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**Influence of Socioeconomic Factors on School Dropout and Insecurity in Calabar South  
Local Government Area of Cross River State**

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**Abstract**

This study sets out to examine the nexus between socioeconomic factors, school dropouts and insecurity in Calabar South local government area of Cross River State, Nigeria. The research design adopted for the study is the descriptive survey research. Using purposeful sampling procedure, a sample of 291 participants were selected from Anantigha, Bayside, Afokang and Idang, Insidung, Edibedibe communities in the study area. The reason for using this sampling technique within these communities is because these are the flashpoint where insecurity is most pronounced. Two research questions were formulated and transformed into two null hypotheses. The instrument for data collection is the researcher designed structured questionnaire titled. Socioeconomic factors, school dropouts and insecurity questionnaire (SFSDIQ) with a four point likert scale response options of strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree. Using the Cronbach alpha reliability estimate, the coefficient ranged between 0.75-0.80. The instrument was administered by the researcher and five trained field assistance. Data obtained was analyzed using simple percentage and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis at 289 degree of freedom and 0.05 significance levels. The simple percentage analysis result for question 1 shows that 178 respondents representing 61.4% agreed that socioeconomic factors influence student's dropout from schools, while 113 respondents (38.6%) disagreed that socioeconomic factors cannot influence students dropping out of schools. The result on table 2 also revealed that 202 respondents representing 69.4% agreed that dropping out of school can be a catalyst to insecurity, while 89 respondents, representing 30.6% disagreed that there is no way dropping out of school can influence insecurity in Calabar South. The result of the Pearson Product Correlation analyses on table 3 and 4 revealed that there is a significant relationship between socioeconomic factors and school dropouts, and insecurity in Calabar South. It was concluded that socioeconomic factors influence school dropout thereby orchestrating insecurity in Calabar South. It was recommended among others that government should make education more affordable for the poor, while

churches should use the money they build skyscrapers as worship centers to build functional schools for the masses.

*Keyword: Socioeconomic factors, school dropout, insecurity, poverty, unemployment and family income*

## **Introduction**

The current economic realities across the world is disheartening and painful, there is high rates of inflation to the extent that consumable goods are difficult to afford, food, housing, basic health, sanitation, hygiene and quality water supply among basic necessities of life are difficult to afford. This situation occurs in most part of the world, especially in the third world countries or developing countries. This scenario is most pronounced in sub Saharan Africa, Latin America, Asian and other third world countries. Meeting the daily requirement of human existence has become a very herculean task; these situations are further exacerbated by global climate change affecting food production and human wellbeing. With all these, most developed world believed that education is a weapon with which we can fight all social ills against humanity. There are also the issues of insurgency, terrorism, kidnapping, crime, epidemics, global climate change, and food insecurity, human induced and natural disaster among others. Other crimes against humanity are the issues of religious bigotry, agitation for resources control, illegal exploitation of natural resources like the mining of gold in the North East and Northwest regions of Nigeria, agitation for self-independence like in the Eastern parts of the country among others.

Within the national boundaries of Nigeria, there are serious threats to our corporate existence, in the South East, there is agitation by the Igbo ethnic groups to be self-independent (Biafra Republic), in the Niger Delta regions, there is the agitation for resources control, where they contribute to more than 85% of national income, but get less than 15%, whereas other areas that contribute nothing, get more than 75% of these resources. In the Western parts of the country, kidnapping for ransom and political reasons are on the rise, in the North, their agitation is to continue to colonize other regions and remain in power. In the Middle Belt, there is farmer-herders imbroglio; Fulanis are on the rise destroying farmers crops because they must graze their animals.

Nigeria was once a country where anybody could call home, but what we are experiencing in recent times was or is not the dreams of our founding fathers. Where did we go wrong? The main trust of this research is intended to ascertain how socioeconomic factors have influenced school drop outs among indigenes of Calabar South and how their effects influence insecurity in Calabar south.

Cimene, Cimene, Albino, Amschel, Flora, Austria, Leah, Corporal, Elarcosa, Flora, Recto, Rewie & Villaflor, (2023) studied the complex factors behind students dropping out of school. Their study identified some factors affecting students dropping out of school through multiple lenses. The study employed a qualitative research design with the key informant interview as the mode of data collection. Data were obtained from 25 key informants and they primarily fall within the age range of 18 to 21, and 21 and above, indicating that the study focuses on young adults who dropped out of school. There was a fairly even distribution of male and female key informants, suggesting that both sexes are represented in the study. The majority of key informants dropped out of school during their senior high school years, particularly in Grade 12. Moreover, the study identifies several key factors contributing to school dropouts, including the need to work and help the family income, teenage pregnancy, difficulty coping with academic demands, bullying incidents, lack of motivation, and parental influence.

These findings align with the principles of self-determination theory (SDT), which emphasizes the importance of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in motivating and retaining students in educational settings. The study highlights how external factors, such as the need to work to earn some income to assist the family and parental influence, can limit students' autonomy and motivation, potentially leading to disengagement and dropout. It also underscores the impact of academic struggles on students' competence and motivation, indicating that persistent academic challenges can erode confidence and motivation to continue their education (Archambault, Pascal, Tardif-Grenier, Dupéré, Janosz, Parent & Pagani, 2021). This result speaks volume, when students have to drop out of school to look for employment, parental influence also put pressure on the

students to support the family farming or business, and this will distract them from concentrating in their academic pursuits.

In another study by Parreno, (2023) on school dropout in the Philippines, causes, changes and statistics, the author observed that school dropout is a major problem as it has negative impacts that results in high social costs. A learner can be called a dropout when the learner fails to enroll in school despite having reached the mandatory school age. The author identified the root causes of school dropouts in the Philippines, specifically in all regions for the years 2008 and 2013. The secondary data on the proportion of population 6 to 24 years old who are not attending school from the website of the Philippine Statistics Authority were used. Data were analyzed using R version 4.2.1.

The author employed descriptive statistics, namely frequency and percentage to identify the root causes of dropping out in the Philippines when grouped according to region and year. The Percentage change (increase and decrease) were explored to track changes in the causes of school dropouts. The findings indicated that the high cost of education and student employment or when the student is seeking employment were the root causes of dropouts in the Philippines for the years 2008 and 2013, respectively. Based on the findings, it was recommended that the Philippine government, through the Department of Education, should prioritize programs that will address the root causes of the school dropouts with the goal of decreasing the dropout rate in general.

The implication of this finding is that the high cost of schooling is tied to income and economic situation of the students; there are issues of paying their learning fees, buying of textbooks and other items needed in school including other school charges. Most students would have no choice than to drop out of school to support their parents or families in their business or look for other sources of income to support their families.

Archambault, Janosz, Olivier and Dupéré, (2022) studied students engagement and school dropouts, and observed that school dropout is a major preoccupation in all countries. Several factors contribute to this outcome, but research suggests that dropouts mostly have gone through a process of disengaging from school. The aim of the study was to present a synthesis of this process

according to the major theories in the field and review empirical research linking student disengagement and school dropout. The work also presents the common risk and protective factors associated with these two issues, the profiles of students who drop out as well as the disengagement trajectories they follow and leading to their decision to quit school.

In this work, the authors concluded that income of parents, culture and belief systems, parental influence, distance to school; age and sex were factors responsible for school dropout among students. The authors highlighted insecurity, crimes, social vices and unskilled labor as consequences of dropout. Similar position was held by Ogunode, Chinwuba and Ayoko, (2022) whose work on out of school children in Nigeria, causes, social implications and the way forward, observed that various socioeconomic and political reasons are adduced to why most school children dropped out of school. The authors blamed the government and most religious organization for wasting money to build churches, but cannot use that money to build educational institutions for the public to learn.

In another study, school facilities, where schools have smaller spaces for learners and the school enrollment is far greater than the available space, would definitely lead to some students withdrawing from school. These authors further explained that these factors are school related factors, while issues of school charges, textbooks and fees are student's related causes (Archambault & Dupéré, 2017).

Ogunode, Chinwuba and Ayoko, (2022)'s research examined the concept of out-of-school children in Nigeria, the factors responsible for out-of-school children, the social implications of out-of-school children and suggested the way forward. The authors used secondary data sourced from print and online publications. The paper identified causes of out-of-school children in Nigeria to include; poor funding of education, corruption, poor implementation of the Child Rights Act, insecurity problems, lack of political will to address the problems, high rate of poverty, and high fertility rate.

The authors then concluded that the social implications of out-of-school children include security challenges, shortage of skilled manpower in future, bad international image, high levels of

illiteracy and high socioeconomic and dependency issues. The authors recommended among other things that the federal, state and local governments should come up with programs to address the problem of out-of-school children in Nigeria. They further recommended that adequate funding should be allocated to the education sector at all levels of government. Authors like Afia, Dion, Dupéré, Archambault and Toste, (2019) and Chen,

Huebner and Tian, (2020) posited that when there is high rates of school dropouts among any society, there is commensurate of social vices among the people like high crime rates, unemployment, banditry, terrorism, social and civil unrest, kidnapping, stealing, robbery, prostitution, human trafficking, scamming among others.

Dropout, a phenomenon that has become a pressing concern in our system of education, refers to the act of abandoning one's academic pursuits before completing the required level of schooling. This trend has far-reaching consequences, not only for the individual but also for the community and society as a whole. Imagine a young mind, full of potential and promise, forced to leave the hallowed halls of learning due to circumstances beyond their control. The reasons are varied - poverty, insecurity, lack of access to quality education, poor academic performance, or even bullying and social exclusion. Whatever the cause, the outcome is the same - a future truncated, opportunities lost, and a sense of disillusionment that can last for lifetime.

The consequences of dropout are dire. Without the safety net of education, individuals are more likely to succumb to poverty, unemployment, and social isolation. The economic impact is equally severe, with reduced economic growth and development affecting not just the individual but the entire community. Yet, all is not lost. By addressing the root causes of dropout, we can work towards creating a more inclusive and supportive education system. This requires a multifaceted approach - improving access to quality education, providing support services such as counseling and mentorship, promoting inclusive and safe learning environments, and encouraging community engagement and involvement. Only by understanding the complexities of dropout can we hope to mitigate its effects and create a brighter future for all. Let us work towards a world

where every individual has the opportunity to reach their full potential, unencumbered by the shackles of dropout.

According to Nwosu, (2019) a child who disengages from school can be defined as a learner who exits the education system before completing the programs for which he or she was registered. This definition could embrace students at all levels of the education system whether primary, secondary or tertiary. The consequences of dropping out of school are costly. Children who drop out of school are more likely to become dependent on others for welfare, engage in illegal activities, and experience health and affective problems. Dropping out of school creates a negative momentum for youth in a society during difficult economic periods. Such momentum may foster even higher dropout rates in the future (Omolade & Audu, 2021). High percentages of young dropouts are either not employed or are not even in the labor force. The rate of engagement in high-risk behaviors such as premature sexual activity, early pregnancy, delinquency, crime, violence, alcohol, drug abuse and suicide are found to be significantly higher among dropouts.

In a developing country like Nigeria, dropout rates are remarkably very high, especially in the Northern region of the country. Saleh (2015) states that the high school dropout problem is a crisis because, it impacts not only individuals and their education, but also comes with both economic and social costs which the local communities have to deal with. Communities suffer from a lack of productive work force and higher costs associated with incarceration, health care, and other social services. Cervantes, (2018) confirmed that most of the young dropouts experience a wide range of job market, earnings, social and income problems that impair their ability to transit to productive career and stable family life.

Thus, their life chance had been threatened and they resort to crime. Economic depression is a sustained period of significant economic decline that sees a nation's gross domestic product (GDP) drop, unemployment rates rise and consumer confidence suffers. A depression is a dramatic and sustained downturn in economic activity, with symptoms including a sharp fall in economic growth, employment and product. Economic depression can be defined as a recession that lasts

longer than three years or that results in a decline of at least 10% in annual GDP (Parreno, 2023, Liberto, 2024).

According to Mudege, Zulu and Izugbara (2008), education can be linked to security in two major ways. Education can be studied to understand its potential influence to “redress global security threats”, or, alternatively, to understand “the impact of the new security threats on education” Insecurity is a feeling of inadequacy or uncertainty about oneself, one’s ability or one’s worth. Insecurity can lead to tormenting behavior in several ways. For example, insecure people may try to boost their ego by putting down or dominating others, seek validation or approval from others by conforming to their expectations or norms, project their own fears or insecurities onto others by accusing or blaming them, avoid facing their own flaws or weakness by focusing on those of others.

Rising poverty, inequality and inadequacy of employment opportunities, particularly among the youths, are at the center of Nigeria’s insecurity problem. The increased insecurity in Nigeria has coincided with rising poverty levels, with an estimated 83 million people which is 39% of the total population living in extreme poverty (less than \$2 per day) as at April 2023(Ogunode, et al., 2022). This is a significant 18% increase from 70 million people recorded in 2016 (www.agusto.com)

The concept of insecurity is known to societies, as it has existed even in the primitive societies of the world. According to Adamu and Rasheed (2016), insecurity is “the state of fear and anxiety stemming from a real or assumed absence of protection”. Insecurity is seen as political, economic, social and environmental threats that affect the individual as well as the state at national and international levels (Alhassan & Mustafa, 2020).

For Achumba, Ighomereho and Akpan-Robaro (2013), insecurity is an absence of protection or safety. These scholars argue further that insecurity entails peril, deathtrap, and ambiguity, dearth of fortification and lack of security. They also discuss the problem of insecurity from the following two major perspectives: Firstly, insecurity is the state of being prone or vulnerable to danger or threat of danger. In this situation, the tendency of experiencing hurt based



on insufficient measures against danger is very bright. Secondly, insecurity is the state of being exposed to risk or anxiety. The exposure could be as a result of inadequate measures against insecurity by the state or by a group of people. It could also occur when peoples' basic necessities of life are lacking.

Education is a cornerstone of human development, and its significance cannot be overstated. However, various factors hinder the attainment of quality education, leading to school dropout, insecurity, and socio-economic challenges. Cross River State, Nigeria, is no exception, where these issues are prevalent. According to Ayodele (2017), school dropout is a significant challenge facing Nigeria's education system, with far-reaching consequences for individuals and society. Insecurity, as noted by Okoro (2020), further exacerbates the issue, creating a volatile learning environment. Moreover, socio-economic factors, such as poverty and unemployment, as highlighted by Nwosu (2019), play a crucial role in shaping educational outcomes.

The problem of socioeconomic factors, school dropouts and insecurity challenges in Cross River State has become a pressing concern that warrants urgent attention. This phenomenon has far-reaching consequences, not only for the individuals involved but also for the community and society at large. The nexus between socioeconomic factors, school dropout and insecurity is complex and multifaceted. Insecurity, in its various forms, has become a pervasive threat, making it difficult for students to access education in a safe and conducive environment. Socio-economic challenges, such as poverty and unemployment, further exacerbate the issue, forcing many students to drop out of school to fend for themselves and their families.

The consequences of this trend are dire. School dropout limits career opportunities, reduces earning potential, and increases the risk of poverty and unemployment. Insecurity and socio-economic challenges, on the other hand, perpetuate a cycle of violence, fear, and desperation, making it difficult for individuals to break free from the shackles of poverty and achieve their full potential. Despite the severity of this problem, there is a dearth of research on the triangular relationship between socioeconomic factors, school dropouts and insecurity in Cross River State. This study aims to fill this knowledge gap by examining the causes, consequences, and strategies

for mitigating these challenges. By doing so, it seeks to contribute to the development of effective solutions that can help reduce school dropout, insecurity, and socio-economic challenges in the state.

### **Objectives of the study**

The main trust of this paper is to ascertain the relationship between socioeconomic factors, school dropouts and insecurity in Calabar South Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria; the specific objectives include:

1. To identify the major socioeconomic factors influencing school dropout among indigenes of Calabar South
2. To examine how school dropout influence insecurity in Calabar south;

Research questions: the following research questions were formulated based on the purpose to guide the study

1. What are the major socioeconomic factors influencing school dropouts among indigenes of Calabar South?
2. What is the relationship between school dropouts and insecurity in Calabar south?

### **Hypotheses**

There is no significant relationship between socioeconomic factors and school dropouts in Calabar south

There is no significant relationship between school drop outs and insecurity in Calabar south.

### **Research design and methods**

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The study area is Calabar South Local Government Area of Cross River State. Calabar South Local Government Area is one of the eighteen local government areas of Cross River State and it is part of Calabar metropolis. Using a purposeful sampling procedure, a sample 291 participants were selected from Anantigha, Bayside, Afokang and Idang, Insirung, Edibedibe communities in the study area. The reason for using this sampling technique within these communities is because these are the flashpoint where insecurity is most pronounced. The instrument for data collection is the researcher designed structured

questionnaire titled Socioeconomic factors, school dropouts and insecurity questionnaire (SFSDIQ) with response options as shown here Strongly agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); Strongly disagree (SD). The reliability of the instrument was obtained using Cronbach alpha reliability estimate which shows reliability coefficient estimate obtained to range from 0.75 to 0.80. The researcher and five trained field assistance personally administered the questionnaire to all respondents. The responses obtained from the questionnaire were processed with the use of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The statistical tool used in analyzing the data obtained is simple percentage and Pearson Product Moment correlation analysis.

### **Result and discussion**

Arising from the simple percentage analysis on table 1, out of the 291 respondents, 109 (37.7%) respondents strongly agreed that socioeconomic factors make students drop out of school, 69 (23.7%) respondents also agreed that some socioeconomic factors make students drop out of school, while 57 respondents representing 19.5% of the respondents disagreed that socioeconomic factors cannot make students drop out of school, another 56 respondents representing 19.1% strongly disagreed that socioeconomic factors cannot make any student drop out of school. A further summation of this result shows that 178 respondents representing 61.4% agreed that socioeconomic factors influence student's dropout from schools, while 113 respondents representing 38.6% disagreed that socioeconomic factors cannot influence students dropping out of schools. Judging from the majority response, socioeconomic factors influence students dropping out of schools. These factors could include poverty, lack of funding and sponsorship, distance to school, doing household chores including fetching water from long distances and dropping out of school to get menial jobs to support family among others all influence students dropping out of school.

Result from the simple percentage analysis on table 2, showing the influence of school dropout on insecurity, 117 respondents representing 40.3% strongly agreed that dropping out of school can influence insecurity, 85 respondents representing 29.2% also agreed that dropping out of school can influence insecurity through joining bad gang amongst residents of Calabar south.

Table 1: response on influence of socioeconomic factors on school drop out

S/n	Question item	Response options				Total %
		SA/%	A / %	D / %	SD/ %	
1	Most students drop out of school because they do not have sponsors,	122 41.9	71 24.4	55 18.9	43 14.8	291
2	Students are not employed, so they find it difficult to pay their fees	143 49.3	72 24.7	40 13.7	36 12.3	291
3	Some students drop out of school to support family business	130 44.8	78 26.8	36 12.3	47 16.1	291
4	Some student stay very far from the school, so they find it difficult to trek to school	156 53.8	55 18.8	45 15.4	35 12.0	291
5	Most students trek long distances to get water, so it affect their schooling	41 14.3	55 18.8	89 30.5	106 36.4	291
6	Because of the introduction of fees in primary schools, some pupils dropped out of school	45 15.4	67 23.0	94 32.2	85 29.4	291
7	Dues to some socioeconomic factors, I dropped out of school	156 53.8	71 24.3	38 13.0	26 8.9	291
8	My parents were too poor, so they couldn't continue funding my education	144 49.6	87 29.8	26 8.9	34 11.7	291
9	Sine I had no sponsor, I discontinued my education	53 18.2	48 16.4	104 35.7	86 29.5	291
10	Because I dropped out of school, I could not get any good job	105 36.2	87 29.8	41 14.1	58 19.9	291
	Total response	1095	691	568	556	2910
	Percentage	109	69	57	56	100
		SA+ A	178	D+SD	113	291
			61.4		38.6	100

Table 2: Response on the influence of school dropout on insecurity in Calabar South

S/n	Question item	Response options				Total %
		SA/%	A / %	D / %	SD/ %	
11	As I dropped out of school, I engage in so many things to survive	118 40.7	96 32.9	37 12.7	40 13.7	291
12	Since I do not have a good paying job, I decided to sell cigarette, combine, Indian hems among others to make ends meet	144 49.6	79 27.1	38 13.0	30 10.3	291
13	I have joined my friends to do some shady deals before	45 15.4	55 18.9	91 31.2	100 34.3	291
14	When most persons drop out of school, they become working tools in the hands of politicians	125 42.9	86 29.5	58 19.9	22 7.5	291
15	I have severally been recruited by politicians to work for them during elections	111 38.1	98 33.6	39 13.4	43 14.7	291
16	I had been engaged in different street fights to protect my boss and friends	132 45.3	80 27.4	40 13.7	39 13.4	291
17	School dropout are mostly engaged in different crimes	144	79	35	33	291

		49.4	27.1	12.0	11.3	
18	Most robbery and crimes are committed by area boys who are school dropout	99	104	48	40	291
19	Most of the issues of insecurity in Calabar south are caused by school drop out	34.0	35.7	16.5	13.7	291
20	It is likely that most of the insecurity witnessed in Calabar South are perpetrated by some school dropouts in the area	122	95	44	30	291
		41.8	32.6	15.1	10.3	
	Total	134	77	43	37	291
		46.0	26.4	14.7	12.7	
		1174	849	473	414	2910
		117	85	47	42	291
	Percentage	40.3	29.2	16.3	14.2	100
	Summation	SA+A	202	D+SD	89	291
			69.4		30.6	100

47 respondents representing 16.3% disagreed that dropping out of school does not in any way influence insecurity in Calabar South, while 42 respondents representing 14.2% strongly disagreed that dropping out school does not necessarily influence insecurity in Calabar South Local Government Area. A further summation of the result shows that 202 respondents representing 69.4% agreed that dropping out of school can be a catalyst to insecurity, while 89 respondents, representing 30.6% disagreed that there is no way dropping out of school can influence insecurity in Calabar South. Based on the strength of the respondents, it is strongly agreed that dropping out of school is a catalyst to insecurity in Calabar South.

### Testing of hypotheses

Hypothesis one:

The result on table 3 shows the Pearson product moment correlation analysis testing hypothesis one. There is no significant relationship between socioeconomic factors and school dropouts in Calabar south

**Table 3: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis of the relationship between socioeconomic factors and school dropouts among residents of Calabar South (N=291)**

Variables	$\sum X$	$\sum X^2 \sum Y^2$	$\sum XY$	r-val
Socioeconomic factors	2099	3879	56453	0.78
School dropouts	1894	2585		

Significant 0.05 level, critical  $r=0.178$ ,  $df =289$ .

The Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis shown on table 3 indicated that the calculated r-value of 0.78 is greater than the critical table value of 0.178 at the degree of freedom of 289 and at 0.05 significance level, it means there is a significant relationship between socioeconomic factors and school dropouts among indigence of Calabar South. The implication of this result is that when students have some socioeconomic challenges like shortage of funding, poor parental back groups, parental influence, distances to school , no sponsorship, peer influence among others, students may likely drop out of school to fend for themselves or support the family business or get menial jobs to support their families

Hypothesis two

There is no significant relationship between school drop outs and insecurity in Calabar south. The result presented on table 4 shows the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis testing the relationship between school dropout and insecurity in Calabar South.

The result on table 4 shows that the calculated r-value of 0.84 is greater than the critical table value of 0.178, at 289 degrees of freedom and 0.05 significance levels. Based on this result, it is established that there is a significant relationship between school dropouts and insecurity in Calabar south. This significant relationship is qualitative.

**Table4: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis of the relationship between school dropouts and insecurity in Calabar South, (N=291)**

<b>Variables</b>	$\sum X$	$\sum Y^2$	$\sum XY$	<b>r-val</b>
School dropouts	2051	3674	56939	0.84
Insecurity in Calabar South	1894	2585		

Significant 0.05 level, critical r=.178, df =289.

**Discussion of findings**

Result from table 1 and 2 shows that there socioeconomic factor such as poor or no funding, poverty, unemployment, distances from home to school, parental factors, sex and lack of clear vision about the purposes of education specifically to the students leads to school dropouts.

Resources like payment of school fees and charges, buying of books, school uniforms and other charges also make students drop out of school. This was also supported by the Pearson Product correlation analysis on table 3, which shows that the calculated r-value of 0.78 was higher than the critical table value of 0.178 at 289 degrees of freedom and at 0.05 significance level. The implication is that there is a significant relationship between socioeconomic factors and school drop outs in Calabar South.

This result has come to support the findings of Saleh, (2015); Okoro, (2020); Gomera, (2020) and Omolade and Audu, (2021) who in their respective studies found similar results, their respective studies found a significant relationship between poverty, unemployment, distance and school dropout, the implication of this study is that when students have parents who are poor, funding their children education becomes a problem, in some situations, these students withdraw from school to get menial jobs to help the family out. Further, in some cases, parents withdraw their children from school to come and support their farming activities or business.

This finding went beyond just looking at why some students dropped out of school, most of these respondents said some of them were living with guardians who used them to hawk different goods and groceries, by the time they are back to school they are already tired, when they dismissed from the school, they go straight to shops and carry wares again to go and sell. By the time they are back from the market, they worked all late into the night. They go to bed by 11pm or 12 am, by 4.30am, they are already awake doing home chores. These respondents posited that the circle continues without them even having an hour of rest the whole day. This circle of doing home chores, hawking and going to school continues like this day in day out, they hardly have time to do any assignments or read their books, even during examination periods, the same circle continues. When they finally failed examination, they are tagged dull and lazy students. The end result is dropping out of school.

This result also supports the earlier findings of Okeke, (2018); Oberoi, (2023); Gutierrez, (2023); Liberto, (2024) who found that there are two sets of factors responsible for school dropouts among students, one is the school related factors and the other is the students and parents related

factors. The school factors are the learning environment, the quality of teachers with the right knowledge of subject matter, the classroom, the school administration and management among others. The second issues is the students and parent related factors, students preparedness to learn, students understanding of education goals, students funding, parental decisions and control, parental influence, parental socioeconomic status, their poverty or income level, parent's income and employment status among others. All these factors influence student's concentration in school or drop out from school.

The second question and hypothesis looks at the relationship between school dropouts and insecurity in Calabar South. The simple percentage result on table 2 shows clearly that 202 respondents representing 69.4% of the respondents said school dropout influence insecurity in Calabar South, while 89 respondents representing 30.6% of the respondents disagreed that school dropout does not in any way influence insecurity in Calabar South. The result of Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis shown on table 4 indicated that the calculated r-value of 0.84 is higher than the critical table value of 0.178, at 289 degrees of freedom and 0.05 significance level. The result shows a significant relationship between school dropouts and insecurity in Calabar South. This result has earlier been found by Ekanem, (2019); Gomera,(2020); Goulet, et al., (2020) and Ediyinn, (2024) respectively found that when students drop out of school, they have not certificate to earn them any good paying jobs, they end up looking for menial jobs, very few may decide to learn a trade, while a majority of them may join friends that will lead them to easy and quick way of making illegal money.

Some may indulge in alcoholism, other go into drugs to make them high and give them temporal relief from depression, while so many may engaged in different crimes to make ends meet. Result from Table 2 and 4 further showed that there is a significant correlation between school dropout and insecurity in Calabar South Local Government Area of Cross River State. This finding is in line with the finding of Monity and Oko, (2021); National Center for Education Statistics (2019); Dupéré, et al., (2019); Dupéré, et al., (2020); Dierendonck, et al., (2020) and Cleary, et al. (2021) that found out that student who reported feeling unsafe or threatened at school



were nearly three times more likely to drop out of school than their peers who felt safe. According to the authors dropout and insecurity are interconnected issues, as students who feel unsafe or threatened in their learning environment are more likely to disengage and ultimately drop out of school.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this study has assessed the influence of socioeconomic factors, school drop outs and insecurity in Calabar South Local Government Area of Cross River State. The findings revealed a significant relationship between socioeconomic factors such as poverty, unemployment, poor funding or absence of funding and lack of access to quality education exacerbating the problem. The study highlights the need for policymakers and educators to address the systemic and structural barriers that perpetuate inequality and limit students' opportunities. It emphasizes the importance of creating safe and inclusive learning environments that promote academic achievement and social well-being. By addressing the nexus between socioeconomic factors, school dropout and insecurity, we can work towards reducing the number of students who drop out of school and improving their overall well-being. This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge and provides insights for evidence-based policies and interventions to address this critical issue in Calabar South Local Government Area of Cross River State..

### **Recommendations**

Based on the finding of this study and previous ones, it is recommended among others that:

- Government at all levels should make education free and affordable for all citizens desirous of going to schools. Government can create a special education facilities for children who are actually from poor background to give them the opportunity to go to school like their peers from well to do homes.
- Instead of churches building sky scrapers in the name of worship centers, such monies should be used to build cheaper and affordable schools for children from poor homes.

- Individual, private organizations, nongovernmental organizations and charity organizations should provide scholarship including other educational opportunities for children from poor homes to benefit and be in schools
- The Ministry of Education in Cross River State should develop and implement a comprehensive school safety and security policy that addresses the physical, emotional, and psychological well-being of students in Calabar South Local Government Area
- The Cross River State Government and relevant educational authorities should implement targeted socio-economic empowerment programs aimed at reducing poverty and unemployment among parents and guardians in Calabar South Local Government Area. This can include initiatives such as vocational training, microfinance schemes, and entrepreneurship support, which can help improve the economic stability of families and reduce the likelihood of school dropout.
- There should be the implementation of targeted interventions to address socio-economic challenges facing students and their families, improving access to quality education and resources for disadvantaged students, enhancing school safety and security measures to create a conducive learning environment and encouraging community involvement and partnerships to support students' educational and socio-emotional needs.

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