



## IMPACT OF NON-ACADEMIC STUDENTS ON THE SOUTH EASTERN NIGERIA UNIVERSITIES AND ASSOCIATED PROBLEMS

**A. N. Duvie<sup>i</sup>**

Ph.D, Department of Educational Management  
Michael Okpara University of Agriculture,  
Umudike, Nigeria

### **Abstract:**

This study investigated the Impact of Non-academic Students on the South Eastern Nigeria Universities and the Associated Problems. The main purpose of this study is to identify who these non-academic students are, how they came to be and the associated problems they pose to the university system. Federal university with commission, visions and missions located in the South East of Nigeria provided the target population. South Eastern Nigeria is one of the flash points of students crises hence it was selected. Two research questions and two hypotheses were developed to give answers to the study. The hypotheses were tested at the probability of 0.05 level of significance. A structured questionnaire titled Impact of Non-Academic Students and Associated Problems (IONASAAP) was by the researcher. The questionnaire was face validated by three experts in Measurement and Evaluation, Psychology and Educational Management and was tested for reliability using Cronbach alpha method. A value of 0.79 was obtained. The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The sample subjects comprised 120 university staff who work closely with students and 480 students selected by proportionate stratified random sampling from the four mature federal universities in the region. The research questions were analyzed with means and standard deviations while t-test was used to analyse the hypotheses. The findings of the study showed that family factor, peer group influence, inability of students to adjust to the new academic environment are responsible for the creation of non-academic students. It also showed that the presence of the non-academic students is a source of various problems to the universities which include, disruption of academic programmes theft, illegal occupation of facilities, rape, armed robbery and many others.

**Keywords:** non-academic, students, south east Nigeria, universities, problems

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<sup>i</sup> Correspondence: email [duvian@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:duvian@yahoo.co.uk)

## 1. Introduction

Higher education is important to the development of Nigeria as a nation. The nation's ability to prosper and thrive in an increasingly knowledge based global economy and society depends largely on the country having a progressively well educated population. In recent times, the wealth or poverty of a nation depends on the quality of higher education (Gills in Okorji & Nwogbo 2009). Nigerian undergraduates in the south east of Nigeria whose parents have sent to higher institutions to get degrees for their betterment and that of the nation as a whole seem to have some of them pursuing a different agenda other than that of their parents. This has created a dichotomy among the students in which they are referred to as academic and non-academic students. Academic students are those students who are duly and regularly registered for their courses, pay their fees, attend lectures, do all the assignments, take all the examinations and pass with good grades. Sanni (2004) referred to non-academic students as former, bonafide students of an institution who for one reason or the other were expelled. According to him instead of such students to go home they prefer to hang around the institution pretending to be bonafide members of the institution. On the other hand Karp (2011) opined that non-academic students are those students who despite their efforts at academic and effort of the institution to give them the very best continue to have low rate of students persistence and degree attainment. They are also referred to as academically vulnerable students. They are said to face significant academic and non-academic barriers that they find difficult to surmount. It is one thing to gain admission into the university and it is another to sustain the admission and remain in Status. For the purpose of this paper, a non-academic student is one who has discontinued his education either willfully or by the institution and is no more a registered student but has persistently prepared to loiter around the institution assuming falsely the characteristics of a registered student. Such a person uses the university facilities illegally.

It is a well-known fact that some students gain admission into the universities by fraudulent means. According to Aru, Achumba and Opara (2016), Joint Admissions Matriculation Board (JAMB) and West African Examination Council (WAEC) alone cannot ascertain the best crop of students for admission as there are examination syndicates everywhere in the country to ensure that their candidates/customers make all their papers in the limited number of sittings and pass JAMB as well as gain admission. Ebiri in Aru *et al.*, (2016) observed that using JAMB as a yardstick for admission of students in Nigerian universities has led to the intake of poor caliber of candidates, characterized by high failure rate, increase in examination malpractice, high spillovers and the production of poor quality output that are neither self-reliant nor able to contribute effectively in the development of the country.

In recent times, the difficulties encountered in the admission process in Nigerian Universities due to limited admission places has compelled some parents and guardians of prospective students to go to any length both legally or fraudulently to secure admissions for their candidates. Some desperate students have been deceived

with fake admission letters due to their parents or guardians pressure (Okosun, 2017). No sooner than later such students are fished out, where they fail to go home they turn to non-academic students. Some of these desperate moves have led to the admission of weak candidates who eventually find it difficult to cope academically. This has led to a reasonable rate of attrition among the undergraduates in the universities in Nigeria (Olowokodeje, 2004).

Poor academic performance and social distractions have contributed immensely to academic vulnerability of Nigerian students. Some of these social distractions include membership of secret cult groups, membership of clubs with no future ambition, drinking groups and so on. A good number of factors are said to be responsible for students dropping out.

Omollo, and Yambo, (2017) in their study of the influence of peer pressure on high school dropout in Kenya found that peer pressure group drop out in Kenya was as high as 43.75% in the community under study. The study concluded that in most cases where students are most often sent home there were high chances that some never returned to school sooner or in the near future and the institutions did not give the students enough support particularly those from poor homes.

It is a proven fact in psychology that intelligence and most types of ability are not necessarily innate but are usually modified by environmental factors such as learning motivation, nutrition and encouragement from both parents, schools and the like (Spencer and Aber in Ejedegba, 2017).

Family environment has more chances of increasing or decreasing the intellectual achievement of a child (Clifford, 1981). Ejedegba (2017) in his study of the influence of family background factors that can influence students' academic achievement in senior secondary schools found that parental educational level, parental income and parental motivation have direct relationship with students' achievement. This implies that students particularly the young adults in the university system who are not far from the ages of the high school students are likely to have their academic achievement influenced by either their educated or non-educated parents. For the former positively because they know the value of education having gone through it, and for the latter perhaps negatively because they may not know the value of education or how to influence their children positively. Also where students are emotionally supported positively they will yield positive academic achievement while those parents who support their children emotionally in a negative way elicit negative academic achievement. Also parental income of students where adequate, influences the student's academic achievement positively. But where the income is poor due to large family size or any other reason, poor academic achievement will result in all the students' effort. Since the child may not have the opportunity to get all the books and other facilities required for education.

Cultism is one of the major vices confronting the Nigerian educational sector today. The activities of these groups according to Inyang (2017) have caused the deaths of many members and non-members. Secret cult groups are rampant in higher institutions in Nigeria and have become a smear on the proper development of

Nigerian youths. The non-academic students who have been deregistered from their institutions and have still continued to hang around are usually attracted to this cultism if they were never members before. For those non-academic students who were already members before expulsion, their allegiance become stronger and they now have all the time to run their dangerous errands for their fraternities. For those who have just been attracted due to the quest for power, revenge, protection, recognition popularity take refuge in this abnormal society. According to Inyang (2017) the activities of these groups include, torture, advance fee fraud, making painful inscriptions on the bodies of new members, voodoo ritual practice, murder, drinking of human blood and urine, taking of hard drugs and holding meetings in unconventional places such as cemeteries, forests, riverside and so on. Others include, indecent dressing, intimidation of other students, armed robbery, sexual assault and kidnapping. However it is not every non-academic student that is a secret cult member such people are however insignificant.

Cultists experience poor academic performance. They skip lectures and have no time to read their books (Inyang, 2017). This explains why many cultists end up spending more years than expected in the university while some drop out outrightly graduating into nonacademic students. Tertiary institutions have very low tolerance for cult activities consequently; any student found culpable is summarily expelled. These category of students find it difficult to go home and give explanation to their parents or guardians for their predicament, instead they hang around and throw in their weight to the association running dangerous errands from one tertiary institution to the other.

According to Briggs (2007) the distribution and ferocity of secret cult groups in Nigerian universities is skewed. They constitute a greater menace in the universities in Southern Nigeria particularly in institutions that are located in those parts of the South that served as the theatres of the Nigerian civil war essentially the whole of former eastern and mid-western regions. This brought about the selection of South Eastern Nigeria as a study area.

Briggs (2007) further noted that the issue at stake for cultists is vying for supremacy in the campus, the disruption of university examinations or the desire to secure the love and affection of one of the opposite sex. Other than intimidate and terrorizing their victims the following weapons are used by them to affect their devilish act: acids, charms, machetes, axes, daggers and guns; Robbery of all descriptions, extortion of money at gun point, stealing of mobile phone sets, car theft, and organized gang, inspired armed robbery are regular events that bring in the required cash to sponsor other cult activities. The main desire of campus cult groups is the disruption of normal university activities (Briggs, 2007). They do so through causing a scarce at lectures and examinations and openly confront one another with firearms in and around university campuses. In the pandemonium, people abandon their legitimate activities and flee for safety. This creates the scenario the cultists require for stealing and destruction. Occasionally cultists highjack legitimate student protests and other groups and impose on them the arson and destruction that constitute their hallmark (Briggs, 2007). Students' union week is a particularly dangerous time as cultists are in the habit of disguising as students union personnel and evade cities, ranking markets

shops and petrol stations. Above all, they have utter disregard for human lives. Briggs (2007) posited that some of the measures he took as a Vice Chancellor was to reduce flash point water and light thus reducing opportunity for them to hijack student demonstrations.

Most of the dropouts in the south eastern Nigeria universities are presumed to be more of those expelled for cult activities than poor academic performance. Most of those expelled for poor academic performance are more likely to go home to re-strategize with the support of their families and friends. Whereas their cultist counterpart would prefer to hang around with their confraternity whom they seem to have more confidence in. Eya (2001) warned that the existence of secret cults in the tertiary institutions in Nigeria over the years has brought with it untold hardship, misfortunes and great lessons to many individuals and families. According to him people have been wounded, maimed and killed in the course of rival cult activities, which has been a thorn in the flesh of university administration.

Due to the current social configurations of the university system, many students live off campus where they interact with villagers and are not influenced positively. The absence of elitist social clubs on campus has not helped to engage the students positively. The effect of the numerous religious social clubs seems not to have taken root in the students as their body languages, dress codes and general attitude to life show. All these are assumed to have contributed to the distractions students have that reduce them to non- academic students. The unofficial lowering of admission age from 17 years to as low as 15 years might have made its own contribution to the problem. This means admitting immature youngsters into the midst of adults. All these are alleged to have gone a long way to create confusion in the young undergraduates' minds. Powdtharce and Vignoles (2008) also assert that there is indeed a sizeable and statistically significant gap in the rate of withdrawal after the first year of university between the most advantaged and disadvantaged surprising students. Many are alleged to have been deceived by older students to take actions that they eventually found out to be detrimental to their future progress. Some have been cajoled or coerced to join secret cults. Some in the process of enjoying new found freedom in the university system began to form the habit of missing tests and even examination (Olowokodeje, 2004). By the time they realized what was happening to them, their cumulative Grade point Average (CGPA) would have gone below 1 unit. In most cases, efforts to redeem the situation become ineffective. The student is sent on probation and when he or she resumes and is still unable to redeem the courses he or she failed such a person may be advised to withdraw his or her studentship (Olowokodejo, 2004).

Because of shame or what their parents' reaction would be these students may decide to keep the expulsion to themselves and pretend to remain registered students. On the other hand, a student can be expelled for criminal behavior which would deter him or her from completing the degree programme. Such behaviours include extorting money from fellow student, rape, cultism, robbery, insubordination among many other vices (Ajayi, Hasstrup, Ekundayo & Osalusi, 2007). It is generally believed that these non- academic students live ostentations lives. This is because they collect school fees,

pocket monies from parents, uncles, aunties and people of good will which they spend on themselves and any willing male or female student. Some of these non-academic students falsely claim membership of the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) which they never graduate to end their tenure. At this national level they intimidate the real executive members and dominate them. Sometimes they even form a faction supported by some politicians. This is widely known but never documented. The aim is to use them to attack their opponents verbally through the social media or even physically during elections. By so doing they now become willing tools in the hands of the politicians using NANS which they are illegal members by force (Ademuwagun, 2014; Daniel, 2016, Daniel, 2015). They incite and execute crises in an institution over trivial matters between the students and the university authorities. This they do as alleged by manipulating the authentic student union executive of the institution. The presence of non-academic students according to Dabis and Malik (2015) has created outrageous impact on the university administration which needs investigation. The South Eastern Universities which have had very active secret cult cells were chosen for this study to ascertain the authenticity of how the non-academic students are created and their attendant problems. A number of researchers and organizations have proposed reasons why students drop out of school. College and University blog (2018) stated that financial limitations can contribute to why a student may be forced to relinquish his or her university education. Moodie (2016) noted that students from poor homes are likely to drop out because of pressures of finance. Likewise family obligations will induce dropping out. It is possible therefore that for some who seem to be desperate, they may prefer to hang around for some months hoping for a miracle. According to Olowokodeje (2004), some of the students after registration willingly refuse to attend lectures and take examinations and prefer to rove around on campus inadvertently prolonging their stay in the university without any achievement. Abebayo (2015) asserted that some students deliberately refuse to re-register their failed courses usually referred to as carry over courses as well as take the exams and get them done with. A good number of freshmen turn a blind eye and have low expectations of academic demand university level (College & University blog 2018). As they get into the toughest period of their university education, they suddenly realize that despite their new found independence, the amount of responsibility that comes with their freedom was not at all what they anticipated. They therefore become burnt-out, discouraged, and finally quit, whether or not their grades were lacking. For the non-academic students they hang around participating in every social activity and sometimes in the academic ones. These they do illegally. They would continue to hang around as long as they were innocently funded by their parents or guardians. College and University blog (2018) also pointed out that broken relationships can have adverse effect on students. Finding love at college is said to be a very common phenomenon, but when love turns into loathing and heartbreak, it can easily take the student away from academics. In some universities in the south east of Nigeria, some female students have had babies without their parents' knowledge. This is usually concealed from the parents

while the victim drops either temporarily or permanently out of school. Such parents continue to fund the young female's education in ignorance.

While growing up people need guidance. They thrive on someone's instruction or care. At the university especially the first year, guidance and individual attention from a counselor or mentor may not exist in the students' life. Not knowing where to go, and how to deal with problems can lead to the student quitting when overwhelmed. Where the student is afraid of the consequences of going home, he or she might resort to hanging around the campus pretending to be a registered student when he or she had either willingly withdrawn from the institution or had been advised to withdraw by the institution. It is also difficult for an undergraduate to balance his or her social life with academics. The natural inclination is friends and pleasure, partying, drinking, staying up late blowing off classes to the point where the student is too far behind to make up for the slack can lead to expulsion. Most of these non-academic students are usually young adults who are still dependent on others for decision making.

Rattelle, Larose, Guay & Senecal (2005) in their studies found that perceived parental involvement and support predict college students' persistence in science curriculum. The results suggested that perceived parental involvement and support have specific roles in predicting student self-processes and achievement, highlighting the importance of sustaining parents' contribution for college students.

According to Ohio Department of Education (ND) not all students who come to school are ready to learn as learning readiness is necessary for school success and improvement. It further stated that "Non-academic barriers" often get in the way of creating the right conditions for students and families. Some of these barriers are listed as child abuse and neglect, domestic violence, substance abuse, mental health needs and family-related problems. The use of positive Behavioural Interventions and Supports (PBIS) a decision making that guides selection integration and implementation of the best evidence based academic and behavioural practices for improving important academic and behavior outcomes for all students indicates that families have specific roles to play in the academic achievements of the young adults in the college or universities. Families are important members of the school communities and when schools and families work together toward their common goal of helping all children to be successful it is much more likely to happen. According to PBIS for families, families have valuable insights and information about how their children learn best and what types of environmental supports are helpful to them. But when families fail in this exercise, the student is disillusioned and starts performing poorly.

Consequently, it could be said to be evident that nonacademic students are likely to be created by social and developmental barriers which include the unreadiness of the student to learn, the negligence of the family and the uncondusive conditions of the learning environment. Furthermore, an idle hand is a devils workshop which is the lot of the non-academic student.

## **2. Statement of Problem**

A university is an institution of higher education and research which awards academic degrees in various academic disciplines. Universities typically provide undergraduate education and postgraduate education. In the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, concerns were raised over the increasing managerialization and standardization of universities worldwide. Consequently, university student retention is of increasing importance to college administrators as they try to improve graduation rates and decrease a loss of tuition revenue from students that drop-out. From the above assertions, the presence of non-academic students in South Eastern Nigeria universities is an abnormality in a century where competition is the order of the day in the universities all over the world; the South Eastern Universities are alleged to be grappling with unserious expelled students who hide among serious students to cause mayhem. It is believed that a situation like this if not nipped in the board may become more complex in future considering the population of admission seekers into the universities in Nigeria in recent times. There is therefore the need to investigate why some students turn out to be non-academic and identify the problems they pose to the university.

### **2.1 Theoretical Framework**

This section explores the theories of work adjustment and shame resilience which underlie the present study.

The theory of work adjustment is sometimes referred to as the person – environment correspondence theory. It was originally developed by Rene’ Dawis, George England and Woyd Lofquist in 1964. The theory states that the more closely a person’s abilities (skills, knowledge, experience, attitude, behaviours etc) corresponds with the requirements of the role or the organization, the more likely it is that they will perform the job well and be perceived as satisfactory by the employer. In other words the more closely students’ abilities correspond with the requirements of the role of studentship in the university system the more likely they will perform well in their academics and the university will perceive them as satisfactory. Similarly, the more closely the reinforcers (rewards) of the role of the organization correspond to the values that a person seeks to satisfy through his or her work the more likely it is that the person will perceive the job as satisfying. Therefore, the more closely the reinforcers (rewards) in terms of the students good grades correspond to the values the students seek to satisfy through their work, the more likely the students will perceive their studentship satisfying. The degrees of satisfaction and satisfactoriness are seen as predictors of the likelihood that someone will stay in a job or retain his or her studentship be successful at it and receive advancement. Where a student is admitted with a result obtained from a “miracle center” (illegal examination centres) where cheating is allowed such a candidates is believed to be predetermined to seek academic protection through whatever means such as joining a cult which gives them false assurance of passing all their examinations while coming in without any skill and with a polluted behavior. Consequent upon these there is no way such qualities will

correspond with the requirements of the role expected. Also where the university is not playing its role properly by the lecturers attending classes and teaching, giving assignments and actually marking them and giving corrections, releasing previous results on time to enable the students know what to do with their failed courses to avoid creating complications the correspondence between the students and the institution will not be efficient.

The theory however acknowledges that the correspondence between person (student) and environment (the university) may not be perfect. This could be as a result of the student choosing the wrong course. In a situation like this the student will exhibit some flexibility by trying to adjust to establish correspondence. The flexibility of a person or an environment will determine the extent to which they can tolerate any lack of correspondence between abilities and requirements and or values and reinforcers. As flexibility vary from individual to individual and from environment (university) to environment (university), some individuals may persist. Persistence is defined as the extent to which individuals or environments will keep trying to adjust before giving up. When no further adjustment is possible, something more dramatic happens- the person leaves the job or is fired. In the same way, the student voluntarily withdraws from the institution unofficially or is expelled by the institution.

Shame is a fundamental human emotion that is similar to feelings of guilt and disgrace. It is a powerful emotion that can have wide ranging effects on mental health. According to Shame Resilience theory, shame can lead to social withdrawal and isolation.

According to Brown (2017), shame causes people to feel trapped, powerless and isolated. Consequently the student who has been deregistered and has become a dropout feels trapped powerless and isolated and may seek a way out by all means. For some students the easiest way is to withdraw from parents, guardians and friends that may influence them positively and hang around the campus with people of the same predicament. This is the lot of some expelled or withdrawn students Brown (2017) also noted that shame triggers can vary between individuals. That is why it has been observed that not all the students that drop out turn into non-academic students. Some pack their things leave the campus, move on with their lives while others stay back, and hang around turning themselves into non-academic students.

Brown (2017) therefore suggested ways of overcoming shame. These are itemized as:

1. Recognizing the personal vulnerability that led to the feelings of shame
2. Recognizing the external factors that led to the feelings of shame
3. Connecting with others to receive and offer empathy.
4. Discussing and deconstructing the feelings of shame themselves.

## **2.2 Research Questions**

Two research questions guided the study:

1. Why do some students become non- academic?
2. What are the problems associated with non- academic students?.

### 2.3 Hypotheses

Two null hypotheses were formulated and tested in this study.

1. There is no significant difference between the mean responses of the staff and students on why some students become non- academic.
2. There is no significant difference between the mean response of the staff and student on the problems associated with non- academic students.

### 3. Methodology

The study adopted the survey research design. The study population comprised 2, 400 staff and 9,600 students of the four oldest federal universities in the South East. The target staff include those who work in close contact with students which comprises college officers, departmental officers, student affairs officers, administrative staff in examinations and records unit, sports unit and the security. The students include all those in their penultimate year in the various universities who are assumed to be well versed in the university tradition, are not saddled with final examination syndrome, and can therefore find time to attend to the questionnaires.

There are five states in the South Eastern Nigeria namely Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo. Each state has a federal university but only four of them met the criteria of being at least 25 years old. This older universities were chosen on the premise that at age 25 an institution must have been well established in terms of academic and administrative traditions. Ebonyi state federal university was excluded based on the aforementioned reasons. Students in the faculties of Education and Sciences were used for the study since some of these universities were specialized and these two faculties exist in all the universities.

The study adopted the proportionate stratified random sampling technique. The universities were stratified on state basis and 5% of the sample subjects were proportionately selected from the population. The entire staff and students selected from the four states were 120 and 480 respectively. The researcher developed a questionnaire titled "Impact of Non-Academic Students and Associated Problems (IONASAAP)" which was used to elicit responses from the staff and students. The questionnaire was divided into three parts. Part "A" elicited responses on respondents' personal data. Part "B" elicited information on the reasons why students turn non-academic. Part "C" sort information on the problems associated with non- academic students in the South East Universities. A four point scale of: strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2) and strongly disagreed (1) formed the response mode.

The IONASAAP instrument was validated by three experts in the Departments of Educational Management, Measurement and Evaluation and Psychology respectively. Instrument reliability was established using Cronbach Alpha coefficient. This yielded a value of 0.79 which was considered adequate for the study. Copies of the questionnaires were administered on the samples with the help of three research assistants. A total number of 600 copies were administered on the samples. The data was collected with the help of three research assistants. They distributed the copies of

the questionnaires to the respondents and ensured that they collected them back on the spot. With persuasion, 100% of the questionnaires were retrieved. The research questions were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as means and standard deviation. The hypotheses were analyzed using t-tests.

#### 4. Findings

##### Research Question 1: Why do some students become non-academic?

**Table 1:** Staff and Students Mean Perception on Why Some Students' Become Non-Academic

S/N	Why some students become non-academic	Staff			Students		
		X	SD	Remark	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remark
1.	Large family size makes it difficult to financially cater for all children or wards.	3.20	0.75	Accepted	3.42	0.49	Accepted
2.	Parents/guardians do not find time to monitor their children's/wards academic progress.	3.40	0.49	Accepted	3.29	0.48	Accepted
3.	Inability of parents/guardians to adequately encourage their children or wards psychologically.	2.90	0.95	Accepted	3.00	0.76	Accepted
4.	Many parents/guardians are handicapped by their level of education.	3.32	0.56	Accepted	3.43	0.50	Accepted
5	Expelled students are scared of their parents' or guardians' reactions if they went home	3.56	0.53	Accepted	3.43	0.50	Accepted
6.	Expelled students love campus life where they have freedom.	3.55	0.88	Accepted	3.14	0.83	Accepted
7	Students are influenced by negative peer group influence.	3.02	0.86	Accepted	3.18	0.83	Accepted
8	Some parents/guardians encourage fraud in J.A.M.B examination in order to get their children/ward admitted with the university at all cost.	3.05	0.88	Accepted	2.86	0.83	Accepted
	<b>Grand Mean</b>	3.25	0.74		3.20	0.65	

Table 1 shows that both staff and students accepted all the items on the table as the reasons why some students turn nonacademic. The items were accepted since their respective mean scores were above the bench mark of 2.50. the table shows that both staff and students agreed that large family size makes it difficult for parents and guardians to adequately cater financially for their children and wards hence they easily drop out and become non-academic students ( $\bar{X} = 3.2$ ,  $\bar{X} = 3.42$  respectively). The table also shows that staff and students agreed that students turn non-academic because parents and guardians do not find time to monitor their childrens'/wards' academic progress, ( $\bar{X} = 3.40$ ,  $\bar{X} = 3.29$  respectively). The table further shows that parents and guardians do not give their children and wards adequate psychological encouragement, ( $\bar{X} = 2.9$ ,  $\bar{X} = 3.00$  respectively).

The teacher and students agreed that parents/guardians are handicapped by their level of education hence they find it difficult to monitor their childrens'/wards' academic progress ( $\bar{X}=3.32$ ,  $\bar{X}= 3.28$  respectively). They also agreed that expelled students are scared of what their parents or guardians would say if they discover that they have dropped out of College. ( $\bar{X}=3.56$ ,  $\bar{X}= 3.43$  respectively). They equally agreed that many students are carried away by campus life where they have new found freedom from their parents and guardians ( $\bar{X}=3.55$ ,  $\bar{X}= 3.14$  respectively). The table also showed that the respondents agreed that students are influenced by negative peer group influence hence they turn non-academic ( $\bar{X}=3.02$ ,  $\bar{X}= 3.18$  respectively). Finally the teachers and the student agreed that students turn non-academic because some parents and guardians encourage impersonation for their children during JAMB examinations in order to gain admission into the Universities for them at all costs ( $\bar{X}=3.05$ ,  $\bar{X}= 2.86$  respectively). The grand mean of 3.25 and 3.20 indicate that the variables listed on the table contribute to the creation of non-academic students from academic ones in South Eastern Universities of Nigeria.

**Research Question 2:** What are the problems associated with non-academic students?

**Table 2:** Analysis of the mean scores on the problems associated with Non-Academic students

S/N	Problems associated with Non-academic students	Staff			Students		
		X	SD	Remark	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remark
9.	Raping of female students	3.15	0.86	Accepted	3.00	0.76	Accepted
10.	Vandalization of school property	3.18	0.81	Accepted	3.14	0.64	Accepted
11.	Armed robbery	3.08	0.84	Accepted	3.43	0.53	Accepted
12.	Disruption of academic programme	3.05	0.67	Accepted	3.14	0.64	Accepted
13.	Impersonation during examination before admission	2.70	0.75	Accepted	2.85	0.65	Accepted
14.	Theft	2.84	0.77	Accepted	3.14	0.64	Accepted
15.	Illegal occupation of hostel	3.61	0.66	Accepted	3.42	0.73	Accepted
16.	Illegal use of games facilities	3.40	0.50	Accepted	3.57	0.73	Accepted
17.	Inciting of students against school authorities	3.60	0.50	Accepted	3.57	0.49	Accepted
18.	Intimidation of fellow students	2.81	0.64	Accepted	3.43	0.50	Accepted
19.	Living affluent lives on campus	3.27	0.49	Accepted	3.43	0.50	Accepted
20.	Organize students to rig elections for politicians for a fee	2.83	0.82	Accepted	3.29	0.45	Accepted
21.	Usually form the main agent that drive cultism	3.20	0.75	Accepted	3.71	0.46	Accepted
	<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>3.13</b>	<b>0.70</b>		<b>3.32</b>	<b>0.59</b>	

Table 2 shows that both the staff and students agree with all the items as the problems associated with the non-academic staff. These were, raping of female students ( $\bar{X}=3.15$ ;  $\bar{X}=3.0$ ), vandalization of school property ( $\bar{X}=3.18$ ;  $\bar{X}=3.14$ ), armed robbery ( $\bar{X}=3.08$ ;  $\bar{X}=3.43$ ), disruption of academic programme ( $\bar{X}=3.05$ ;  $\bar{X}=3.14$ ),

impersonation during examination that leads to the admission ( $\bar{X} = 2.70; \bar{X} = 2.85$ ); theft ( $\bar{X} = 2.84; \bar{X} = 3.14$ ) respectively. Others are illegal occupation of hostel ( $\bar{X} = 3.61; \bar{X} = 3.42$ ), illegal use of games facilities ( $\bar{X} = 3.40; \bar{X} = 3.57$ ); inciting students against authorities ( $\bar{X} = 3.60; \bar{X} = 3.57$ ), intimidation of fellow students ( $\bar{X} = 2.81; \bar{X} = 3.43$ ), living affluent lives on campus ( $\bar{X} = 3.27; \bar{X} = 3.43$ ), organizing election rigging for politicians for a fee ( $\bar{X} = 2.83; \bar{X} = 3.29$ ) and forming the main agents that drive cultism ( $\bar{X} = 3.20; \bar{X} = 3.71$ ) respectively. The grand mean of 3.13 and 3.32 indicate that the variables listed on the table are the likely problems associated with non-academic students in the South Eastern Nigeria Universities.

**H0:** There is no significant difference between the mean responses of the staff and students on why some students become non-academic

**Table 3:** The t-test analysis of the difference between the mean response of the staff and students on why some students turn non-academic

Groups	Number of samples	Mean	SD	DF	T.Cal	P. Value	Decision
Staff	120	3.25	0.74	598	0.73	0.464	NS
Students	480	3.20	0.65				

Table 3 shows that the t-calculated value of 0.73 with a P. value of 0.464 is greater than 0.05 on the table at 0.05 level of significance. This implies that the null hypothesis above which states that there is no significant difference between the mean responses of the staff and students on why some students turn non-academic is retained.

**H0:** There is no significant difference between the mean responses of the staff and students on the problems associated with non-academic students.

**Table 4:** The t-test analysis of the difference between the mean response of the staff and students on the Problems associations with Non-Academic Students

Groups	Number of samples	Mean	SD	DF	T.Cal	P. Value	Decision
Staff	120	3.27	0.62	598	1.92	0.060	Not Significant
Students	480	3.15	0.61				

Table 4 shows that a t-calculated value of 1.92 with P. value of 0.060 is greater than 0.05 at 05 level of significant. This implies that the null hypothesis is not rejected. This implies that there is no significant difference between the responses of staff and students on the problems associated with non-academic students.

## 5. Discussion

The findings of the study have shown that the respondents agree totally on the reasons why students suddenly become non-academic students irrespective of whether they were staff or students. The issue of large family size and financial handicap agrees with

the findings of Rattelle *et al.*, (2005) and Mishra and Azeez (2014) who asserted that one of the reasons why some students turn non-academic is the inability of their parents or guardians to cater financially for them effectively because of large family size. In recent times, students are not allowed to take their examinations unless their fees were fully paid where this occurs frequently the student is loaded with previous sessions unexamined courses creating academic catastrophe for the student. As time goes on the student eventually drops out under the academic load.

The findings also showed that parents and guardians need to adequately encourage their children and wards psychologically to help them improve on their academics. This agrees with the assertion of Clifford (1981) that family environment has more chances of increasing or decreasing the intellectual achievement of a child. It also agrees with the findings of Ejedegba (2017) that parental motivation have direct relationship with students achievement. This is further corroborated by the findings of Rattelle *et al.*, (2005) that parental and by implication guardians' involvement and support having specific roles in predicting student self-process and achievement. It highlighted the importance of sustaining parents' constitution for college students.

The findings also show that parents and guardians do not find time to monitor their childrens'/wards' academic progress. Likewise, parents and guardians are unable to adequately encourage their children or wards psychologically. This agrees with the assertion of Ejedegba (2017) that parental motivation have direct with students' achievement. If the family contributes to school dropout where the family is large, the finance will be small parents and guardians motivate the students by giving them psychological support and monitor their performance. They will excel in academic achievement. The corollary is also the case where the student drops out and may become non-academic student. This implies that where parents and guardians motivate the students by giving them psychological support by monitoring their performance they will excel in academic achievement and will never turn non-academic.

The finding also showed that many parents and guardians were handicapped by their level of education in an attempt to monitor their children and wards. This agrees with the findings of Ejedegba (2017) that family background factors such as parental educational level has direct relationship with students achievement. This implies that a good number of the non-academic students are likely to be those whose parents have low level of education. Such parent may not know how to monitor or guide their children since they never had such experience. The findings further showed that some parents and guardians were over protective towards their children or wards consequently they become gullible to them and see advisers over their children as intruding into their private life. This therefore restrains people from giving early warnings to some parents.

This agrees with the corollary of the findings of Rattelle *et al.*, (2005) Clifford (1981) and Ejedegba (2017) that negative motivation from the family will yield negative academic achievement. This implies that those parents and guardians who prefer to depend on the information dished out to them by their children and wards and who

think complaints about their children and wards are unnecessary interference are those who continue to pay school fees when their children and wards had been dismissed.

The findings also show that expelled students are usually ashamed of reporting their condition to their parents or guardians considering the amount of resources that have gone down the drains. This is corroborated by Brown (2017) that shame causes people to feel trapped, powerless and isolated. It makes them feel guilty and disgraced. They prefer to hang around thinking that the problem will just go away on its own while withdrawing from their parents and guardians. While hanging around they may get themselves involved with people of the same predicament with them who may be older in that situation and who may introduce them to some anti-social groups or behaviours.

The findings also show that expelled students who are thrilled by campus life where they are free from parents breathing down their necks prefer to stay put on campus. This freedom is noted by college and university blog (2018) that the students do not have an idea of the degree of work that awaits them in the university. This is worse for the student who did not write the entrance examination himself or herself likewise those who got admission through fraudulent means. As they fall by the way side they may prefer to enjoy their freedom to the full.

The finding also showed that students are influenced by peer group which makes them fall prey to become non-academic students. This agrees with the findings of Olowokodje (2004) who posits that, after admission some students in the process of enjoying new found freedom in the university system with their friends begin to form the habit of missing tests and even examinations keeping late nights and having some drinking sprees. This also agrees with the findings of Omollo & Yambo (2017) that influence of peer pressure in Kenya high school dropout rates is as high as 43.75%. They pointed out that the institutions never gave the students enough support. These non-academic students are usually young adults in the same age bracket with the senior high school students who are still in the impressionable age who need to be supervised. The new environment meant for mature adults now exposes them to peer influence.

The finding is also show that the problems associated with non-academic students include rape, vandalize of university properly armed robbery Disruption of academic programmes and theft, inciting of student against authorities. All these vices agree with the assertions of Luyang (1917) and Briggs (2007) which are the characteristics of cultists. Since non-academic students are mostly those who hang around for probable activities cult after being expelled, they therefore have the same characteristics with the confraternities.

The findings also show that some of the other problems associated with non-academic students include impersonation during qualifying examinations for admission, illegal occupation of hostels and games facilities. Though not documented some of those who eventually become non-academic students are students who hired persons to sit for their JAMB examination. When they are finally admitted they find it hard to cope. This agrees with the assessment of college and university blog (2018) that students are usually not aware of the amount of academic responsibility attached to

their new fraud freedom. Since non-academic students are not legal members of the university community any facility they are occupying or they are using is denying the legitimate students the opportunity to use them. The findings also show that non-academic students organize students to rig elections for politicians for a fee and are usually the main agent that drives cultism. This agrees with the assertion of Daniel (2015) (2016) where NANS give attenuation to governors on purely political matters as well as dabble into sensitive political issues they have no business with. Though not documented, cultists in the universities act as thugs to politicians in Nigeria and non-academic student being their members are not far removed from these activities. The finding also show that non-academic students live affluent lives. This is because they fraudulently collect school fees and maintenance allowances from their parents or guardians and spend them as they like. They make sure the money comes regularly to finance their ostentatious lives by keeping the secret.

The findings also showed that some parents and guardians in their desperation to get admission for the children and wards go through all kinds of unethical means. This agrees with the assertion of Aru *et al.*, (2016) who pointed out that JAMB and WAEC alone cannot ascertain the best crop of students for admission as there are admission syndicates everywhere in the country.

Ebiri in Aru *et al.*, 2006 noted as well that using JAMB as a yardstick for admission of students in Nigerian Universities has led to the intake of poor caliber of candidates characterized by high failure rate, increase in examination malpractice, high spillovers and poor quality output. This funding agrees with Okosun (2017) assertion that in the desperate moves by parents and guardians to secure admissions for their candidates fake admission letters have sometimes been offered to them which lasts for only a while before they are fished out and dismissed. This implies that there are various ways non-academic students enter the university only to be asked to withdraw at the appropriate time. Parents and guardians should therefore seek the legitimate ways of admission to avoid their children and wards falling into the wrong hands and subsequently being kicked out, thereby becoming non-academic students if they refuse to go home.

## 6. Conclusion

In line with the findings of this study, it is concluded that non-academic students are created in the south east universities as a result of students factors, family factors, peer group influence and shame among others. Their presence in these institutions creates some problems to the university communities.

### 6.1 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study the following recommendations were made.

1. First and foremost, the issue of overcoming shame as itemized by Brown (2017) should be incorporated into the orientation programmes for the freshmen. This

will reduce drastically the number of non-academic students who will hang around. With time, the phenomenon will disappear.

2. There should be an early outreach programmes into the secondary school to develop the student academic competencies.
3. At this level, the students should be properly guided on the dangers of becoming a member of any cultist groups.
4. The orientation programmes to ease the transition to the universities which is already in place should be emphasized and carried out every semester of the first year. This should contain positive academic strategies, social support and how to cope with campus life.
5. Academic advising, psychological and social counseling should be taken seriously. This will help the institutions identify the early warning signs and deal with them.
6. Parents and guardians should be involved positively in the progress of the students. It is not just enough to get admission for them but they should follow their academic progress and make effort to know who their friends are to avoid their falling into the wrong hands.

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Duvie Adanma  
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THE SOUTH EASTERN NIGERIA UNIVERSITIES AND ASSOCIATED PROBLEMS

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