

## **Survey On Causes of Mass Failure in Senior School Certificate English Examinations from The Perspective of Teachers and Students in Yobe State**

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### **Abstract**

The research examined the mass failure of student in SSCE English Language as viewed by students and teachers in Yobe state based on four factors namely; government cause, student cause, teachers cause and parental cause. Radom sampling techniques were used to select 1000 respondents from 20 publics and 20 private secondary schools in which 800 students and 200 teachers were used for the purpose of this research from all the three zone of the Yobe state, Nigeria. Statistical package for social science was used to analyse the means of the respondents. Findings of this research revealed that Government and schools preparatory have immensely contribute to the cause of mass failure of which include insufficient number of teachers and qualified teachers in English, lack of teaching instructional materials and over use of old curriculum. findings also show that student, teacher and parents contribute to the cause of mass failure of students in English language.

Finally, the study recommends that government and schools preparatory should provide adequate funding of schools and employ qualified teachers, Students should develop interest in learning of English language, teacher should adopt more practical and modern techniques in method of teaching and parent should monitor all academic activities of the students at home.

**KEY WORD:** English language, mass failure, students and teachers

## **Introduction**

This research work is on the evaluation of the poor performance in English in selected secondary schools in Yobe state.

English language is the instrument of communication in secondary school as well as the official language of Nigeria of which the student depends on. Secondary school students need sound knowledge of English language to function properly or perform better and more importantly to get admitted into the institution of higher learning Fema (2003). It became extremely disturbing to stakeholders since it is the key to the educational development. The performance of students in Senior Secondary Schools examination in Nigeria has remained an issue of concern to all stakeholders. The report by Education Resource Centre's of the state (2020) on the survey of the performance of candidates in English language in the region over the years revealed a discernible decline. This perennial decline has remained a source of concern to educators. The trend of performance of students in English language for the past five consecutive years (2019 – 2022). was range between 25% to 35%, This has strong implications for the study of all subjects at institutions of higher learning. It is assumed that Yobe state students would be able to demonstrate these skills in their SSCE but what was observed in the last five years shows there is need for the stakeholders to do more on education especially in English language. Despite the slight improvement on the performance of students in English language SSCE in 2023, comparing their performance with other states, still Yobe state remained at the bottom line. English language remain the key factor or is the backbone of the general knowledge of both science and humanity of which all the students need from the grassroots to the tertiary institution.

## **Statement of Research Problem**

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The National Policy on Education 2004 revised edition stated that education given to children between the ages of 15 – 17 years is very important. It is also the level of education in which the future career of a child is determined.

Educating young children will help them cope with sudden step up on the concepts they will have to learn when to go to institutions of higher learning.

The importance of location to a successful academic achievement cannot be overemphasized; where the school is located determines to a very large extent the patronage such a school will enjoy. Similarly, the entire unattractive physical structure of the school building could de-motivate learners to achieve academically. This is what Isangedighi (1998) refers to as learner's environment mismatch. According to him, this promotes poor academic performance. The means or strategies employed by teachers in an attempt to impart knowledge to the learners are referred to as methodology which is another factor that could influence the students' academic performance. Sometimes when a teacher teaches and at the end of the lesson, evaluation is carried out and it is discovered that students were unable to carry out the behavioral or instructional objectives, what the teacher needs to do is to examine his teaching methods rather than looking at students as the cause. Most untrained teachers point accusing fingers on students rather than on themselves when the students are unable to carry out the expected behavior at the end of the lesson or in examinations. Therefore, teachers planning should include:

- i. Choice of appropriate teaching material
- ii. Choice of appropriate teaching method
- iii. Intensive research on the topic to be taught

- iv. Determination of the objectives for the lesson generally, peer group means a group of equals.

### **Aims and Objective of the Research**

The objectives of this study are:

1. To find out the causes of mass failure in English language as viewed by teachers and students.
2. To evaluate the performance of students in English language.
3. To assess the effects of failure in English language.

### **Research Questions**

These research seek to find the answer to the following questions.

1. What are the views of teachers and students on the role of government and school preparatory as a cause for mass failure in NECO/WAEC English language examinations?
2. What are the views of teachers and students on the role of students as a cause for mass failure in NECO/WAEC English language examinations?
3. What are the views of teachers and students on the role of teachers as a cause for mass failure in NECO/WAEC Mathematics and English language examinations?
4. What are the views of teachers and students on the role of parents as a cause for mass failure in NECO/WAEC English language examinations?

### **Scope of The Study**

The major concern of the education of a child is that child should dictate the scope and direction of his education. The child's point of view should take precedence over the teacher and the society and that education of a child should

not only be framed in the light of preconceived values and attitude of adult. However, this study is specifically limited to English language education at the senior secondary level. Senior Secondary Education referred to education given to children between 15 – 17 years of age. National Policy on Education indicated the importance of this level of education pointed out in the policy is that, it is that level of education in which the future career of young children is determined.

Senior secondary education is therefore, the key indicator of determining the future career of young children in getting admission to institutions of higher learning. The beginning of Western education to child involving 3RS, reading, writing and arithmetic it is the bedrock of education and 3-year program whereby if the child education is concentrated at that level there will be effective teaching and learning process in education.

### **Significance of The Study**

1. The findings of this study will enable the teacher focus on English language education at the senior secondary level
2. It will help parents in contributing to their children education because of the interest of parents in education influence in the learning process. Parental encouragements serve as a forum of reinforcement.
3. It will enable the proprietor of schools to provide basic tools for the educational advancement of child curriculum in order to determine the amount of teaching and learning that go on in school administration which takes between the teacher and the students.
4. It enables the government to provide adequate educational service such as libraries, laboratories e.t.c. for the students.

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5. It will also serve as a base for further advanced research in future.

### **Review of Related Literature**

English language is seen as the language used to describe the problems arising in most branches of science, technology and humanity. In spite of its importance, the performance of students in the subject has been a great concern to the society. Awokoya (1975) and Fafunwa (1980) revealed in their different research studies that everyone lives in a world where science and technology have become an integral part of the world culture, therefore for any nation to be relevant; it must not overlook the importance of her educational system. Adebule (2004) submitted that there is a consensus of opinion about the fallen standard of education in Nigeria. He further stated that parents and government are in total agreement that their huge investment on education is not yielding the desired dividend. Ashiaka(2010) Comments that Teachers also complain of students' low performance at both internal and external examinations. Oluremi (2012), subscribe to the view that infrastructure which include safe learning environment, language lab etc. play a substantial role in the teaching and learning English language and their insufficiency. He concludes that proving basic school infrastructure should be part of plan to improve student's performances at all levels.

In the same vein, Njemanze (2012) highlights that one of the major determinants of learner performance as poor teacher performance affects learners' performance'. Some additional problems identified are inconsistency on the part of government, the emergence of Nigerian English (NE), mother tongue interference, (Maduekwe 2017) poverty (Lacour & Tissington, 2011) imbalance in learner/teacher ratio, learner readiness/maturity, poor teacher/learner motivation, indiscipline among learners and

teachers as well as examination malpractice (Njemanze, 2012).The challenges teachers are facing in delivering of quality learning include poor learning environment, low language understanding, heavy work load, parental attitude, for effective learning to take place all this issues need to be addressed (Eucharia 2022). Findings revealed that over-burdening home activities contribute to mass failure of students in secondary school; parents' action and inaction contribute to mass failure of secondary school students to a great extent. Poor quality and ineffective teachers contribute to mass failure of secondary school students to a great extent (Ononye and Obiakor 2020).

(Malik 2019) recommended that Governments should design and implement teacher training programme, equip the schools with the modern instructional technology and provision of language based textbooks.

### **Methodology**

#### **Research Type**

The study intended to adopt descriptive survey type using frequency count and simple arithmetic mean for the analysis.

#### **Sampling Technique**

The target population comprised of senior secondary two and three (SS2 & SS3) students and their teachers in both public and private secondary schools in the state. A total of 800 students SS2 and SS3 students and 200 teachers are sampled from 40 senior secondary Schools by stratified sampling technique of 20 students and 10 teachers of each schools from 20 public senior secondary schools and 20 private senior secondary schools in disrespectful of gender. The reason for selecting these variables was because the teacher and the students are the major stakeholders in teaching and learning processes.

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**Data Collection Procedure**

Senior secondary schools were randomly selected for the purpose of this study. The researchers intend to meet the principals of the proposed selected senior secondary schools and sought for the permission to administer the questionnaire in their schools. After getting the approval, the researchers will proceed.

**Research Instrument**

The main instrument to be used for this study was a researchers-designed questionnaire on teachers and students' views on the causes of students' mass failure in senior secondary

certificate (SSCE) in English language examinations. The questionnaire contains two (2) sections; section A sought information on personal data of the respondents and section B contains five (4) probable causes of mass failure in SSCE English language examinations. Such include: students cause (5 items); parents' cause (5 items); Teachers' cause (5 items); Government cause (5 items); that require responses of alternative options from the respondents. The response scale is: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. In all, the questionnaire contains (-----) items seeking information about the causes of students' mass failure in SSC English language examinations.

**Data Analysis**

**1.Government Factors:** TO what extent does the Government and the preparatory schools contribute to the mass failure of student in English language SSCE examination

**Table 1: Response on the Government and preparatory schools that contribute to the mass failure of student in English language**

S/N	ITEMS	SD	A	D	SD	MEA N	GRAN D MEAN
1	There is insufficient funding of schools or poor supervision	472	408	94	26	1.67	1.83
2	Most schools Lack proper English language laboratory and Instructional materials	266	474	174	86	2.08	
3	Schools Lack conducive environment for learning	226	506	180	88	2.13	
4	Most curriculum are not reviewed	500	280	66	154	1.87	
5	Frequent transfer or dismissals of teachers	454	260	120	166	2.00	

From the table above, it shows clearly that the grand mean is 1.83 in Table 1 above, and all the mean Responses were above 1.5 with the mean

ranging from 1.67 to 2.13 it indicates that lack of proper funding of schools, lack of instructional materials, poor school environment, over use of

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old curriculum and also instability of teacher in most school, all these factors result to mass

failure of student's English language Examination.

**2.Student Factors:** TO what extent does students contribute to the mass failure in English language examination.

**Table 2: Response on Students that contribute to the mass failure of student in English language.**

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN	GRAND MEAN
6	Students spend much of their time on social media or watching movies	500	240	54	206	1.97	1.81
7	Students lack of reading habit contributes to the poor performance in English language.	414	392	80	114	1.89	
8	Students are involve in more theoretical work than the practical	406	274	160	160	1.89	
9	Lack of interest on parts of the students result to poor performance	552	150	152	146	2.07	
10	Students have less attitude in solving assignment or class work in English language	494	312	154	40	1.74	

The table above shows that the grand mean is 1.81. All the mean Reponses were above 1.5 these indicates that with the mean range from 1.74 to 2.07, it shows that most of the students spend most of their times on social media or watching

movies, lack of interest, student's lacks reading habit, student have less practical than theory and Students have less attitude in solving assignment or class work in English language result to mass failure of students.

**3.Teachers Factors:** TO what extent does the Teachers contribute to the mass failure of student in English language SSCE examination

**Table 3: Response on Teachers that contribute to the mass failure of student in English language**

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN	GRAND MEAN
11	Teachers have problems or difficulty in preparation or lessons Presentation in English language	484	236	114	166	1.96	1.83
12	Inadequate teachers in terms of number and quality	426	394	74	106	1.86	
13	Teachers have less interest in teaching profession	506	214	280	-	1.77	

14	Teachers have difficulty in adaptation of teaching method use in any lesson	474	304	128	94	1.84	
15	Lack of instructional materials or poor administering of class activity	196	484	154	166	2.29	

From the table above the grand mean is 1.83, all the means of the response falls within the range that is from 1.77 to 2.29, this shows that most of the teachers have problems or difficulty in preparation or lessons Presentation, Inadequate teachers in terms of numbers and quality, teachers

have less interest in teaching profession, teachers have difficulty in adaptation of teaching methods use in any lesson and lack of instructional materials and poor administering of class activity. All These roles have negative impacts on the mass failure of English language examination.

**Parental Factors:** TO what extent does the Parents contribute to the mass failure of student in English language SSCE examination.



**Table 4: Response on parents that contribute to the mass failure of student in English language**

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN	GRAND MEAN
16	Parents have less concern on necessary English learning materials for their children	500	222	74	204	1.98	1.81
17	parents lacks proper monitoring of children note books and assignment at home	428	294	154	124	1.97	
18	Parents have difficulty in assisting their children in solving some of English language class work	468	162	148	222	2.12	
19	Parents engage their children in other activities at home than studies during holidays or after school hours	558	166	98	178	1.90	
20	Most parents lack awareness or Interest on the role of English language	648	194	30	128	1.64	

From the table above the grand mean is 1.81, all the means of the response falls within the range that is from 1.64 to 2.12. This shows that Parents have less concern on necessary English learning materials for their children, parents lack proper monitoring of children note books and assignment at home, Parents have difficulty in assisting their children in solving some of English class work, Parents engage their children in other activities at homes than studies during holidays or after school hours and most parents lack awareness and Interest on the role of English. This shows parental factors have contributed to the mass failure of student's in English language examination.

**Discussion of Findings**

The data obtained and result of the analysis has led the researcher to some findings that government and school preparatory have contributed immensely in the region to the mass failure of students, Insufficient funding of schools or poor supervision and over use of old curriculum are the most contributory factors

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followed by the other factors like inadequate teaching materials, lack of libraries and language laboratories, lack of supervision and inspection of teachers. Provision of adequate teaching materials, provision of more classrooms and furniture, provision of libraries and laboratories, proper supervision, inspection of teachers, monitoring of lessons, completion of syllabus as well as administering more examinations and quizzes as ways of improving performance students in English language.

The researcher has also find out that students have less attitude in solving assignment or class work, spend much of their time on social media or watching movies than reading, this impression has made them to develop hatred for the subject which invariably contribute to poor performances in the subject area.

Furthermore, the researcher finds out the extent to which teacher factor contributed to mass failure of secondary school students in English language. This indicates that: Inadequate teachers in terms of numbers and quality and ineffective



teaching methods lead to the mass failure of the students to a great extent. This implies that teacher-factor contributes to mass failure of secondary school students in English language. the findings also revealed that repeated failure of SSCE English language could lead to loss of interest in education. And mass failure of SSCE English language could lead to lack of English language teachers in the education sector which is not healthy for a developing nation. This implied that repeated failure of SSCE English language will lead to shortage of English teachers in the near future to come.

Finally, lack of parental participation in the education of children are some of the main causes and parents lack proper monitoring of children note books and assignments at home. Lack of parental participation in the education of their children are some of the main factors indicate that lack of encouragement of students by parents affects students' performance to a great extent; lack of parental involvement in students' class activities to a great extent, and; poor motivation and poor supervision by parents lead to mass failure of students in Examinations. This implies that parents contribute to mass failure of secondary school students in English to a great extent.

### **Conclusions**

The mass failure of English language SSCE examination in yobe state has become the pressing problems of all the stake holder despite the state of emergency declared on education by the state governor, SSCE results from 2015 to 2022 shows less than 35% pass English language at pass level.

The sample population of eight hundred (800) students and two hundred (200) teachers in 40 schools were drawn for respondents in this study, Using the statistical package (spss) the researcher employed the mean method of data analysis and

came out with the following conclusions: Government and school preparatory are responsible for mass failure of students; Students are engage in social media or watching movies with their phones than studies result to mass failure; Poor quality and inadequate teachers contribute to mass failure of students; over-burdening home activities by parents contribute to mass failure of students; parents' action and inaction contribute to mass failure of secondary school students in English language to a great extent.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the conclusion reached from the data investigation and analysis, the researcher makes the following recommendations:

1. Government and school preparatory should provide adequate funding of schools so that basics educational facilities like instructional materials, standard laboratories and class rooms in order to enhance teaching and learning.
2. Frequent transfer or dismissal of English language teachers from school should be discouraged
3. Parents and Teachers should monitor students to concentrate on their studies not to waste time on social media or watching movies.
4. Students should be encourag to developed interest in reading habit.
5. There is need for the employment of qualified teachers who are knowledgeable in English language to teach.
6. English teachers should constantly employ appropriate methods for teaching.
7. Parents should limit the level of domestic chores done by their children at home in order to enable them devote more time to their studies.

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8. Parents should serve as mentors to their children by encouraging them in classwork. They should be involved in students' activities in schools and encourage them, not just paying school fees.

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