can be traced to their parents being uneducated and earning less income that was not sufficient to fulfill their expenses. Some have also observed that students drop their school due to poor health caused by poor diet and starvation and inequalities of education system and poor family background also helps in student dropout. If there is less contribution of parents' interest for their Childs' education then there are greater possibilities of student drop out, (Latif et al., 2015). Moore (2017), and Rumberger (2008), just to name a few among others classified the factors that bring about drop out of students into various categories, which include: student related factors, school related factors, parent related factors and community related factors. According to them, the student related factors are those students behavior that occur both inside and outside the school environment. They include those negative behaviors that cause the student to become less engaged in school. These areas include areas such as the students'

behavior and disciplinary problems, attendance and academic achievement. Academic performance is also another key factor that has consistently been cited for being responsible for student staying in school and graduating (Moore, 2017). They pose that students who perform below average academically are likely to drop out in the long run as options of class retention or course reseating may surface. As cited by Moore (2017), Alexander and Entwisle (2001), stated that students that had been retained at any point of their school career, increased the likelihood of quitting school regardless of the retention. For them, the highest predictor for school dropout was if a student was to repeat a grade or level which will result in them not graduating with their actual class; this, they perceived as being a recourse to their psychology. It was on this note that Rumberger (2008), postulated that students' retention in schools only brings about an increase in the odds of students dropping out of school.

Allenworth and Easton (2007), also established that attendance was an imperative factor to determine a student's completion of school program. They postulated that absenteeism from academic activities and other school engagements ensures detachment from the school environment thereby increasing the risk chances of leaving school. Students absenteeism from school can be traced to causal factors such as challenges with one's health, marital status for the female students especially, and in some cases pregnancy for both the married and the unmarried students etc. researchers have identified in some dropout cases that were traced to be engineered by absenteeism and detachment from the school environment to be caused by health complications encountered by some students who had health challenges or physical disabilities. Wells et al. (1989), as cited in Moore (2017), defined school related factors as those factors that occur during the school day and are related to the structures and activities within the day, these include; school climate, the learning environment, teacher-student engagement, structure and school vision. School related factors are capable of either supporting or enabling the students to thrive or deter from graduating. Ideally, every learning environment should be designed in a way that will enable its students thrive and graduate, keeping its dropout rate as minimal as possible, as well as not being traceable to the school even at its minimal level. This is one of the highest determining factors of student drop out in the context of underdeveloped nations as Nigeria where ranging from the physical environment to the academic environment are not supportive of an undergraduate's academic achievement. Some of these include over population, poor infrastructures such as accommodation facilities in the hostels and lecture halls, practices of unfavorable examination policies, poor medical health care centres, absence of scholarship for indigent and physically challenged students etc.

The family related factors according to Moore (2017), include such qualities as family environment, composition, socio-economic status and drug use in the home. Some researchers are of the opinion that family related factors are the most influential factors to the reasons why students graduate or drop out of school. They further added, citing Wells et al. (1989), who stated that a lack of parent support along with an abusive home is connected with a higher incidence of dropping out., Factors such as living in a violent dysfunctional home, a home where drugs and alcohol are abused, a home where family deficiencies are present, a home where a language other than the primary language of the educational institute is spoken, and a lack of parental education have all been linked with student's dropout. A properly structured home of both educated parents as well as parental expectations decreases the chances of dropping out of school Rumberger (2008), as there

are higher tendencies of better socio-economic status and literacy which implies parental attention on the education of their children, creating a comfortable environment for them to excel. On the other hand, children from single parenthood or other family living arrangements such as step family suffer the adequate support required for their educational success due to low financial strength of the family. , single parent family especially the female headed single families, have lower income and are more likely to depend on public assistance (Rumberger, 2008), which may a times result in working and schooling on the part of the student in other to support the financial cost which could with time, bring about loss of interest in education and further lead to dropout. Apart from family stability/structure, scholars have further argued that some families with both parents pay less attention to their children's education i.e. portraying a care-free attitude towards their children, giving them room to live their life as they please without guiding them and providing the necessary support to deter them from engaging in deviant behaviors that could encourage their dropping out of school. They opine that most of such parents have histories of incarceration or crime records and drug abuse also not unconnected to previous records of children who dropped out in the same family (Rumberger& Thomas, 2007).

Although most people consider family support to be from those who are literally genetically family members, sometimes others can be considered family (Moore, 2017). Viewing family beyond the bio-genetic perspective, they stated that students, who engage in extracurricular activities in form of a team, view them as such and as well play a huge role in determining students' graduation or dropping out. Backing up their arguments were citations of a number of researches that were made in that regard. Among these were Rumberger (2003), Mahoney (1997), amongst others who carried out research on the role of extracurricular activities in students' education in terms of either graduating them or dropping out. The studies found out that students who engaged in extracurricular activities such as sports had influence in encouraging students' academic performance, and other social activities had adverse effect on their studies. Casalone (2018), argues that unemployment in the labour force of a state has direct negative influence on student academic achievement and abate drop out. This is typical in underdeveloped nations like Nigeria without hope of job employment for graduates who end up engaging in jobs meant for school dropouts. With this continuous occurrence in the society, the rate of drop out taking place among universities and other tertiary institutions is exacerbated owing to the apparent fact of unemployment even as a graduate or not. Furthermore, there seems to be an existing gradual shift from values of the Nigerian society which has unfortunately discouraged educational attainment and encouraging negative values in the society. Besides the obvious unemployment situation which has almost become systemic, the Nigerian society has in addition, overtime, under-appreciated efforts made in educational attainment made by her citizens through denial of sponsorships, promotions, scholarships and life assuring opportunities. Year after year, students graduate with remarkable results worthy of credible attraction from companies, institutions, governing bodies etc but are surprisingly neglected for winners of reality TV-shows that institute neglect for our cultures and values and promoting moral decadence in the society. This has gone a long way in encouraging undergraduate dropout across the nation, especially as winners of such Reality TV-shows who go home with millions of Naira announce themselves as school dropouts or graduates without gainful employment.

The Community related factors according to *De Witte (2017)*, cited Rumberger (1983; 2004), stating that *Neighbourhood characteristics* - the geographical location of families' residence, eventual housing problems, lack of playgrounds and green areas), may have detrimental effects on students' school performance, either directly or indirectly. If youths live in poor and distressing environments they may be more susceptible to early school leaving (Blue & Cook, 2004). Just as "urbanicity" may lead to or correlate heavily to early school leaving, so could a whole region in which students life be associated with higher drop out rates. At least equally important appears to be the presence of a *network of high achieving and high aspiring peers* in children's and youths' environment. This factor could exert an influence independent from other variables on the individual. Of course, many other community factors and societal mechanisms could play a crucial role, like social discrimination and prejudice. Such processes have caused minority groups to be "streamed" into special and vocational education tracks for ages. They may moreover still be responsible for differences in dropout and downward mobility between minority and majority students (Kalmijan & Kraaykamp, 2003).

Alternative Options for Drop out Students

Many studies have been shown by researchers on the different engagements drop out students involve themselves, some of which are low paying jobs in other to support the family financially, enrollment into other vocational institutions, Enrollment into the marriage institution especially in the case of the female students, starting up a business venture for those who were not initially involved and facing squarely the business they combined with schooling initially etc. Musa (2018), stated from his findings on a research in northern Nigeria that the increase in drop out rate in the tertiary institutions in Sokoto state brought about rapid increase in deviant behaviors and crime such as armed banditry, rape, kidnapping, political killings, terrorism amongst others. In addition to these criminal acts engaged by undergraduate drop out students, are fraudulent activities such as cyber crime and all sorts of various illegal activities to survive and also in a bid to acquire wealth. Some other dropouts dive into the entertainment/music industry which for them, is considered as an occupation through which they can earn a living especially as we have in our entertainment and music industry today; large number of uneducated youths without the necessary skill and talent. Although some of them have been able to excel in this route, gaining fame as well as wealth, most of them are still out there striving to be heard in the society.

De Witte (2017), posits that *employment or apprenticeship opportunities* could act as other powerful "pull factors" stimulating students to stop out or drop out. This is peculiar majorly in south eastern Nigeria where there is much interest in entrepreneurship and business ownership especially on the male gender. This can be identified as a part of the culture of people that make up this region of Nigeria where majority of their young youths, especially males enroll into apprenticeship under a successful business owner or entrepreneur who grooms them into the business which after an agreed period of time the individual is expected to have acquired the necessary knowledge and skills to succeed in the business and then starts his own independent of his master and earning a living and source of income for himself. This practice discourages education considering it as a waste of time especially in our society where merits of education are not widely acknowledged due to the social system. On this note will such individuals consider apprenticeship as being sufficient for dropping out of school.

The Effect of Drop out

The phenomenon of dropping out of school has a severe implication socio-economically on the individual who dropped out of school, the family of the individual, the society or community and also the economy of the society as a whole. Effect on the individual: Individual dropouts suffer because they may not be able to secure employment in future especially in the formal sector because of lack of the requisite educational qualification. In fact, Rumberger (1987), indicated that dropouts mainly have difficulty finding steady, well-paying jobs over their entire lifetimes. Information on the employment sector of researchers has shown that majority of students who dropped out of school were in the private informal sector, earning low wages/salaries which is the reward for unskilled jobs. According to some researchers, Owusu et al. (2015), they opine that drop out among youths render their life unproductive and keeps it stand-still. They further argue on the self-esteem of the dropout individuals, acknowledging that it has a negative effect on them, as it lowers their self esteem especially when they come in contact with their graduated counterparts. In recent years, advancement in technology which has fueled the demand for a highly skilled labour force, transforming education into a minimum requirement for entry into the labour market has worsened the economic insignificance of school dropouts (Vermont, 2011). With respect to this situation, the completion of senior secondary school has an essential requirement for numerous jobs and tertiary education entry. The economic outcomes of not having a diploma are very difficult. Owusu et al. (2015), citing Create (2007), posit that this situation has put many young people behind the access to good and well-paid jobs. This becomes a serious case, where young people or students who are devoid of intellectual skills because of dropping out of school become unfit to take any challenging position in their societies which demand the educated personalities. Besides, the unemployment rate for dropouts is very high as compared to the unemployment rate of graduates. Even when the dropouts are employed, they earn less salary. This eventually affects dropout youths who earn low income and they are therefore not able to meet their daily needs making their economic life unbearable and unaffordable. Therefore, their future becomes shuttered where most youth engage in dubious activities in order to meet the necessities of daily life (Acquilano, 2009). Others also find themselves in trading activities that cannot even provide for them the basic necessities because of low capital for their trading. This shows that most of the young people who completed school are able to find themselves in business and other industrial work where they are well paid later for their daily needs to the extent that they are able to save (Antwi 2012). Effect on the economy:-Education is vital for economic development. According to Vision 2030, "Education is a key component of economic growth because it has direct influence on entrepreneurship, productivity growth and then increases employment opportunities and women empowerment. Education helps in making potential youth for the enhancement of ability, creativity and systematic skills to contest with the fast changing Global inclination. Students drop out reduces literacy rate of a country and non-innovative environment, increasing the dependence on the government alongside culminating into decrease in the quality of the labour force of the society. Moore (2017), cited (Bridgeland et al., 2008; Christle et al., 2007; National Education Association, 2006; Orfield, Losen, Wald & Swanson, 2004; Romberger, 1983; Romberger 1987), stating that these dropouts are costing the government billions of Dollars because of unemployment benefits, public assistance and lost revenue. Effect on the society:-Society or community is diversely being affected by the behavior and other social activities of the people residing in it. This however shows that, the safety mode of society is not spared when school dropout is

on the increase. School dropout exert burden on the community or the public where especially young people whose parents are in the state of extinct and have nowhere to go but to rely on people to have a living (Thornberry, 1985). This upsurge dependence on public assistance is to be expected, due to the fact that young women who drop out of school are more likely to have children at younger ages and more likely to be single parents than graduates (National Centre for Education Statistics [NCES], 1998). The implication here is that, they create a worrying responsibility for the community where the public have to take care of the young people when it is very impossible or difficult if not easy for someone to take care of these young people especially when these children's parents do not exist. In addition, a community is not spared especially when the rates of school drop out were high, such a community experiences higher crime rates (Owusu et al., 2015). This appears more with the issue of delinquency and drug related crime and other highly risky behaviors such as alcohol abuse, drug abuse and sexual activities. Specific communities also saw a decrease in property values, which ultimately led to homes which were poorly maintained, urban blight and transient neighborhood, (Acquilano, 2009). With respect to this issue, there are threats on social stability of community where robbery becomes the order of the day.

The issue of school drop out has strong or direct implication on the social life of the youth. Most of the young people engage in various activities to make a living. However, some find themselves in prostitution, drug selling, smuggling, robbery and even practicing occultism and "blood money" in order to have a living (Hunt, 2007). This however, makes them unfit in the face of social rules of society which makes most of them end their lives in prison while others are got killed through robbery. Besides, the individual strains and weariness related to drop out have social repercussions (Hunt, 2007), as cited in Owusu et al. (2015), positing that dropouts make up uneven percentages of every nation's prisons and death row inmates. In addition, researchers have argued that 82% of America's prisoners are dropouts. The serious and worried situation is that, many of the young people used to be brilliant students when they were in school but financial constraints among others compel them to duck out schooling and get themselves involved in social vices. This destroys their bright future which would have had a good bearing on society but rather the opposite felt (Owusu et al., 2015).

Prevention/control of Rate of Increase in Drop out

Here, we shall be considering various recommendations identified by various researchers in the proposition of preventive measures of school dropout; the measures will be addressing the various causes of drop out as earlier stated ranging from the student related factors to the later, as well as that of the researcher.

Measures aimed at students: Since research indicates (most often by correlations) that *grade retention* is the worst culprit among all student-related risks factors with regard to early school leaving, it is of primary importance to restrict its use. As Orthner and Cook (2002) have noted, the issue of grade retention versus promotion is heavily charged; it seems neither wise to delay student's entry into or transition to a higher grade, nor to advance them without the skills necessary to succeed in later years. The key is, they state, to identify those at risk of grade retention as soon as possible, and to provide special care for them, both within and outside school.

Similarly, Adams and Becker (1990), cited by De Witte (2017), have recommended that teaching support be offered to first-year students, but insisted on its availability for more experienced students as well. Orthner and Cook (2002), in turn have added that purposive

assistance is best arranged even before kindergarten and should moreover be complemented by extracurricular activities (involving music, dance, drama and the likes) and after-school programs. Particularly disadvantaged children and youth would benefit from the latter. Orthner and Cook (2002) are of the opinion that an integrated strategy with clear objectives is much more effective than a diverse strategy with multiple objectives. Students need their own integrated, community-supported strategy with clear direction and mobilized in-school, after-school, and community-based resources to ensure that they arrive and leave school ready to learn and succeed. Promising strategies to enhance academic achievement, even among minority students from disadvantaged backgrounds, may be found in peer and adult counseling programmes. Teachers, coaches, peers, family members, and sometimes mentors from community programmes have proved capable of motivating students to achieve and even strive for academic honors by acting as supportive role models (Herbert & Reis, 1999). In addition, it appears worthwhile to devise programmes addressing students' (culturally diverse) attitudes toward and perceptions of school responsible for under-achievement. Finally, there seems to be agreement among scholars that for disadvantaged students, work needs not to be discouraged (Entwisle et al., 2005). Yet, at the same time there is a need for clarification of the circumstances in which work either increases or decreases students' propensity to leave school early. Entwisle et al. (2005), therefore, as a measure of precaution, have advised that students be dissuaded from taking up an adult job before the age of sixteen.

Measures aimed at Families:- In order to be effective, policies should not involve students alone but will have to engage students' parents or guardians. Since involvement of parents in the academic achievement of their children has proved to be extremely important, parent engagement strategies seem a necessary path to follow. If well conceived, these may help parents supervise and regulate their sons' and daughters' activities, discuss with them eventual problems and promote in their children a certain degree of self-reliance (Bridgeland et al, 2006). There is some evidence that early childhood (preschool) intervention programs have positive effects in this regard (Reynolds, 2006). Cooper and Chavira (2005) have stressed the importance of high and unambiguous expectations on the part of parents as well as other adults involved in students' school life, such as counselors. They have warned, however, against a paternalistic attitude, not least towards parents from low-income or minority groups.

One way to ensure that parents feel understood is to foster their supportive activities through parent discussion groups. Herbert and Reis (1999) have recommended that such groups be set up by school counsellors but run by successful parents in their homes. More generally, policies have to be focused on optimizing families' living conditions in order to secure an inviting environment for studying and a healthy degree of student responsibility in the household (Haelermans & De Witte, 2013), and, moreover, on obtaining a safe emotional climate and parent-child relationship. Finally, welfare programs need to offer assistance for single parents who suffer a dramatic income loss after having divorced (Suet-Ling, 2000).

Measures Aimed at Schools:- Since the 1980s, it has increasingly been recognized that apart from personal guidance of students, also strategies have to be developed to influence schools' organization. The literature focused on *schools' environment, lecturer and lecturing characteristics, and schools' relation to both families and community*. With regard to the former, teRiele (2006), have stressed that the focus needs to be on establishing school environments adapted to the needs of diverse students, rather than the other way around. In

a similar vein, De witte (2017), citing Balfanz and Legters (2004) and Bridgeland et al. (2006), have called for student outreach, especially in case of difficulty, and underlined the value of a school climate that cherishes academics and maintains high standards. Yet the school atmosphere, Blue and Cook (2004) have stressed, should at the same time be authentic and caring and defer to students' cultural diverse identities and home languages, while seeing the latter as strengths rather than weaknesses. Some other scholars have advised schools to remain sufficiently small (that is: not to merge into mega-schools) and to foster a positive social climate through a high degree of students' participation, while containing problems as much as possible.

Also in view of this social climate, lecturing approaches have been proposed that involve discussion and conversation, while relating the school to students' lives (Cooper & Chavira, 2005; Bridgeland et al., 2006). Other scholars have suggested increased personalization (Balfanz & Legters, 2004; Blue & Cook, 2004; Lee & Burkam, 2003) in teaching. With respect to content, some have recommended the development of literacy and language across various courses, as well as instruction of complex thinking. In general, educational programs should be intensive and courses challenging (i.e., more academic and less remedial) in order to close eventual gaps in terms of achievement. Finally, in terms of teacher and trainer quality, coherent and long-term professional development strategies, guidance, care and support for teachers are advocated (De witte, 2017). Some scholars plead for teaching staff to be allowed to concentrate their instruction activities in one semester, as to increase their teaching quality. Similarly, in the view of Moore (2017), schools need to decrease dropout rates through implemented practices that create student motivation, behavior habits, and academic skills. It was on this note that Cabrera et al. (2006), as cited in Staiculescu et al. (2018), identified the types of interventions that universities could adopt. They include: efforts to promote social and institutional adaptation that tries to promote the social life of the students' body with programs aimed at organizing recreational and cultural events, efforts to recruit students, university guidance programs i.e. through university tutors, programs that provide pre-university information and guidance on university specialties, programs that provide counseling and support to the student, especially providing training in learning and psychological support strategies, among others.

Moore (2017), also emphasized on the role of school management in curbing the rate of drop out stating that a school's focus usually lies in the hands of the administrators and district leaders. District leadership also plays a role in strategy development for teaching and learning. School leaders have a significant part in preventing drop out, and the responsibility and accountability of decreasing the drop out rate lies within their plate of duties. School boards, superintendents, curriculum supervisors, school administrators, and teachers must engage in a successful partnership to collaborate and strive for a successful improvement agenda. They added that in order to monitor prevention intervention efforts, school leaders must provide adequate resources, research based training, technical support, and current student driven data. School leaders must receive reinforcement and encouragement from their school board. This support leads to innovative schools and collaboration with employers and universities. Casalone (2018), posits that if the University system is publicly funded, the monetary direct cost of education will be affordable and reduced the likelihood of drop out. Incentives such as scholarships should be implemented in universities for indigent students to enable fight the financial challenges associated with university education in public universities in the country as they seem more affordable compared to the private

institutions that are only affordable by the elites in the society. Similarly, also activities devoted to help first-year students in adapting to the university environment and life may increase students' success.

In the opinion of Staiculescu et al. (2018), the solution for reduction of the increase in drop out of university students are of two types, namely: prevention and intervention. They advocate for the development of counseling, coaching, and socio-emotional skills development in universities, addressed to students targeting both preventive and interventionist actions. According to them, the counseling, coaching and development of students' socio-emotional skills must come to meet these needs. They should make students aware of their own personality, help them develop their self-image and self-awareness, help them take responsibility, solve their school integration, social and professional problems. Studies show that, where students have received counseling services, school performance has increased (Renuka , 2013., That counseling services tailored to students' daily concerns contribute to a higher effectiveness (for example, online counseling services - Olusegun, 2014). Furthermore, counseling services should be developed institutionally, contribute to the adoption of educational programs specific to the traits of those who follow them. Several studies have shown that majority of students appreciate the benefits of counseling services that helped them get better acquainted with the university expectations, grow self-esteem, be more motivated for learning and plan for proper careers, etc.

According to Justyna (2015) as cited by Staiculescu et al. (2018), the setting up of workshops and meetings with colleagues from older generations ensure the development and construction of learning networks, contributing to integration. Students will be encouraged to participate in activities, to have adequate academic behavior - which is another predictive factor of good integration. It seeks to promote an environment that combines traditional teaching with other learning ways. It is imperative for students to feel comfortable in the university environment ("at home"), to participate in extracurricular activities, to be connected with teachers and colleagues, which will reduce the risk of university dropout. Teachers and university staff must provide an academic background to help students integrate academically. Optimal combination of educational resources and related services, facilitating social interactions make academic integration and socialization easier, predictive factors for school success. All these activities will contribute to better social and school integration, defining factors in preventing university drop out (Trevor & Parker 2014).

Measures Aimed at the Society:- There is urgent need for our social institutions to realize the ill of drifting away from our traditional culture and value system that encourages and appreciates hard work through meritocracy. Therefore, the idea of promoting good value systems should be practiced at various levels and branches of our social structure so as to discourage any form of corrupt practice of any sort that has continued to ruin the future of our society. With this in full implementation, starting from the smallest unit of the society which is the family to all other institutions such as the religious, legislative, judiciary, economic, educational etc to the political/administrative institutions, there will be full actualization of a reoriented mind set of every Nigerian which will now see to the withdrawal from all forms of contradicting behaviors towards our traditional culture and values, and by so doing see to the actualization of our common good. Going by this, good value system being upheld in the mind of every individual regardless of your age, sex, ethnicity, religion and socio-economic and political class; there will be hardworking leaders as well as followers

that will bring about the ideal society hoped for, which will be characterized of effective social institutions such as law enforcement agencies persecuting law offenders duly without compromise, implementations of favorable policies that will bring about rapid development in the educational sector and economic sector and therefore create job opportunities massive enough to curb unemployment, corruption as well as all other social ills including “dropout” found within our society. With these obvious improvements, students will acknowledge the benefit of staying back in school to complete their academic programs which will seem more productive and convincing to invest. Without these improvements, the society will continuously be plagued by the increase in the dropout rate and the ill prepared workers for the job market (Moore, 2017).

Empirical Review of Literature

Students Connectedness in Tertiary Institutions

A research was carried out in tertiary institutions in Anambra State in Nigeria in 2010 by Agu, Omenyi and Odimegwu on a sample of 772 students from different higher institutions in the state, adopting a descriptive survey design using questionnaire instrument to determine the level of student's connectedness to the tertiary institutions with reference to the age and gender of these students. The study found out that the degree of students connectedness to their school environment was on the average, and that students with higher degree of connectedness to their school environment which comprises the school management, staff as well as fellow students thrive more academically and stand lesser chances of deviant behavior that could result to dropping out of school.

The Impact of Dropout

Musa (2018), conducted a descriptive survey of co relational type among the tertiary institutions in the Sokoto metropolis which were made up of The Shehu Shagari College of Education, Sokoto State University and the Sokoto State Polytechnic. A total number of 300 participants were selected through random sampling technique, using the questionnaire as an instrument for data collection. This study was aimed at deciphering the relationship between drop out and human security, the findings of the research paper revealed that drop out in the Sokoto metropolis increases criminal behavior such as kidnapping, armed banditry, rape, political attacks, ritual killings among others bringing about insecurity of life and property. Owing to these empirical facts, they recommended that government should encourage entrepreneurship programs and make it compulsory for dropouts, and target schools especially tertiary institutions as the centre for human security. Latif, Choudhari and Hammayun (2015), conducted a comparative research on the economic effect of student drop out of schools for the purpose of exploring the causes and impact of student's drop out on the economic enterprises of the Pakistan students. They discovered that the Pakistan students, like any other student in any other part of the world, withdrew from school as a result of these reasons: financial challenges, distance, parent unwillingness, lack of basic facilities, low quality education, absence of enabling environment, overcrowding, insecurity etc. the effect of drop out was found to bedevil the economy and human freedom through posing threat to security of live and property as well as becoming a burden to the government. Amina (2014), carried out a qualitative study in the upper west region of Ghana with the aim of discovering the experiences of girls who dropped out of school in the region. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. Purposive sampling was used to draw sixty senior girls who dropped out of school in the region. Interview was the method that was used to collect data from the respondents who were recorded as they

attempted ten open questions in the process. The researcher and other trained personnels gathered these data in the course of five(5)weeks, and the data was analysed through descriptive analysis. The study found out that girls drop out of school as a result of poverty or pregnancy related cases due to either financial challenges or lack of proper guidance and counselling services which they were denied from the family that has shifted from the traditional extended family setting to the widely spread nuclear family system, and the society as a whole, especially for needy girls, who end up as single parents, victims of rape, prostitutes etc in a bid to survive. The researcher recommended that clubs be established in schools where students can engage in group discussions about their welfare, and that school conditions should be made more female-friendly, like appointing more female staffs and doing away with the physical punishments such as dismissals.

Factors that Cause Student's Drop out

Moore (2017), carried out a qualitative research on 15 volunteer respondents who were dropouts in Tennessee to find out the factors that were responsible for student's drop out, and factors that could have prevented them from leaving. Using 1 to 1 and semi-structured interview as a method of data collection, and follow up phone calls; using the descriptive method for the data collected, the factors identified as being responsible for the student's drop out include lack of credits, bullying, moving, language barrier among others, while the preventive measures include monitoring of progress earlier, academic support and a safe learning environment could help students avoid quitting before graduation. They recommended that educators should be more vigilant in identifying those students who are more at risk of dropping out and create a more accommodating learning environment for them like providing language instructors for those challenged with the language used in schools and so on, depending on the area of challenge faced by the student. Casonova (2018), carried out a research on 2,970 first year students in a public university in Northern Portugal using their academic achievements records of their first year on the factors that bring about persistence in dropout rate in the university using a decision tree technique. Using a classification tree analysis for the data gathered from the field, they concluded that students with higher academic achievements had higher chances of graduating, seeing those with lesser grades or within ranges lower than average as being at higher risk of dropping out. They recommended that the university management should secure a structure that will easily identify students perceived as being more at risk of dropping out through their academic records and admonish them through a more accommodating learning environment through measures such as improved lecturer-student interaction, proper enlightenment and counseling on the choices of courses to apply for etc. Arhipova (2013), carried out a research on first year students in the faculty of Engineering Sciences of Latvia University of Agriculture on the causes of the dropout in the faculty. Using the data set of 677 students from 5 faculties of the engineering sciences evaluating factors such as student's gender, secondary school grades that determines the priority of the program to be studied and the source of finance. Using the proportional hazard model of survival analysis, the study found out that poor secondary school knowledge and low motivation to study Engineering were the causes of dropout in the Engineering sciences of the University.

Kem (2018), carried out empirical analysis with 3-year balanced panel data from 2013-2015 which was gathered from Higher Education in Korea website using non-linear panel data models to identify possible factors that could be responsible for student's dropout in universities in South Korea. For the purpose of the study, 4 fundamental factors for

university education were selected which include student, faculty, resources and structural factors. The study found out that though sending students to graduate schools was very important but at the same time it could be more stressful for the students and could result in drop out, quality education represented as lectures from professor's tenure track were considered extra burden and therefore imposed stress on the students that made them to withdraw from the university,

That donations and projects in which professors could engage in that could yield financial resources for the university brought about diverted attention away from the students, and finally the size of the university in South Korea was a key determinant of student dropout; as smaller universities had insignificant number of dropout.

Factors that may Prevent Drop out

Ekaette, Emeneke and Agboola (2019), carried out a study on the effect of student's engagement in the university on student's retention on 3447 students in their first year in the University of Uyo in Akwa-Ibom state in Nigeria adopting a descriptive survey method of research design and a purposive sampling and the simple random sampling technique were used to select students at the faculty and departmental levels respectively. The documentary analysis check-list and the researcher developed questionnaire were used for data collection titled "Student's rate of retention", and "Student's engagement" respectively. The study found that students' engagements had huge influence in first year student's retention in the University of Uyo, Akwa-Ibom state, Nigeria; with particular reference to student's retention variable such as students' active learning, student-faculty interaction, teaching strategies and co-curricular activities. With references to the findings of this study, they recommended that teachers adopt better accommodating strategies in trying to impact and pass knowledge to students leaving no stone unturned, universities should encourage more co-curricular activities for students at both faculty and departmental levels, improvement of student-faculty interaction within the university and faculties should adopt active student learning practices to enable students active academic participation. Ogiri (2016), carried out a study to access the rate of drop out among students in Benue state, Nigeria. Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study population of 6167 drop out students and 400 drop out students were used as the sample size. Data collection was through class attendance register, students' personal records and 4rating structured questionnaire. The study found that there was positive relationship between school factors, teachers' factors, parent factors, and school location on the rate of drop out among secondary students of Benue state in Nigeria. The study recommended that government and stakeholders should organize orientation programs that will educate people more, especially parents on the importance of education, also in addition that government should organize workshop for principals and staffs of schools on how to encourage and maintain students enrolment in schools.

Review of Related Theories

In this study, various theories from Schultz and Becker, Pearson (2005) and Finn (1989) among others will be considered.

THE FINN'S Developmental Theory of School Drop out

This is a theory of school dropout propounded by Jeremy D. Finn (1989). This model explicitly adopts a developmental perspective on drop out. Finn's model highlights two long-term pathways that can lead to drop out and that are set in motion as soon as individuals are enrolled into the school system. The two pathways described by Finn are reminiscent of

Tinto's concepts of academic and social integration, although they are applied much earlier in students' schooling career. These models include:

The frustration-self-esteem model

The participation/identification model

In the first one, called the frustration-self-esteem pathway, early school failure leads to the internalization of a negative self-concept and then fuels frustration and rebellion in a cycle that ultimately results in further failure and drop out or dismissal from the school.

In other words, it argues that the Initial antecedent to school withdrawal is early *school failure*, which, In turn, leads to low *self-esteem* and then *problem behaviors*. Problem behaviors further erode school performance and, subsequently, self-esteem and behavior. Eventually, students either voluntarily quit school or are removed from school because of their problematic behavior. Finn also describes a second participation-identification pathway that does not necessarily start with early learning problems. Rather, it is launched when individuals are enrolled into school ill equipped to participate in classroom activities because of a lack of support and preparation at home. Because participation is suboptimal (for instance because of irregular attendance), the individual does not develop a sense of belonging in school, which further decreases participation. This negative feedback loop is thought to lead to lower engagement and achievement in school and ultimately result in drop out. In 1989, Finn introduced the theoretical model to describe the process of student identification with school. Finn distinguishes behavioural (participation) and emotional (identification) aspects. Participation consists, for instance, of active behaviour in the classroom and other learning processes, participation in extracurricular activities i.e. non-academic activities of the school, students' union government etc. Absenteeism is a negative form of participation. Identification consists of the feeling of belonging to a school and recognition of the value of education. Dropping out of school can be seen as a possible outcome of the process of participation and identification. In the case where there is little or no participation from the students in the activities associated with the school environment, there is apparently going to be unsuccessful school outcomes, which then leads to non-identification and finally to non-participation of the student who could now engage in physical withdrawal from school (Beekhoven & Dekkers, 2005). This model argues that there is both a *behavioral* and *emotional* component to the withdrawal process of the student.

In line with other developmental models of problematic outcomes in individuals, Finn notes that such long-term pathways of self-reinforcing transactional processes are not the only ones leading to dropout and that some individuals are up to a good start but encounter incidents along the way that cause them to withdraw, such as new obligations to work or to take care of family members or other external factors beyond the determinacy of the student where this theory was hinged. However, Finn does not explicitly integrate such precipitating factors in their theory or otherwise elaborate on their importance. Like Tinto and Wehlage, Finn recognizes that proximal events may be of consequence for some students, but they concentrate on the processes unfolding in the long term. This model identified some important factors that Influence student withdrawal from school, including attitudinal and behavioral factors, but the models do not specifically address features of schools that may directly Influence students' participation and Identification with school. This model only gives account for factors that are only students' related with regards to dropout, whereas there are other factors independent of the students behavior or attitude as some scholars

have identified in their various studies. Therefore, extrapolations to this theory state that it was only capable of narratives to the “pull factors” and not for “push factors”.

The Human Capital Theory

Schultz (1961) and Becker (1962) first developed human capital theory to account for increases in productivity that could not be explained by improvements in technology and financial capital. Since then, numerous other studies (Broomhall & Johnson, 1994; Goetz, 1993; Sander & Schaeffer, 1988; Smith, Beaulieu & Israel, 1992; Stallmann & Johnson, 1996) have used human capital theory to show the relationship between income and investment in education, or between employment and investment in education. Human capital refers to those individual skills, talents, capacities and elements of knowledge that improve one's contribution to the production of goods and services (Gebremedhin & Odell, 1996). The foundation of the human capital theory lies in the fact that people make investment on themselves in terms of education with the expectation of future returns (Blaug, 1976). The link between education as a form of human capital development and economic development rests on the theory that human capital investment improves the quality of the labour force, and thereby, the value of the labour input to the production process of the local economy (Welch, 1975). Human capital theory is based on a model of individual choice. Likewise, the economy is viewed as composed of families who make choices that shape their present consumption and future income (Gebremedhin & Odell, 1996). The decision at the core of human capital theory is whether to spend time and resources to obtain income in the present, and hence maximize current consumption, or instead to use one's time and resources in obtaining skills and thus maximize future consumption (Friedman, 1984). This is to say that if we place the individual choice on the state economy, then the human capital theory would be the choice of the state to invest in human capital, like investing in tangible forms of capital, such as buildings and industrial equipment which generates a stream of future goods.

According to Watchel (1984), an individual will invest in human capital through education as long as the expected stream of returns from the investment exceeds the cost incurred by making the investment. The prospects of having better job opportunities and of achieving improved lifetime earnings are major incentives for people to stay in school and invest more in education. Education contributes significantly to employment success, and those with education are both more likely to be employed and earn a higher income. On the other hand, if reverse is the case, as it is obtainable in the third world nations where there is little investment in the educational sector from the government and poor support/investment on education from even the immediate environment such as the family and other relations and little can be said about the reward as graduates and dropout are often standing the same chance of allocated resources due to the underdeveloped corrupt system, individuals are therefore discouraged from education, causing students to drop out of school as they are convinced in the thought that they will only be wasting their precious time in the classroom and would rather go out to the society to strive for survival with the graduates of tertiary institutions who in normal circumstances, ought to stand better chances of living a more comfortable life with a better paying job as they are supposed to be more marketable according to the human capital theorists.

Academic Mediation Theory

The Academic Mediation theory was developed by Battin-Pearson in 2000. It concentrates on explaining the connection between academic achievement and drop out of an educational facility, meaning, that the strongest predictor for students to drop out of school is a poor academic presentation, usually in form of standardized tests or grade point average (Pearson, 2000). Battin-Pearson uses other studies when formulating theories. In this specific theory he uses studies written by Harachi, Abbott, Catalano (1996); Maguin & Loeber (1996) and Hawkins, Catalano & Miller (1992). The main message from these studies, which was incorporated in this theory was school bonding. This school bonding is connected to students' presentation at school. Those who are engaged and have a motivation to succeed in school are doing better academically and less likely to quit school. This means, those who have a low academic achievement, probably have a low bonding to school and are more likely to drop out of a current education level (Pearson, 2000).

Poor Family Socialization Theory

This theory was developed in the year 2000, by Battin Pearson. It concentrates on family practices and expectations (Rumberger & Lim, 2008). According to Newcomb (1997), family is the earliest and the most important socialization institution for children and their development. Family support and bonding have a significant impact on persons' general deviance and on psychological distress (Newcomb, 1997). Family forms a foundation not just for the academic achievement of the individual and how well they do in school, but also make a basis for their future. Rumberger (1983), also argues that the family background has an important effect on the individual's school attendance and their tendency to drop out of school. Poverty is one of the main reasons why individuals feel the pressure to drop out of the school and contribute to the families' income (Rumberger 1983). Factors like parent divorce, family stress, parental behavioral control, also acceptance and even the parents' educational level have significant effects. Scholars like Dupere (2015), postulated that In studies of dropout, stress proliferation and configuration suggests, for instance, that parental divorce may be especially likely to curb school perseverance when it comes with other stressors, such as a significant loss of family income, parental substance abuse, residential mobility, and social isolation upon entering a new school. Parents' educational level sets their expectations for their children's' school performance (Battin-Pearson 2000). Rumberger (1983), also mentions as the factors for drop out the household conditions, family size, geographic location, marriage and childbirth are determinants for an individual's dropout.

Theoretical Orientation

The Human Capital Theory

This theory was first developed by Schultz and Becker in 1961 and 1962 respectively, to explain increases in productivity that were unexplainable by the improvement in technology and financial capital. Gebrimedhin and Odel (1996), defined Human capital as those individual skills, talents, capacities and elements of knowledge that improve one's contribution to the production of goods and services. Some experts have used human capital theory to show the relationship between income and investment in education, or between employment and investment in education, and they include:

Broomhall & Johnson, (1994); Goetz, (1993); Smith, Beaulieu and Israel (1992); Sander & Schaeffer (1988), Stallman & Johnson, (1996) among others. The foundation of the human capital theory lies in the fact that people make investment on themselves in terms of

education with the expectation of future returns (Blaug, 1976). The link between education as a form of human capital development and economic development rests on the theory that human capital investment improves the quality of the labour force, and thereby, the value of the labour input to the production process of the local economy (Welch, 1975). Human capital theory is based on a model of individual choice. Likewise, the economy is viewed as composed of families who make choices that shape their present consumption and future income (Gebremedhin and Odell, 1996). The decision at the core of human capital theory is whether to spend time and resources to obtain income in the present, and hence maximize current consumption, or instead to use one's time and resources in obtaining skills and thus maximize future consumption (Friedman, 1984). If we place the individual choice on the state economy, then the human capital theory would be the choice of the state to invest in human capital, like investing in tangible forms of capital, such as buildings and industrial equipment which generates a stream of future goods.

Education contributes significantly to employment success, and those with education are both more likely to be employed and earn a higher income. According to Findeis, Leif and Wan-Ling (1996) education is considered important for prospective employment now, more than ever before. Education provides an individual with social, academic, technological and economic foundations that enhance productivity and earnings (Gebremedhin & Odell, 1996; Weiss, 1995). On the other hand, according to researchers, failure to complete and pursue higher educational goals results in lower annual and lifetime earnings, higher unemployment rates, lower self-esteem and restricted life opportunities and scarce resources etc. According to Watchel (1984), an individual will invest in human capital through education as long as the expected stream of returns from the investment exceeds the cost incurred by making the investment. The prospects of having better job opportunities and of achieving improved lifetime earnings are major incentives for people to stay in school and invest more in education. Therefore, it suffices to opine that where the expected return or reward from investing in education does not exceed the cost, where a better standard of living, source of income and access to opportunities and other advantages associated with investing on education is unrealizable, withdrawing from school can be considered justifiable. Furthermore, being that survival is paramount, and education is conceived to have failed in ensuring survival of the individual, it will be discouraging and less prioritized, in other to survive, other options that will ensure survival are explored and in the process, dropout occurs. The human capital theory grips more of the reality in the western developed societies where there is much more focus and investment on education and with a minimal level of corruption, meritocracy is established and rewarded accordingly, and so therefore, education is prioritized good values such as hard work are upheld. But reverse is the case in the third world nations where corruption has ravaged the structure and cause a shift from good values of the society such as hard work, honesty, humility, and so on to laziness, pride, selfishness, heartlessness and what have you due to the undue allocation of scarce resources to individuals resulting from corruption. Where employment is not guaranteed to a graduate of higher institution due to lack of job opportunities, and the few job opportunities available within the society are not awarded to worthy or credible graduate of the society, but rather are victims of the manipulations of nepotism, bribery, influence peddling etc, thereby discouraging education as the due reward is being denied as postulated by the human capitalists. This is one of the major reasons youths, especially males, dropout of school to opt for other alternatives to survive and earn a living as education is not worth the time.

Furthermore, the theory emphasizes much on education as the source to achieving better standard of living and earning better income, whereas there are evidences of uneducated individuals who with their experience and focus have established themselves socio-economically through apprenticeship and other jobs, even to the level of employing the educated persons in the society.

Research Hypotheses

- (1) Younger undergraduate students are more likely to drop out of school than their older counterparts.
- (2) male undergraduate students are more likely to drop out of school than their female counterparts.
- (3) undergraduate students in their first and second year are more likely to drop out of school than those in their penultimate and final year.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A cross-sectional survey research design was applied in this study. This type of research design is used to draw inferences from the data collected from the target population's opinion on a given phenomenon, and usually a population of large number at a particular time. Hall (2008), describes cross-sectional design as a snapshot of the population about which they gather data. The quantitative method was adopted in identifying those factors that bring about increasing rate of dropout among undergraduates in University of Nigeria Nsukka.

Area of study

The University of Nigeria, Nsukka was the area of study. The University is located in Nsukka town, Nsukka local government in Enugu State of South-Eastern Nigeria. It was formally opened on the 7th of October 1960 and has a land mass of 871 hectares (2,150 acres) and is located on a hilly Savannah which enables it enjoy a healthy and pleasant climate.

Population of the study

UNN has a total number of 43,265 undergraduate students (UNN Academic Planning Unit, 2019). The research population consisted of the total population of 43,265 officially admitted undergraduate students of the institution with 23,887 female undergraduate and 19,378 male undergraduate students.

Sample size

The study had a sample size of 150 respondents. The study was made up of 150 students who were either regular students or students who had been on and off in their studies and had considered leaving school either temporarily or permanently, cutting across five(5) different faculties and their departments /Unit of the University.

The sample size formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N X (e)^2}$$

Where

n = Sample size

N = Definite population

e = Level of Significance or limit of tolerable error

1 = Unit (a constant)

The total population of undergraduates = 43,265 and (e) = 0.0815

$$\frac{43,265}{1 + 43,265 \times (0.0815)^2}$$

Convert to decimal fraction

$$\frac{43,265}{1 + 43,265 \times 0.00664}$$

$$= \frac{43,265}{288.28}$$

$$= \underline{150.07}$$

$$\approx \underline{150}$$

Sampling Technique

The research was carried out using the simple random sampling technique. The respondents were drawn from the undergraduate students of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, who had been active and inactive participants of the academic activities of the institution. Simple random sampling method was used in selecting the student's sex, active and inactive undergraduate students from chosen unit and departments from five (5) faculties of the University out of a possible nine (9) in the university with thirty (30) questionnaires each to be distributed among them, making a sum total of 150 questionnaires. These faculties include; the faculty of Arts, social sciences, education, physical sciences and the biological sciences. For the faculty of Education; political science education was chosen, for the Faculty of Arts; linguistics, for the Faculty of Social Sciences; Sociology and Anthropology, for Faculty of Physical Sciences; Physics and Astronomy, and for the Faculty of Biological sciences; Micro-biology. These faculties were selected basically on the ground that they paraded within their ranks fewer professional courses, and the unit and departments selected were non professional courses that are often perceived by the public as non-productive, and at the same time, were made up of more female undergraduate students than the male counterparts in terms of population that could make them parade more undergraduate male students who may find education unsatisfying, and so therefore suffices for the study. In the course of distribution of these thirty (30) questionnaires to each of these five (5) departments and unit, preference was given to the male undergraduate students more than their female counterparts regardless of the level or year, due to the variables such as sex, unemployment and crime such as cybercrime kidnapping that constitute the specific objectives for this study. These necessary considerations were geared towards achieving the public perception on the study and to cut across various categories of students and ensure proper justifiable representation of the population.

Instrument for data collection/Administration of instruments

In this study, the questionnaire was used as the major instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was divided into two different sections, namely; section 'A' which was made up of demographic details of the respondent, and Section 'B' was focusing on the tentative

issues of the study. In the course of administration of instruments, the services of a research assistant was employed. The research assistant was intimated with the necessary information regarding the study, including the variables to look out for. The questionnaire that was used to collect quantitative data was self-administered as the researcher along with the research assistant handed it out to the respondents having gotten such respondents' consent to partake in the research. The filled questionnaires were collected and cross checked by the researcher together with the research assistant for omissions. And when identified by the researcher or research assistant, the attention of the respondents were called for proper validation.

Methods of Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using the 'Statistical Package for the Social Sciences' (SPSS version 20). The Chi-square test was used to test the hypotheses which was finally used to either accept or reject the hypotheses.

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This chapter dealt with the presentation and analysis of data from the field work, and then discussion of findings. The analysis was based on the respondent's views from the questionnaires distributed. Out of 150 questionnaires that were distributed, 146 were validly filled and returned, giving a return rate of 97.3%.

4.1 Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

The socio-demographic data covered the respondents' age, sex, religion, marital status and level of education. The frequency distribution and sample of all the socio-demographic variables were presented below.

Table 1: Distribution of the respondents by age

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
16yrs-20yrs	45	30.8
21yrs-25yrs	82	56.2
26yrs-30yrs	18	12.3
31yrs-35yrs	1	0.7
Total	146	100.0

Source: *Field survey, 2021*

Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents according to age. Out of the four categories of the age groups given as options, respondents between the age interval of 16yrs-20yrs were 30.8%, those within the age interval of 21yrs-25yrs were 56.2%, those in the age interval of 26yrs-30yrs were 12.3%, while those from the age of 31yrs-35yrs were 0.7%. This revealed that the highest proportion of the respondents were between the age range of 21yrs-25yrs.

Table 2: Distribution of the respondents by sex

Sex	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	101	69.2
Female	45	30.8
Total	146	100.0

Source: *Field survey, 2021*

Table 2 shows the distribution of respondents by their sex. The response shows that 69.2% of the respondents were males, while 30.8% were females. This revealed that the highest proportion of the respondents were males.

Table 3: Distribution of the respondents by religion

Religious affiliation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Christianity	141	96.6
Islam	1	0.7
African Traditional Religion	4	2.7
Total	146	100.0

Source: *Field survey, 2021*

Table 3 shows the distribution of respondents by religious affiliation. The result shows that 96.6% of the respondents were Christians, 0.7% were Moslems, while 2.7% were African traditional religion worshippers. This revealed that the highest proportion of the respondents were Christians.

Table 4: Distribution of respondents by marital status

Marital status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Single	136	93.2
Married	7	4.8
Divorced	1	0.7
Separated	2	1.4
Total	146	100.0

Source: *Field survey, 2021*

Table 4 shows the percentage distribution of respondents by their marital status. The response shows that 93.2% of the respondents were single, 4.8% were married, 0.7% indicated they were divorced, while 1.4% indicated they were separated. This shows that majority of the respondents were single.

Table 5: Distribution of the respondents by study level

Study level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
100 level	39	26.7
200 level	24	16.4
300 level	28	19.2
400 level	55	37.7
Total	146	100.0

Source: *Field survey, 2021*

Table 5 shows the study level of the respondents. The data indicated that 26.7% of the respondents were in 100 level, 16.4% were in 200 level, 19.2% were in 300 level, while 37.7% were in 400 level of study. This revealed that majority of the respondents were in 400 level of study.

Tentative issues of the study

This section presents the results of data analysis concerning respondents' views on the factors that bring about increasing rate of dropout among undergraduates in University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

Table 6: Distribution of respondents by their views on factors that bring about increased rate of undergraduate dropout in Nigerian Universities

Factors that bring about increased rate of undergraduate dropout in Nigerian Universities	Frequency	Percentage (%)
ASUU strike	30	20.5
Financial constraint	68	46.6
Inability to adapt to the academic environment	20	13.7
Negative peer-group influence	9	6.2
Lack of interest	16	11.0
Others	3	2.1
Total	146	100.0

Source: *Field survey, 2021*

Table 6 shows the percentage distribution of respondents by their views on factors that bring about increased rate of undergraduate dropout in Nigerian Universities. The response shows that 20.5% of the respondents indicated ASUU strike, 46.6% indicated financial constraint, 13.7% indicated inability to adapt to the academic environment, while 6.2% and 11.0% of the respondents indicated negative peer-group influence and lack of interest respectively. Also, 2.1% of the respondents specified other options which include environmental factors such as COVID 19 pandemic, and also all of the above options as factors that bring about increased rate of undergraduate dropout in Nigerian Universities.

Table 7: Distribution of respondents by their views on factors within UNN that contribute to withdrawal rate of undergraduate students of the University

Factors within UNN that contribute to withdrawal rate of undergraduate students in the University	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Poor academic performance	39	26.7
Unfavourable academic calendar	39	26.7
Inconvenient time duration for examination	11	7.5
Inadequate learning facilities	39	26.7
Others	18	12.3
Total	146	100.0

Source: *Field survey, 2021*

Table 7 shows the percentage distribution of respondents by their views on factors within UNN that contribute to withdrawal rate of undergraduate students of the University. The response shows that 26.7% of the respondents indicated poor academic performance, while another 26.7% also indicated unfavourable academic calendar. The response further revealed that 7.5% indicated inconvenient time duration for examination, while 26.7% of the respondents also indicated inadequate learning facilities. Also, 12.3% of the respondents specified other options and most notable of these options specified include frustration, poor academic performance, failure due to exam time inconvenience, carefree attitude towards studies, ASUU strike and poor grades, and all of the above as factors within UNN that contribute to withdrawal rate of undergraduate students in the University. From the response, it could be deduced that majority of the respondents (26.7%) indicated that poor academic performance, unfavourable academic calendar, and inadequate learning facilities

respectively are the main factors within UNN that contribute to withdrawal rate of undergraduate students of the University.

Table 8: Distribution of respondents by their views on factors they consider to be contributory to students' decision to drop out

Contributory factors to students' decision to drop out of University	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Distance between school and place of residence	7	4.8
Unqualified teaching staff	30	20.5
Weak student union government (SUG)	18	12.3
High cost of living in the campus	79	54.1
Others	12	8.2
Total	146	100.0

Source: *Field survey, 2021*

Table 8 shows the percentage distribution of respondents by their views on factors they consider to be contributory to students' decision to drop out of school. The response shows that 4.8% of the respondents indicated distance between school and place of residence, 20.5% indicated unqualified teaching staff, 12.3% indicated weak student union government (SUG), 54.1% indicated high cost of living in the campus, while the remaining respondents (8.2%) specified other options which include lack of interest in education, interest in business, depression due to poor academic performance, poor management and terrible learning environment/poor administration as factors they consider to be contributory to students' decision to drop out of school. This shows that majority (54.1%) of the respondents indicated that high cost of living in the campus is the major factor they consider to be contributory to students' decision to drop out of school.

Table 9: Distribution of respondents by their views on the factor that influence students more to drop out, with peculiarity to UNN

Factors that influence students more to drop out, with peculiarity to UNN	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Poor hostel facilities	26	17.8
High school fees	58	39.7
Inconvenient time duration for exam, especially CBT	44	30.2
Weak student union government (SUG)	18	12.3
Total	146	100.0

Source: *Field survey, 2021*

Table 9 shows the percentage distribution of respondents by their views on the factors that influence students more to drop out, with peculiarity to UNN. The response shows that 17.8% of the respondents indicated poor hostel facilities, 39.7% indicated high school fees, 30.2% indicated inconvenient time duration for exam, especially CBT, while 12.3% indicated weak student union government (SUG). It can be deduced from the response that majority (39.7%) of the respondents indicated that high school fees is the factor that influence UNN students more to drop out from school.

Table 10: Distribution of respondents by their views on the external factors to school environment that could also result to students' loss of faith in school

External factors to school environment that could result to students' loss of faith in school	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Insecurity	36	24.7
Increasing rate of unemployment	73	50.0
Poor funding of educational institutions	6	4.1
Poverty	22	15.1
Disappointment with the social system	7	4.8
Others	2	1.4
Total	146	100.0

Source: *Field survey, 2021*

Table 10 shows the distribution of respondents by their views on the external factors to school environment that could also result to students' loss of faith in school. The response shows that 24.7% of the respondents indicated insecurity, 50.0% indicated increasing rate of unemployment, 4.1% indicated poor funding of educational institutions, while 15.1% and 4.8% of the respondents indicated poverty and disappointment with the social system respectively. Also, 1.4% of the respondents specified other options and they indicated that all the above options are the external factors to school environment that could result to students' loss of faith in school.

Table11: Distribution of respondents by their views on what they think is the most desired reason for investing in education in our society

Most desired reason for investing in education in our society	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Knowledge	58	39.7
Exposure	32	21.9
Gainful employment	34	23.3
Certificate	22	15.1
Total	146	100.0

Source: *Field survey, 2021*

Table 11 presents the respondents' views on what they think is the most desired reason for investing in education in our society. The response shows that 39.7% of the respondents indicated knowledge acquisition, 21.9% indicated exposure, 23.3% indicated for gainful employment, while 15.1% indicated for acquisition of certificate. From the analysis, it could be seen that majority (39.7%) of the respondents indicated that the most desired reason for investing in education in our society is for knowledge acquisition.

Table 12: Distribution of respondents by their views on the most likely investment unemployment in the Nigerian society will discourage

Most likely investment unemployment in the Nigerian society will discourage	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Investment in trade	30	20.5
Investment in education	99	67.8
Investment in sports	12	8.2
Others	5	3.4
Total	146	100.0

Source: *Field survey, 2021*

Table 12 shows the distribution of respondents by their opinion on the most likely investment unemployment in the Nigeria society will discourage. The response pattern shows that 20.5% of the respondents indicated investment in trade, 67.8% indicated investment in education, 8.2% indicated investment in sports, while 3.4% specified that all the above options are likely investments unemployment in the Nigeria society will discourage. From the response, it shows that majority (67.8%) of the respondents indicated that investment in education is the most likely investment unemployment in the Nigeria society will discourage.

Table 13: Distribution of respondents by their opinions on ways investment in education can mainly be encouraged

Ways of encouraging investment in education	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Security	18	12.3
Availability of job opportunities	89	61.0
Better standard of living	21	14.4
Under-funding of educational sector	8	5.5
Diversification of the economy	8	5.5
Others	2	1.4
Total	146	100.0

Source: *Field survey, 2021*

Table 13 shows the distribution of respondents by their opinions on ways investment in education can mainly be encouraged in Nigeria. the response shows that 12.3% of the respondents indicated through security, 61.0% indicated through availability of job opportunities, 14.4\$ indicated better standard of living, while 5.5% respectively of the respondents indicated by underfunding of education sector and through diversification of the economy respectively. The response further show that 1.4% of the respondents specified other options as ways investment in education can be encouraged, and the major reason given is the provision of better facilities, education curriculum and administration.

Table 14: Distribution of respondents by their views on the sexes more likely to drop out of school.

Sex more likely to drop out of school	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	133	91.1
Female	5	3.4
Don't know	8	5.5
Total	146	100.0

Source: *Field survey, 2021*

Table 14 presents the respondents' views on the sexes more likely to drop out of school. Data from the table shows that 91.1% of the respondents indicated that males are more likely to drop out of school, while 3.4% of the respondents indicated females. The response further showed that 5.5% of the respondents indicated that they do not know the sexes more likely to drop out of school.

Table 15: Distribution of respondents by their views on the sex that prefers making money other than going to school

Sex that prefers making money order than going to school	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	132	90.4
Female	5	3.4
Don't know	8	6.2
Total	146	100.0

Source: *Field survey, 2021*

Table 15 shows the percentage distribution of respondents by their views on the sex that prefers making money other than going to school. The response shows that 90.4% of the respondents indicated males, while 3.4% indicated females. Also, 6.2% of the respondents indicated that they don't know the sex that prefers making money other than going to school.

Table 16: Distribution of respondents by their views on the sex that make up more population of active students in the class

Sex that make up more population of active students in the class	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	36	24.7
Female	98	67.1
Don't know	12	8.2
Total	146	100.0

Source: *Field survey, 2021*

Table 16 shows the percentage distribution of respondents by their views on the sex that make up more population of active students in their class. The response shows that 24.7% of the respondents indicated that male students make up more population of active students in their class, 67.1% indicated female students, while 8.2% indicated that they do not know. From the response, it could be seen that 67.1% of the respondents indicated that females make up more population of active students in their class.

Table 17: Distribution of respondents by their views on the sexes they think record higher number of undergraduate drop out

Views on sexes that record higher number of undergraduate drop out	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Males	121	82.6
Females	14	9.6
Don't know	11	7.5
Total	146	100.0

Source: *Field survey, 2021*

Table 17 presents the respondents' views on the sexes they think record higher number of undergraduates drop out in school. The response shows that 82.6% of the respondents indicated male students, 9.6% indicated female students, while 7.5% of the respondents indicated that they do not know. This shows that majority (82.6%) of the respondents think male students record higher number of undergraduates drop out from school.

Table 18: Distribution of respondents by their views on activities they think undergraduate dropouts are likely to engage in after leaving school

Activities undergraduate dropouts are likely to engage in after school	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Apprenticeship	94	64.4
Criminal activities	30	20.5
Street begging	2	1.4
Music	12	8.2
Others	8	5.5
Total	146	100.0

Source: *Field survey, 2021*

Table 18 presents the respondents' views on activities they think undergraduate dropouts are likely to engage in after leaving school. The response shows that 64.4% of them indicated that they will engage in apprenticeship, 20.5% indicated they will engage in criminal activities, 1.4% indicated that they will engage in street begging, 8.2% indicated they will engage in music, while 5.5% specified other options such as involvement in many things, both positive and negative, involvement in business, involvement in digital skills and then involvement in yahoo-yahoo, prostitution and crypto trading. This shows that majority (64.4%) of the respondents indicated that they think undergraduate dropouts are likely to engage in apprenticeship after leaving school.

Table 19: Distribution of the respondents by their views on the criminal activities they think undergraduate dropouts consider more profitable

Views on criminal activities undergraduate dropouts consider more profitable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Kidnapping	11	7.5
Banditry	8	5.5
Political thuggery	15	10.3
Yahoo-yahoo	77	52.7
Yahoo plus	29	19.9
Others	6	4.1
Total	146	100.0

Source: *Field survey, 2021*

Table 19 shows the percentage distribution of respondents by their views on the criminal activities they think undergraduate dropouts consider more profitable. The response shows that 7.5% of the respondents indicated kidnapping, 5.5% indicated banditry, 10.3% indicated political thuggery, 52.7% indicated yahoo-yahoo, while 19.9% indicated yahoo plus. The response went further to reveal that 4.1% of the respondents specified other

options as criminal activities they think undergraduate dropouts consider more profitable, and prominent of these options were involvement in business, crypto currency trading, and disappointment in the options listed.

Table 20: Distribution of the respondents by their views on other criminal activities they think is currently a menace in the country

Other criminal activities currently a menace in the country	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Political thuggery	40	27.4
Banditry	37	25.3
Kidnapping	8	5.5
Yahoo-yahoo	57	39.0
Others	4	2.7
Total	146	100.0

Source: *Field survey, 2021*

Table 20 shows the percentage distribution of respondents by their views on other criminal activities they think is currently a menace in the country. The response shows that 27.4% indicated political thuggery, 25.3% indicated banditry, 5.5% indicated kidnapping, while 39.0% indicated yahoo-yahoo. Also, 2.7% specified other options which include that all the above options are other criminal activities they think is currently a menace in the country.

Table 21: Distribution of the respondents by their views on what they think is the most common reason for undergraduate dropouts to engage in the crime of mere kidnapping

Reason for undergraduate dropout engaging in crime of mere kidnapping	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Wealth accumulation	59	40.4
Alternative means of income due to unemployment	77	52.7
Revenge	8	5.5
Others	2	1.4
Total	146	100.0

Source: *Field survey, 2021*

Table 21 shows the percentage distribution of respondents by their views on what they think is the most common reason for undergraduate dropouts to engage in the crime of mere kidnapping. The response shows that 40.4% of the respondents indicated wealth accumulation, 52.7% indicated for alternative means of income due to unemployment, while 5.5% indicated for revenge. Also, 1.4% of the respondents specified other options which is that all the above options are the common reasons why undergraduate dropouts engage in the crime of mere kidnapping. From the response, it could be deduced that majority (40.4%) of the respondents indicated that wealth accumulation is the most common reason for undergraduate dropouts to engage in the crime of mere kidnapping.

Table 22: Distribution of the respondents by their views on what they think is most appropriate to combat the increase in the rate of undergraduate dropout in Nigerian Universities

Most appropriate measure to combat the increase in the rate of undergraduate dropout in Nigerian Universities	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Better hostel facilities	23	15.8
Affordable school fees	48	32.9
Favourable academic learning environment	35	24.0
Increased funding of Universities	11	7.5
Availability of employment opportunities after graduation	28	19.2
Others	1	0.7
Total	146	100.0

Source: *Field survey, 2021*

Table 22 shows the percentage distribution of respondents by their views on what they think is most appropriate to combat the increase in the rate of undergraduate dropout in Nigerian Universities. The response shows that 15.8% of the respondents indicated better hostel facilities, 32.9% indicated affordable school fees, 24.0% indicated favourable academic learning environment, 7.5% indicated increased funding of Universities, while 19.2% indicated availability of employment opportunities after graduation. Also, 0.7% of the respondents specified other options, and it suggests that there should be trust in the economic system in all manner of ways. This shows that majority of the respondents (32.9%) suggested that affordable school fees is the most appropriate way of combating increase in the rate of undergraduate dropout in Nigeria Universities.

Table 23: Distribution of respondents by their views on the most effective measure of reducing withdrawal rate of undergraduates in Nigerian Universities external to the University

Most effective measure of reducing withdrawal rate of undergraduates in Nigeria Universities	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Increased budget for the educational sector	38	26.0
Creation of better and accommodating employment opportunities	84	57.5
Payment of salaries and other incentives to staff	12	8.2
Avoidance of strike actions by staff of the Universities by meeting stipulated agreements	11	7.5
Others	1	0.7
Total	146	100.0

Source: *Field survey, 2021*

Table 23 shows the percentage distribution of respondents by their views on the most effective measure of reducing withdrawal rate of undergraduates in Nigerian Universities external to the University. The response shows that 26.0% indicated increased budget for the educational sector, 57.5% indicated creation of better and accommodating employment

opportunities, 8.2% indicated payment of salaries and other incentives to staff, while 7.5% indicated avoidance of strike actions by staff of the Universities by meeting stipulated agreements. Furthermore, 0.7% of the respondents specified that payment of staff and update of school curriculum and equipment are effective ways of reducing withdrawal rate of undergraduates in Nigerian Universities. This shows that majority (57.5%) of the respondents indicated that creation of better and accommodating employment opportunities is the most effective measure of reducing withdrawal rate of undergraduates in Nigeria Universities external to the University.

Table 24: Distribution of the respondents by their views on what they think can be the most effective measure of reducing dropout rate among undergraduates within UNN

Effective measures of reducing dropout rate among undergraduates within UNN	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Favourable academic calendar	53	36.3
Reduced and affordable school fees	42	28.8
Improved hostel facilities	12	8.2
Better academic learning environment	34	23.3
Convenient time duration for CBT exams	5	3.4
Total	146	100.0

Source: *Field survey, 2021*

Table 24 shows the percentage distribution of respondents by their views on what they think can be the most effective measure of reducing dropout rate among undergraduates within UNN. The response shows that 26.3% indicated favourable academic calendar, 28.8% indicated reduced and affordable school fees, 8.2% indicated improved hostel facilities, 23.3% indicated better academic learning environment, while 3.4% indicated convenient time duration for CBT exams. This shows that majority of the respondents indicated that reduced and affordable school fees is the most effective measure of reducing dropout rate among undergraduates within UNN.

Table 25: Distribution of the respondents by their views on other options they consider encouraging to students' academic pursuit

Other options considered encouraging to students' academic pursuit	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Award of scholarship	87	59.6
Introduction of E-learning	7	4.8
Increased value and preference for education in the society	24	16.4
Adoption of more practical approaches to studies rather than all theoretical	28	19.2
Total	146	100.0

Source: *Field survey, 2021*

Table 25 shows the percentage distribution of respondents by their views on other options they consider encouraging to students' academic pursuit. The response shows that 59.6% of the respondents indicated award of scholarship, 4.8% indicated introduction of E-learning, 16.4% indicated increased value and preference for education in the society, while 19.2% indicated adoption of more practical approaches to studies rather than all theoretical. From

the above response, it could be deduced that majority (59.6%) of the respondents indicated that award of scholarship is the other option they consider encouraging to students' academic pursuit.

Test of Hypotheses

In this section, the hypotheses postulated in this study are tested at .05 level of significance using chi-square (χ^2).

Hypothesis one

Substantive hypothesis: Younger undergraduate students are more likely to drop out of school than their older counterparts.

Null hypothesis: Younger undergraduate students are less likely to drop out of school than their older counterparts.

In testing this hypothesis, the age range of respondents were regrouped as younger undergraduate students (16-20years and 21-25years) and older undergraduate students (26-30years and 31years and above)

Table 26: Crosstab of age and category of students likely to drop out of school

Category of students more likely to drop out of school	Age Total	Younger (16yrs-20yrs & 21yrs-25yrs)	Older (26yrs-30yrs & 31yrs and above)	Total
Male	116 (79.5%)	17 (11.6%)	133 (91.1%)	
Female	4 (2.8%)	1 (0.6%)	5 (3.4%)	
Don't know	7 (4.7%)	1 (0.8%)	8 (5.5%)	
Total	127 (87.0%)	19 (13.0%)	146 (100.0%)	

$\chi^2 = 0.720$; df = 2, p = .994

Tabulated $\chi^2 = 5.991$

Source: *Field survey, 2021*

To test hypothesis one, respondents' age was cross tabulated with category of students more likely to drop out of school in. The response shows that of the respondents who answered that males are more likely to drop out of school, 79.5% of them were younger undergraduates and 11.6% were older undergraduate students, while of those who indicated that female students are more likely to drop out of school, 2.8% of them were younger undergraduate students and 0.6% were older undergraduate students. Also, of those who indicated that they don't know the sexes of students more likely to drop out of school, 4.7% of them were younger undergraduate students and 0.8% were older undergraduate students. With the χ^2 value = 0.720; df = 2, and at p = .994 level of significance, the test shows that there is no statistically significant relationship between age and category of undergraduates likely to drop out of school. As a result, the null hypothesis which states that younger undergraduate students are less likely to drop out of school than their older counterparts is hereby accepted, while the substantive hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis two

Substantive hypothesis: Male undergraduate students are more likely to drop out of school than their female counterparts

Null hypothesis: Male undergraduate students are less likely to drop out of school than their female counterparts

Table 27: Crosstab of gender and category of students likely to drop out of school

Category of students more likely to drop out of school	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
Male	95 (65.1%)	38 (26.0%)	133 (91.1%)
Female	1 (0.7%)	4 (2.7%)	5 (3.4%)
Don't know	5 (3.4%)	3 (2.1%)	8 (5.5%)
Total	101 (69.2%)	45 (30.8%)	146 (100.0%)

$\chi^2 = 6.155$; df = 2, p = .046

Tabulated $\chi^2 = 5.991$

Source: *Field survey, 2021*

To test hypothesis two, respondents' gender was cross tabulated with category of students more likely to drop out of school. The response shows that of the respondents who answered that males are more likely to drop out of school, 65.1% of them were male undergraduates and 26.0% were female undergraduate students, while of those who indicated that female students are more likely to drop out of school, 0.7% of them were male undergraduate students and 2.7% were female undergraduate students. Also, of those who indicated that they don't know the sexes of students more likely to drop out of school, 3.4% of them were male undergraduate students and 2.1% were female undergraduate students. With the χ^2 value = 6.155; df = 2, and at p = .046 level of significance, the test shows that there is a statistically significant relationship between gender of students and category of students more likely to drop out of school. As a result, the substantive hypothesis which states that male undergraduate students are more likely to drop out of school than their female counterparts is hereby accepted, while the null hypothesis is hereby rejected.

Hypothesis three

Substantive hypothesis: Undergraduate students who are in their first and second year of study are more likely to drop out of school than those in their penultimate and final years.

Null hypothesis: Undergraduate students who are in their first and second year of study are less likely to drop out of school than those in their penultimate and final years.

Table 28: Crosstab of year of study and category of students likely to drop out of school

Category of students more likely to drop out of school	Year of study				Total
	100 level	200 level	300 level	400 level	
Male	37 (25.3%)	21(14.4%)	28(19.2%)	47(32.3%)	133 (91.1%)
Female	1 (0.7%)	1(0.7%)	0 (0.0%)	3(2.0%)	5 (3.4%)
Don't know	1 (0.7%)	2(1.4%)	0 (0.0%)	5(3.4%)	8 (5.5%)
Total	39(26.7%)	24(16.4%)	28(19.2%)	55(37.7%)	146 (100.0%)

$\chi^2 = 6.080$; df = 6, p = .414

Tabulated $\chi^2 = 12.592$

Source: *Field survey, 2021*

To test hypothesis three, respondents' year of study was cross tabulated with category of students more likely to drop out of school. The result revealed that of the respondents who indicated that male undergraduate students are more likely to drop out of school, 25.3% of them were in 100 level, 14.4% were in 200 level, 19.2% were 300 level students and 32.3% were 400 level students, while of those who indicated that female undergraduate students are

more likely to drop out of school, 0.7% of them were younger in 100 level of study, 0.7% were in 200 level of study, none was in 300 level of study and 2.0% were in 400 level of study. Also, of those who indicated that they don't know the category of students according to sex that is more likely to drop out of school, 0.7% of them were in 100 level of study, 1.4% were in 200 level of study, none was in 300 level of study while 3.4% were in 400 level of study. With the χ^2 value = 6.080; df = 6, and at $p = .414$ level of significance, the test shows that there is no statistically significant relationship between level of study of undergraduate students and category of students more likely to drop out of school. As a result, the substantive hypothesis is rejected while the null hypothesis which states that undergraduate students who are in their first and second year of study are less likely to drop out of school than those in their penultimate and final years is hereby accepted.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study focussed on those factors that could bring about the increase in the rate of drop out among undergraduate students in the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. It took into cognisance variables such as, age, unemployment, crimes such as kidnapping, and sex with the role they play in determining or influencing students decision to withdraw from school, causes of students dropping out of school that are both internal and external to the student and the University, as well as corrective measures that could be adopted in order to mitigate the increasing rate of undergraduate drop out. The study to a large extent determined that financial constraints is one of the major reasons why undergraduate students duck out of school, that the major motivation for investing in education was to attain gainful employment, and in terms of considering the alternative options to education mostly considered by these undergraduate dropouts, apart from crime being acknowledged as an option, the most options indicated was apprenticeship, The study also found out that age and level of study had no significant effect in influencing the decision of undergraduate students who drop out of the University.

Firstly, regarding factors that bring about increase in the rate of undergraduate dropout in the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, the study found out that 46.6% of the respondent were of the opinion that financial constraint is usually the major reason for the increase in the rate of undergraduate dropout. This is evident in the postulations of Owusu et al. (2015), stating that many of the young people used to be brilliant students when they were in school but financial constraints among others compel them to duck out schooling and get themselves involved in social vices. In addition to this, were the findings made by Latif et al. (2015), which were based on the study conducted on the causes of drop out among Pakistan students and the economic effect it had on them. they identified financial constraints as one of the reasons for students dropping out of school alongside distance between place of residence and location of school, parent unwillingness, lack of basic facilities, low quality education, absence of enabling environment, overcrowding, insecurity etc. 26.7% indicated that poor academic performance, unfavourable academic calendar, and inadequate learning facilities respectively are the main factors within UNN that contribute to withdrawal rate of undergraduate students of the University. On the other hand, Lanham (1999), was cited in Latif et al. (2015), postulating that a study on USA identified that many student dropped out of their school because students found their classes boring, absence from school for long time and unable to manage their work, consuming time with those who are not interested in studies, unnecessary freedom to do everything and failure in class were the main reasons for which student left their school during their education. Also Owusu et al. (2015), in their

conceptualization of the term 'involuntary drop out', gave a contrary view on the causes of drop out, stated that it occurs as a result of personal crisis. 54.1% of the respondents indicated that high cost of living in the campus is a major reason why the rate of undergraduate student's drop out is on the increase. 39.7% of the respondents indicated that high school fees is a major contributor to the increasing rate of undergraduate dropout within the University. Giving a different opinion on the causes of undergraduate drop out, Casonova (2018), after carrying out their study on the factors that brought about persistent increase in the rate of drop out students in the University of Northern Portugal, found that students with higher academic achievements had higher chances of graduating, seeing those with lesser grades or within ranges lower than average as being at higher risk of dropping out

Secondly, with regards to those external factors to the school environment such as unemployment that could be contributing to the increasing rate of undergraduate dropout, 50.0 % of the respondents indicated that the major reason for the increase in the rate of dropout external to the school environment is the increasing rate of unemployment. According to this finding is the position of Casalone (2018), stating that unemployment in the labour force of a state has direct negative influence on student academic achievement and abate drop out. 39.7% of the respondents indicated that the major reason for investing in education is for knowledge acquisition. This is opposed to the view of DE Sousa and Jebrmedhin (1999), in their contributions to the human capitalist theorising, stated that the prospects of having better job opportunities and of achieving improved lifetime earnings are major incentives for people to stay in school and invest more in education. 67.8% of the respondents indicated that the most likely investment unemployment will discourage is investment in education. This is supported by the position of Adekola (2016), stating that youths would prefer to invest in criminal activities as they appear to be more attractive after years of joblessness and frustration. They further added, citing Njoku and Ihugba (2011), stating that unemployment leads to low GDP and increase in crime rate and violence resulting to political instability. 61.0% of the respondents indicated that the ways in which investment in education can be encouraged is through availability of job opportunities.

Thirdly, with reference to the sex most likely to drop out of school, i.e between the male and female students; 91.1% of the respondents indicated that male undergraduate students are most likely to drop out of school. the contributions of Agu et al. (2010), in the area of student's connectedness to the school environment, cited Whitlock (2003), stating that researches on students connectedness to their school environment on the bases of gender comparison, have been inconsistent in their findings, making references to studies such as those of Bonney et al. (2000) and Summers et al. (2007) among others that produced conflicting findings on the gender more connected to their school environment and less at risk to drop out. 90.4% of the respondents indicated that males prefer making money over than going to school. This is supported in the statistical record provided by Oddin (2019) which was addressing the sex with the higher record of unemployment, stating that females had the highest rate of unemployment than males who were more engaged with work in order to survive and acquire wealth, with ratio of 24.9% to 17.7%. 67.1% of the respondents indicated that female undergraduate students make up more of the population of active students within the class. This is in contrast to the views of Skjortnes and Zachariassen (2010) as cited by Amina (2014), stating that some school curriculums are not favourable for the girls; where at the school level, the girls are made to believe that some field of study are meant only for the boys which is indicative of discrimination. 82.6% of the respondents

indicated that males record more higher number of undergraduate dropout. However, this is contrary to the position of Smith et al (2012) and Alike and Egbochukwu (2009) on the solutions to the phenomenon of girls dropping out, stating that more girls abandon their education as a result of various reasons rooted in culture and gender against women and girls.

Fourthly, regarding those activities undergraduate students engage in after dropping out of school; 64.4% of the respondents indicated that undergraduate students who dropped out of school engage in apprenticeship, this is in line with the position of De witte (2017), stating that employment and apprenticeship opportunities could act as powerful pull factors that could stimulate students to duck out of school. On the other hand, Musa (2018), stated from his findings on a research in northern Nigeria that the increase in dropout rate in the tertiary institutions in Sokoto state brought about rapid increase in deviant behaviors and crime such as armed banditry, rape, kidnapping, political killings, terrorism amongst others, inferring that these social vices were alternative options engaged in by these school dropouts. Also in line with this, were the views of Hunt (2007), stating that some find themselves in prostitution, drug selling, smuggling, robbery and even practicing occultism and blood money in order to earn a living. 52.7% of the respondents indicated that undergraduate drop out students consider Yahoo-yahoo to be more profitable. This was acknowledged by Oddin (2019) in their contributions to the issue of youth unemployment, stating that youths have shifted their attention to cybercrime popularly known as 419. 39.7% of the respondents considered that Yahoo-yahoo to be a crime that is currently a menace in the country, 52.7% of the respondents indicated that the reason why undergraduate dropouts engage in crime such as mere kidnapping is that they see it as an alternative means of income due to unemployment. This is also supported by Nwambam and Ezech (2017), stating that unavailability of job opportunities has justified what is currently happening in Nigeria today, which ranges from militancy, insurgency, kidnapping to robbery which were mostly traceable to unemployed youths.

Finally, on the most appropriate measure to combat the increase in the rate of undergraduate drop out; 32.9% of the respondents indicated that affordable school fees is the most appropriate measure to combat the rate of the increase in undergraduate drop out in Nigerian Universities. On the other hand, Moore (2017), emphasises on the role of school leaders, lecturers, administrators in curbing the drop out rate of students. They stated that to monitor prevention intervention efforts, school leaders must provide adequate resources, research based training, technical support, and current student driven data. 57.5 of the respondents indicated that creation of better and accommodating employment opportunities is the most appropriate measure of reducing the withdrawal rate of undergraduate students in the University with reference to external factors to the University, 28.8% of the respondents indicated that reduced and affordable school fees is the most effective measure to reduce the withdrawal rate of undergraduate students in the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. This view is antithetical to the contributions of many other scholars such as Staiculescu et al. (2018), Renuka (2013), Cabrera et al. (2006), who identified the types of interventions that Universities could adopt. They include: efforts to promote social and institutional adaptation that tries to promote the social life of the students' body with programs aimed at organizing recreational and cultural events, efforts to recruit students, University guidance programs i.e. through University tutors, programs that provide pre-University information and guidance on University specialties, programs that provide

counseling and support to the student, especially providing training in learning and psychological support strategies, among others. 59.6% of the respondents indicated that awarding of scholarships is a factor that could be encouraging to student's academic pursuit. Ekaette et al. (2019), gave a divergent view on factors that could encourage student's retention stating that lecturers adopt better accommodating strategies in trying to impact and pass knowledge to students leaving no stone unturned, adding that Universities should encourage more co-curricular activities for students at both faculty and departmental levels, improvement of student-faculty interaction within the university and that faculties should adopt active student learning practices to enable students active academic participation.

With the χ^2 value = 0.720; df = 2, and at p = .994 level of significance, the test shows that there is no statistical significant relationship between age and category of undergraduates likely to drop out of school. As a result, the null hypothesis which states that younger undergraduate students are less likely to drop out of school than their older counterparts is hereby accepted, while the substantive hypothesis is rejected.

With the χ^2 value = 6.155; df = 2, and at p = .046 level of significance, the test shows that there is a statistically significant relationship between gender of students and category of students more likely to drop out of school. As a result, the substantive hypothesis which states that male undergraduate students are more likely to drop out of school than their female counterparts is hereby accepted, while the null hypothesis is hereby rejected.

With the χ^2 value = 6.080; df = 6, and at p = .414 level of significance, the test shows that there is no statistically significant relationship between level of study of undergraduate students and category of students more likely to drop out of school. As a result, the substantive hypothesis is rejected while the null hypothesis which states that undergraduate students who are in their first and second year of study are less likely to drop out of school than those in their penultimate and final years is hereby accepted.

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Summary of Findings

In the course of this research, the following were the findings made which were duly extrapolated from the necessary respondents for this study, and constitute the thrust of this work. The research found out that one of the major reasons for the increase in the rate of undergraduate drop out is financial constraints met with by the students in the course of their study, with peculiarity to the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, it was identified that poor academic performance, unfavourable academic calendar, high cost of living within the campus, high school fees, as well as inadequate learning facilities were contributory factors to the problem of drop out among undergraduate students. The research was also able to establish that the increasing rate of unemployment has a role it plays in the students decision to duck out of school, as most students consider the availability of gainful job opportunities as a major driving force to academic achievement. Although the study was also able to identify that the major reason for investing in education was to achieve gainful employment that will ensure better life opportunities, it was also acknowledged that knowledge acquisition is also a reason. The study was also able to determine that the male undergraduate students were more at risk of dropping out of school due to factors such as socio-economic pressure with a large margin emphasizing that males make up the higher number of the population of undergraduate drop out, and at the same time attesting to the

female undergraduate students making up the higher population in terms of active participation in class.

Furthermore, it was found out that most undergraduate students who dropped out of school engaged in activities such as apprenticeship, and in terms of crime, the most practiced is cybercrime also known as Yahoo-yahoo and kidnapping to some extent. It was identified that these involvement in such criminal activities was only for the sake of survival and wealth accumulation since there are no available gainful job opportunities. According to the study, which identified financial constraints as a major factor for students reason to withdraw from school, in reducing the phenomenon of drop out among undergraduate students, the research was able to identify affordable school fees, awarding of scholarships and creation of better and accommodating job opportunities as incentives for student retention in the Universities. Based on the findings of hypothesis 1, which sort to find out if age has any influence on the tendency for students to drop out of school by hypothesizing that younger undergraduate students are most likely to drop out of school than their older counterparts. The test shows that there is no statistical significant relationship between age and category of undergraduates likely to drop out of school. As a result, the substantive hypothesis was rejected. Based on the findings found in hypothesis 2 which was aimed at identifying the role of sex in determining the rate of dropout by hypothesizing that male undergraduate students are most likely to drop out of school than their female counterparts. The test shows that there is a statistically significant relationship between gender of students and category of students more likely to drop out of school. As a result, the substantive hypothesis which states that male undergraduate students are more likely to drop out of school than their female counterparts is hereby accepted.

Based on the findings made on hypotheses 3 which was geared towards establishing a relationship between level of study and dropout rate by hypothesizing that undergraduate students in their first and second year were most likely to drop out of school than those in their penultimate and final year. The test shows that there is no statistically significant relationship between level of study of undergraduate students and category of students more likely to drop out of school in order to hustle. As a result, the substantive hypothesis was rejected.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher recommends that various measures be adopted and implemented to mitigate, curtail and minimise the rate of undergraduate drop out within the University. This involves both internal and external approaches to the individual and the University. To this end, a structural approach within the society be introduced to re-orientate the public on the advantages of acquiring University education. This can be achieved by making to a large extent the cost of schooling in form of fees, cost of living and other forms of expenditure to be met with by these students affordable, and through visible system of reward or appreciation which could be in form of gainful employment as duely merited and scholarship which could also be in form of further studies within or outside the country, financial or otherwise that could bring about the reconfiguration of the mindset of youths towards education, as well as that of the parents/guardians towards investment in education. This will not only re-ignite the faith in education but foster increased revenue investment in education and at the same time discouraging engagement in social vices and criminal behaviour widely practised by youths of nowadays. One recommendable approach to

implementing these measures should be a form of public showcasing and celebration of individuals who have achieved any form of academic success within the educational sector. For instance, being presented with an attractive reward that could be perceived by the public as really being worthwhile; or in other words, shift the attention in form of sponsorship, support, awards etc allocated to the entertainment industry today by both government and non-government organizations or private individuals to academic achievements of youths in order to drift their attention towards it, bringing to realization the ideas of the human capitalists. With this approach of implementation, individuals who will be publicly appreciated by well known organizations, companies or private individuals would now be seen as role models to the young upcoming youths in the long run, as they are identified as the future of tomorrow. Finally, the researcher also advocates for proper structuring of the academic calendar of University institutions that could aid students thrive in their academic pursuit, and also putting in place other necessary structures within the University environment, using them to serve as replacement for those that have caused more harm than good to the students learning habit. For instance, in the case of financial constraints, the University could provide platforms through which such financially challenged students could be sponsored, and in doing this, create adequate means of awareness to the University environment about such available opportunities for such students.

Limitations of the Study

On the actual completion of this research, just as expected in every study, some challenges were met with by the researcher who proffered other alternative means of resolving them so as to ensure additional knowledge to the already existing literatures on the phenomenon of drop out. Although the study accomplished its objectives, the following limitations were identified in the course of the research. A major identifiable limitation in the course of the study was the inability of respondents to completely and appropriately fill the questionnaires presented to them at first. Some of them attempted to reluctantly fill the instrument hastily providing the excuse that they were reading for their examination, which was also evident in the fact that as at the time these questionnaires were initially scheduled to be shared to these respondents, they were actually preparing for their semester examination. Furthermore, some qualified respondents were unreachable within the time frame for the fieldwork due to the period of examination that saw most students not coming around the academic environment as they spent their time in their place of domicile and library where they prepared for their examination. On this note, we opted for a later date within the week considered more comfortable for the respondents based on inquiries made, and response given to that effect. In addition to this, was an unfavourable weather condition which was characterized mainly with heavy down pour that affected the administration and collection of the instrument as it resulted into an extension of allocated time and days initially scheduled for the fieldwork, to enable access to the target population and effective data administration and collection.

Finally, the research adopted the quantitative method which also could not identify and include actual University Dropouts in its target population, but rather constituted a study that was based on public perception about the phenomenon that also provided data necessary enough for the research.

CONCLUSION

The incident of drop out among not just undergraduate students of Universities but also secondary schools down to primary school level has recorded an increase overtime in third world nations, especially in sub Sahara Africa even though it is a global phenomenon, and therefore requires immediate attention of all involved parties for its address. This study was hinged on factors that brought about the increasing rate of undergraduate Dropouts in Universities in relation to the increasing rate of unemployment within the country Nigeria, as well as its connection with the crime rate which has escalated in recent times. In the bid to identify these major factors and their effect to the increase in the rate of drop out, the study also focussed on the age, level of study and sex that stands the higher risk of withdrawing from the University, identified some of those factors that could be within the University environment and proffered some workable measures that could be adopted and if effectively implemented, could see to the reduction in the dropout rate. The study was able to find out that financial constraints was one of the major factor responsible for students withdrawal from school, that there is no significant relationship between the age and level of study and the decision of students to duck out of school, that the driving force or motivation for students to invest in education was majorly for gainful job employment, and on the bases that this was not visible, other options were considered attractive such as enrolment for apprenticeship, engagement in criminal activities such as Yahoo-yahoo in order to survive and make a living. This was also backed by the finding that males make up for the larger number of undergraduate drop out within the University, and that affordability of fees as well as other expenditures to be met with by students in the University and availability of incentives such as scholarships and creation of job opportunities would go a long way in putting the increase in the rate of undergraduate drop out in check.

Suggestions for further studies

The researcher recommends that more research should be made on this topic but this time, accommodating more higher institutions cutting across various regions of the Nigerian society adopting both the quantitative and qualitative methods which will involve face to face interview with identified former undergraduate students if possible, who dropped out of school, and also importantly, a study on the factors that bring about increase in rate of dropout amongst undergraduate students in relation to the inconsistencies associated with the academic calendar of the University as a result of the seemingly unending disagreement between Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and the Federal Government of Nigeria, a more established comparative study of the rate of undergraduate drop out between the male and female sexes in Nigerian higher institutions, and finally, a public perception on the societal value on educational achievement in terms of socio-economic rewards.

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APPENDIX QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION A: Socio-Demographics

Instruction: please tick (√) the appropriate options in this section as it applies to you.

Age:

- a. 16yrs-20yrs { }
- b. 21yrs-25yrs { }
- c. 26yrs-30yrs { }
- d. 31yrs-35yrs { }
- e. 36yrs and above { }

Sex:

- a. Male { }
- b. Female { }
- c. Others specify---

Religion:

- a. Christianity { }
- b. Islam { }
- c. African traditional religion (ATR) { }
- d. Others specify -----

Marital status:

- a. Single { }
- b. Married { }
- c. Divorced { }
- d. Separated { }
- e. Widowed { }

5) Study level:

- a. 100 level { }
- b. 200 level { }
- c. 300 level { }
- d. 400 level { }

SECTION B: Tentative Issues of the Study

Instruction: please tick (√) at the options as applicable to you (you are allowed to tick more than one option)

6) In general, which of the following factors do you think brings about increased rate of undergraduate dropout in Nigerian Universities?

- a. ASUU strike { }
- b. Financial constraints { }
- c. Inability to adapt to the academic environment { }
- d. Negative peer-group influence { }
- e. Lack of interest { }
- f. Others (specify)...

7) Which of these factors within UNN do you think contributes to the withdrawal rate of undergraduate students of the University?

- a. Poor accommodation facilities { }

- b. Unfavourable academic calendar { }
 - c. Inconvenient time duration for examinations { }
 - d. Inadequate learning facilities { }
 - e. Others specify
- 8) Which of these other factors do you also consider to be contributory to student's decision to drop out?
- a. Distance between school and place of residence { }
 - b. Unqualified teaching staff { }
 - c. Weak student union government (SUG){ }
 - d. High cost of living in the campus { }
 - e. others specify_____
- 9) With peculiarity to UNN, which of the following factors influences students more to drop out?
- a. Poor hostel facilities { }
 - b. Unfavourable academic calendar { }
 - c. High school fees { }
 - d. Inconvenient time duration for exams, especially CBT
 - e) Weak student union government (SUG).
- 10) What do you think are those factors external to the school environment that could also result to student's loss of faith in schooling?
- a. Insecurity { }
 - b. Increasing rate of unemployment { }
 - c. Poor funding of educational institutions { }
 - d. Poverty { }
 - e. Disappointment with the social system { }
 - f. Others specify_____
- 11) Which of the following do you think is the most desired reason for investing in education in our society?
- a. Knowledge { }
 - b. Exposure { }
 - c. Gainful employment { }
 - d. Certificate { }
 - e. Others specify_____
- 12) What is the most likely investment will unemployment in the society (Nigeria) discourage?
- A. Investment in trade { }
 - b. Investment in education { }
 - c. Investment in sports { }
 - e. Investment in politics { }.
 - f. Others specify
- 13) What do you think that investment in education can mainly be encouraged by?
- a. Security { }
 - b. Availability of job opportunities { }
 - c. Better standard of living { }
 - d. Under-funding of the educational sector { }
 - e. Diversification of the economy { }.
 - f. Others specify.....
- 14) Which between the both sexes is more likely to drop out of school in order to hussel?

- a. Male { }
 - b. Female { }
 - c. Don't know { }
- 15) Which between the both sexes will prefer making money other than going to school?
- a. Male { }
 - b. Female { }
 - c. don't know { }
- 16) Which between these sexes makes up more of the population of active students in your class currently?
- a. Male { }
 - b. Female { }
 - c. Don't know
- 17) Which of these sexes do you think records higher number of undergraduate drop out?
- a. Male { }
 - b. Female { }
 - c. Don't know { }
- 18) Which of these activities do you think undergraduate dropouts are likely to engage in after leaving school?
- a. Apprenticeship { }
 - b. Criminal activities { }
 - c. Street begging { }
 - d. Music { }
 - e. Others specify _____
- 19) Which among these criminal activities do you think undergraduate dropouts consider more profitable?
- A. Kidnapping { }
 - b. Banditry { }
 - c. Political thugry{ }
 - d. Yahoo-yahoo { }
 - e. Yahoo plus { }
 - f. Others specify _____
- 20) Which criminal activities do you think currently a menace in the country?
- A. Political thugry{ }
 - b. Banditry { }
 - c. Kidnapping { }
 - d. Yahoo-yahoo { }
 - e. Others specify _____
- 21) What do you think is the most common reason for undergraduate dropouts to engage in the crime of mere kidnapping?
- A. Wealth accumulation { }
 - b. Alternative means of income due to unemployment { }
 - c. Revenge { }
 - d. Others specify
- 22) Internal to the University, which do you think is most appropriate to combating the increase in the rate of undergraduate drop out in Nigerian University from the measures highlighted below?
- A. Better hostel facilities { }
 - b. Affordable school fees { }

- c. Favourable academic learning environment { }
 - d. Increased funding of Universities { }
 - e. Availability of employment opportunities after graduation { }
 - f. Others specify_____
- 23) External to the University, which is the most effective measure of reducing withdrawal rate of undergraduates in Nigerian Universities?
- A. Increased budget for the educational sector { }
 - b. Creation of better and accommodating employment opportunities { }
 - c. Payment of salaries and other incentives to staffs { }
 - d. Avoidance of strike actions by staffs of the Universities by meeting stipulated agreements { }
 - e. Others specify_____
- 24) Within UNN, which do you think can be the most effective measure of reducing drop out rate among undergraduates?
- A. Favourable academic calendar { }
 - b. Reduced and affordable school fees { }
 - c. Improved hostel facilities { }
 - d. Better academic learning environment { }
 - e. Convenient time duration for CBT exams { }
 - f. Others specify_____
- 25) Which of these other options will you also consider encouraging to student's academic pursuit?
- a. Awarding of scholarships { }
 - b. Introduction of E-learning { }
 - c. Increased value and preference for education in the society { }
 - d. Adoption of more practical approaches to studies rather than all theoretical { }