



EFFECT OF VARIABLES ON STUDENTS' PERFORMANCES IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN WEST AFRICAN SENIOR SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS IN NORTH-WEST GEOPOLITICAL ZONE, NIGERIA (2012-2016)

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ABSTRACT

This study analysed the impact of variables on students' performances in English Language in West African Senior School Certificate Examinations in North-West Geo-Political Zone, Nigeria from 2012-2016. The study was carried out with three objectives which are to: analyse pass and fail in English Language by male and female secondary school students in North-West Zone, compare pass and fail in English Language between private and public secondary school students in North-West Zone and examine pass and fail in English Language between urban and rural secondary school students in North-West Zone. Also, three hypotheses were formulated which are: there is no significant relationship performance (pass/fail) in English Language and gender (male/female) of secondary school students in North-West Zone, there is no significant relationship between performance (pass/fail) in English Language and type (private/public) of secondary school students in North-West-Zone and there is no significant relationship between performance (pass/fail) in English Language and location (urban/rural) of secondary school students in North-West Zone. The three hypotheses were tested at 0.05 significance level. The study population was 1,302,150. The sample size of 20,367 students consist 11,561 males and 8,806 females SSCE results from 7 private and public schools purposively selected was used for analysis. The study adopted Ex-post facto research design. An instrument titled: Senior Secondary Students Academic Performances Inventory (SSSAPI) used for the study was pilot-tested and reliability co-efficient was determined using Coronach Alpha technique which revealed a reliability index of 0.78. The study employed percentages and Chi-square statistics to analyse the data collected. One of the hypothesis was retained and two are rejected. The findings revealed that there is no significant relationship in the performances in English Language between male and female students in WASSCE in North-West Geo-Political Zone, Nigeria. However, findings shows significant relationship existed in the performances in English Language between private and public and urban and rural schools in WASSCE in North-West Geo-Political Zone, Nigeria. It was recommended among others that the officials of ministries of education in the seven states should develop policies and strategies such as provision of textbooks, facilities and regular visit to schools to monitor performance standards in English Language. In addition, state ministry of education should employ qualified teachers and sponsor them to attend seminars and workshops in English Language so as to reduce the failure rate of the students and help bridge the gap with students from the urban schools.

1 INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the fundamental instruments for development in all countries in fulfilling the objectives set down in the National Policy on Education. These objectives includes, inculcation of national consciousness and unity; the inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and Nigeria society; the training of the mind in the understanding of the world around; and acquisition of appropriate skills and the development of mental, physical and social abilities and competencies as equipment for the individual to live in and



contribute to the development of his society (FRN, 2016). The hope of every country of the world to the development of human capital for effective functioning of the society are depended on education, being an instrument of change. Education in Nigeria is an invaluable instrument of political, social, economic, scientific and technological development.

Among the levels of education in Nigeria, secondary education which is the pivot of the entire educational system is fast losing its relevance which among other factors is due to unsatisfactory and poor performance of students in English Language in West African Certificate Examinations. The main aims of secondary school education in Nigeria, as stated in the National Policy on Education (FME, 2005), were to prepare the individual child for (i) Useful living in the society's; and (ii) For higher education. In reality these aims are very often defeated as most secondary school graduates fail to adapt adequately to society and fail to succeed in post-secondary education. For some time now, there has been increasingly vocal and widespread criticism of the examination system in Nigeria. West African Senior School Certificate Examinations (WASSCE), which determines the placement of Nigeria students in higher learning and for employment, is of particular concern.

In Nigeria, public discussions frequently focus on educational standards. The public's unhappiness becomes more prominent following the annual release of the West African Senior School Certificate Examination results. Student outcomes do not match the government and parental investment. All stakeholders are concerned about why the system is turning out graduates with poor results especially in English Language. To them, it is questionable whether or not teacher's in the secondary schools, the most important factors in the effectiveness of schools and in the quality of a child's education is competent to teach effectively. The National Policy on Education states, no education system can rise above the quality of teachers in the system (FME, 2005). Ogunsaju (2004) states that the academic standard in all Nigerian educational institutions has fallen considerably below societal expectations. Blumende (2001) corroborated this view when he reported that the decline in the performance of students in English Language cannot be ignored by anyone who is aware of the significant role played by the subject in the advancement of students to higher institutions.

Apart from the reasons stated above, other reasons outlined as causes of mass failure in English Language include non-chalant attitude of pupils, youth disillusion and uncared attitude of parents about their children (Bello, and Osagie, 2013). Others are dilapidated infrastructure, lack of teaching and learning facilities, poor teacher's motivation, abysmal funding and in-competent teachers (The Guardian 8th July, 2011). Ajayi (2011) mentioned some problems as parents' failure to pay attention to the needs of their children and lack of value orientation, corruption and less emphasis on hard work, television viewing and unregulated internet, face-book surfing and abuse of mobile telephone use. In addition, Adesola (2013) said dying culture of reading amongst the children also contributed to the problem of mass failure especially in English Language.

Similarly, a number of researchers have independently outlined some factors they considered responsible, or at least contributed to this trend (Okeke, 2007, Sule, Akonsolu, Olatoun, Chukwu and Peace, 2013). These factors include:

- i. Dissatisfaction with the syllabus;
- ii. Lack of functional counseling unit;
- iii. Lack of appropriate English Language textbooks;
- iv. Lack of English Language laboratory;
- v. English Language teachers' attitude to work;
- vi. Teachers/students relationship;
- vii. Motivation and interest in learning English Language; and
- viii. Students' previous experiences/knowledge of instruction.

Researchers and stakeholders in education industry have in the recent past identified several factors as the causes of poor performance of students in English Language in SSCE examinations. Among such factors identified are poor location of the school, incessant changes in government policies, closure of schools, which is contingent upon teachers' strike action, home-school distance, high student teacher ratio, lack of supervision, monitoring and evaluation machinery, insufficient facilities, poor content and context of instruction, poor and non-conducive environment, inadequacy of professional qualified teachers among others (Odesola, 2001, Adeboyeje, and Olaniyi 2003).

Released results by the West African Examination Council for the May/June 2014 Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE) according Leadership Newspaper (August 12, 2014) indicates that a total of 1,705,976 Candidates registered for the examination out which 529,425 candidates representing 31.28% obtained credits in 5 subject and above including English Language indicating that 68.72% of the students failed.



Given the above varying positions and given the fact that the failure rate in English Language has been rising with each successive year a trend that has been found not only in the North-West Zone, Nigeria but in the entire country. This present study on the Effect of Variables on Students' Performances in English Language in West African Senior School Certificate Examinations in North-West Geo-Political Zone, Nigeria (2012-2016) has become quite necessary and urgent based on current trend that might become a greater problem if urgent attention and solution is not given by all stakeholders in the education industry. This was the thrust of the study.

1.2 Problem Statement

Performance in West African Senior School Certificate Examinations (WASSCE) in English Language in North-West Zone, Nigeria has been abysmally poor over the years. Available statistics shows that the failure rate in English Language in May/June West African Senior Secondary School Certificate Examinations (WASSCE) has given all stakeholders serious concern. According to online report of released results by WAEC in 2010, 76.50% was recorded as failure rate in English Language in 2008, 74.01% failure rate was recorded in 2009 while 75.06% was recorded as failure rate in 2010.

Also, the trend of the failure rate for a period of five years (2012-2016) shows a steady decline in the failure rate in English Language. The FME, Nigeria Digest of Education Statistics 2018, shows the trend of failure rate in English Language in the WASSCE results from 2012-2016. The statistics reveals that 61.19% of the students failed English Language in May/June 2012, while 64.26% failed in 2013. Also 69.98% failed in 2014 while 61.60% failed in 2015. According to the statistics, a total of 45.80% failure was recorded in English Language in 2016. Going by the trend above, it is clear that there was persistent poor performance of secondary school students in English Language examinations conducted by West African Senior Secondary School Certificate Examinations (WASSCE) in Nigeria. Efforts by all stakeholders, including the government towards finding lasting solution yielded no result.

Therefore, the poor performances of the secondary schools undermines students' chances of joining institutions of higher learning and jeopardizes opportunity for placement, and in most cases reduces an individual's active participation in national development. This research work therefore sought to analyse the Effect of Variables on Students' Performances in English Language in West African Senior School Certificate Examinations in North-West Geo-Political Zone, Nigeria (2012-2016) with a view to salvage the situation.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The following objectives were formulated:

- (1) Analyse pass and fail in English Language among male and female secondary school students in North-West Zone, Nigeria (2012-2016).
- (2) Compare pass and fail in English Language between private and public secondary school students in North-West Zone, Nigeria (2012-2016).
- (3) Examine pass and fail in English Language between urban and rural secondary school students in North-West Zone, Nigeria (2012-2016).

1.4 Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

- (1) What is the number of pass and fail in English Language among male and female secondary school students in North-West Zone, Nigeria (2010-2014)?
- (2) What is the number of pass and fail in English Language between private and public secondary school students in North-West Zone, Nigeria (2010-2014)?
- (3) What is the number of pass and fail in English Language between urban and rural secondary school students in North-West Zone, Nigeria (2010-2014)?

1.5 Research Hypothesis

The following null hypotheses were generated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

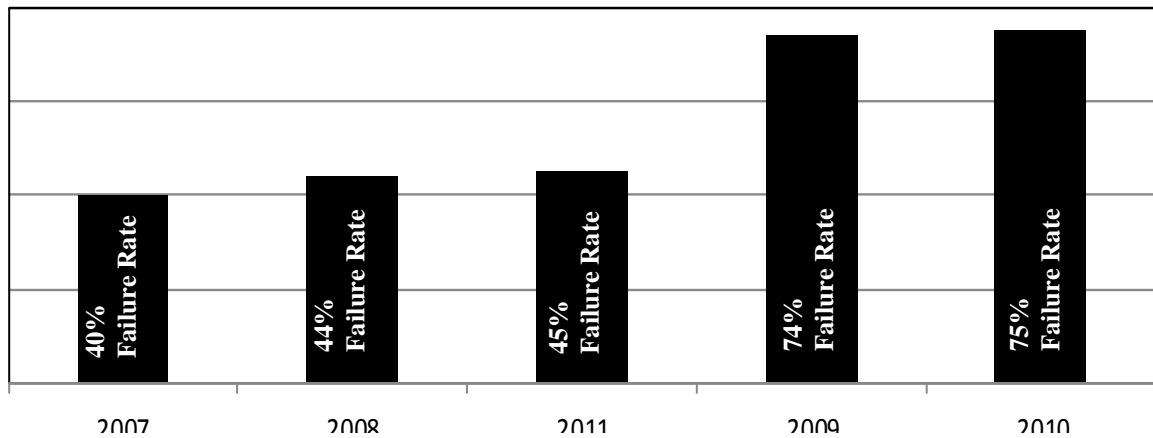
- Ho₁ There is no significant relationship between performance (pass/fail) in English Language and gender (male/female) of secondary school students in North-West Zone, Nigeria (2012-2016).
- Ho₂ There is no significant relationship between performance (pass/fail) in English Language and type (private/public) of secondary school students in North-West Zone, Nigeria (2012-2016).
- Ho₃ There is no significant relationship between performance (pass/fail) in English Language and location (urban/rural) of secondary school students in North-West Zone, Nigeria (2012-2016).



2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

A comparative analysis of these results released by West African Examination Council (WAEC) each year and over many years revealed students abysmal performance in all subjects especially in English Language. WAEC reports of (2004 – 2008) as recorded by Wushishi and Usman (2013) showed that in 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008, only 43%, 37%, 35%, 40% and 44% of the students had 5 credits and above including English Language. The Head of the Nigeria National Office of WAEC, Dr Uyi Uwadiae, corroborated this in 2011 report, where only 38.89% of the candidates obtained 5 credits and above (Vanguard Newspaper, 2011). This is represented in a chat below:

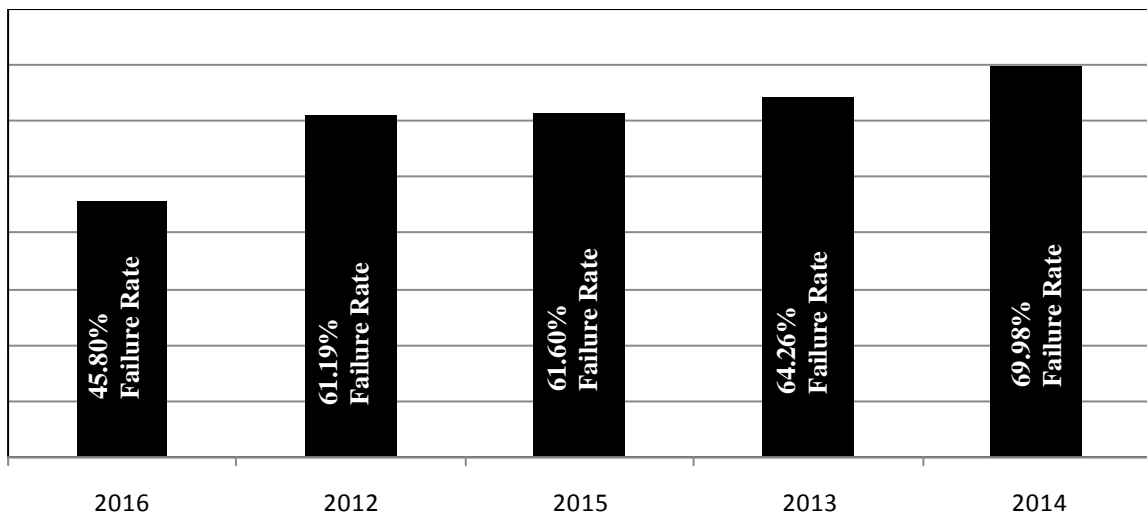
**Bar Chart 1: Students Performances in English Language
May/June WAEC (2007 - 2011)**



Source: Authors' Field Work

The bar chart 1 shows that in 2007, 40% failure rate was recorded in English Language, 44% failure rate was recorded in 2008, while 45% was recorded as failure rate in 2009. Also, a total of 74% and 75% failure were recorded in 2010 and 2011 respectively.

**Bar Chart 2: Students Performances in English Language May/June WAEC
(2012-2016)**



Source: FME, Nigeria Digest of Education Statistics, 2018



The bar chart 2 reveals that 61.19% of the students failed English Language in 2012, while 64.26% failure rate was recorded in 2013. In the same vein, 69.98%, 61.60% and 45.80% failure rate were recorded in 2014, 2015, and 2016 respectively in English Language.

To compare this period (2007 - 2011) with the years (2012 - 2016) under review further shows a consistent fall in the performances of the students in English Language in May/June examinations. Going by this publication, it is disheartening to note that Nigeria recorded 61.19% failure rate and 64.26% failure rate in 2012 and 2013. Also, the failure rate was 69.98% in 2014 while 61.60% and 45.80% was recorded for 2015 and 2016 respectively.

2.2 Variables

Gender (Male and Female)

Gender is a cultural construct that distinguishes the roles, behaviour, mental and emotional characteristics between males and females developed by a society. Umoh (2003) defines gender as a psychological term used in describing behaviours and attributes expected of individuals on the basis of being born as either male or female. Also, Nwobia (2007) sees sex as the biological distribution between male and female while gender is a social constructs involving differences between male and female, that is, the societal role assignment on the male and female sexes.

According to Okeke (2003) the study of gender is not just mere identification of male and female sexes. Scholars have gone further to identify responsibilities assigned to opposite sexes and to analyze the conditions under which those responsibilities are assigned. Similarly, Haig (2004) sees gender as the range of physical, biological, mental and behavioural characteristics pertaining to and differentiating between masculinity and femininity. Depending on the context, the term may refer to biological sex (i.e the state of been male and female or intersex).

Furthermore, Okeke (2003) specifically notes that the study of gender means the analysis of the relationship of men and women including the division of labour, access to resources and other factors which are determined by society as opposed to being determined by sex. It further involves the study of the socio-cultural environment under which responsibilities are assigned and the relationship emanating from it. Thus, gender equally projects the properties that distinguish and, classify organisms on the basis of their reproductive and cultural expectant roles. It relates to the cultural and psychological attributes of men and women through their socio-economic contributions, expectations and limitations.

Thus, the concept of gender does not support or suggest the dominance of male over female or vice versa in academics and other human resource development areas but it stresses equality and equity in enhancing effective recognition, development and utilization of competencies and efficient and endowed capabilities of both sexes.

2.3 Rural Location of Schools

Rural areas are characterized with low population, subsistence mode of life, monotonous and burden. Usually, rural areas are without basic social amenities such as good roads, water, electricity etc. Therefore, rural schools are schools located in villages or remote areas. Owoye (2002) and Onah (2011) indicated that schools in the rural areas are usually without electricity, pipe borne water, few and less qualified teachers, less learning facilities and infrastructure. They admitted that the absence of basic social amenities has negatively affected the students' academic performance in public examination.

2.4 Urban Location of Schools

Urban consist of people living in a city or town. That is it relates to cities and the people who live in them. It is characterized by high population density, social amenities such as good roads, electricity, water etc and high variety and beauty. Therefore, urban schools are schools located in the cities or metropolis. Akpan (2008) indicated that schools in urban areas have electricity, water supply, more teachers, more learning facilities and infrastructure.

Edem (1982) supported this argument and reported that a good administrator (principal) must develop policy and strategy that will bring about better performance in examination. According to the author, such policy and strategy includes:

- Determine the problem associated with poor performance of students.
- Examine the detailed make-up of the problem in existing situation.
- Decide on the criteria for resolving the problem
- Develop a plan for action for solving the problem.



2.5 Students' Academic Performance in English Language

English Language occupies a meaningful position in our curriculum because of its importance. Obanga (1982) points out that English Language plays a uniform role in Nigeria because it is the only language common to Nigerians from diverse linguistics, social, cultural, religious and geographical backgrounds. This is in line with the known fact that English Language is a means of instruction in our primary, post primary and tertiary institutions.

Therefore, English Language serves as a gateway to formal education because almost all the subjects in secondary schools are taught in English Language. The foregoing leaves no doubt in our mind that English occupies an enviable position in Nigeria. It can be seen as the livewire of the survival growth and the unity of Nigeria. In response to this, Olagoke (1979) stresses that English Language should be taught and learned in schools because it is indispensable to modern living. Its indispensability is in view of the fact that it is the language of science and technology, commerce, trade and administration, a means of national and international communication, and finally a passport for educational advancement and prestigious employment.

In addition, teaching/learning process for all subjects excepts the indigenous languages, are carried out in English, since all their texts are written in English language. There are about 400 different languages in Nigeria and in such a diversified country like Nigeria where people of many dialects and linguistics background work side by side. English language has been used to cement these different groupings. Also, the aim of language teaching in schools as contained in the language syllabus by Federal Ministry of Education (2005) for junior and senior secondary English Language curriculum are as follows:

- a. Provide students with a sound linguistic basis for further learning in secondary, tertiary and vocational instructions.
- b. Equip school learner with a satisfactory level of proficiency in English Language in their places of work.
- c. Stimulate a love for reading as pleasurable activity.
- d. Promote the art of spoken English as a medium for national and international communication.
- e. Enhance and develop further the various skills and competences already acquired at the primary and secondary levels

Finally, the National Policy on Education (2005) set out a goal for language teaching at the primary level. That is the aim to attain permanent literacy in the mother tongue and target language. The aim of language teaching is therefore, to enable the learners to use the language in communication both orally and literally (written).

2.6 Importance of English Language

The importance of English Language in Nigeria cannot be over emphasized considering the fact that English Language assumes the position of Nigeria second language. Nigeria is a country with diverse ethnic groups and languages considering the land mass and the population of people living in Nigeria into the various languages. English Language has become an important means of communication among the different ethnic groups.

The important of English language is most noticeable in the field of education where any person seeking admission into post-secondary institution must at least have a pass in the subject before he or she can be given admission into any Nigeria University, Polytechnic or College of Education. Onugbo (2005) stated on the importance of English Language, that six grade of credit pass, is acceptable for admission into any university in Nigeria and requirement for employment by implication, this means that a candidate must have at least a credit in English Language before he or she can be given admission.

Quick (2006) said that language is like religion which is clearly powerful and unifying force. This implies that English Language as used in Nigeria today is a powerful unifying instrument to both the students and society at large. Even since the introduction of English in Nigeria by the missionaries that invaded the country during 18th century, English Language has gained dominance and popularity as the world most popular language which is widely used by the government, mass media, in business etc. This means that all the sectors of our economy today make use of the English Language as a means of communication in carrying out their duties.

2.7 Performance in English Language in secondary school Examination

Despite the importance of English Language and the fact that it is the Language of instruction in Nigeria educational system, the performance of students in the subject over the years has been very poor and not encouraging. Ubahakwa (2002) pointed out that increase enrolment figure over the years also shows a decline in the performance of students. A release of the Federal Ministry of Education in 2000 categorically stated that only 421



students (about 9.9%) of the 1,244,524 who wrote the English Language paper in the school certificate examination in the past 3 years, passed above credit level.

According to WAEC enrolment from (2000-2004), a total of 4,333,453 candidates sat for the English Language examination at the senior school certificate examination, and only 108,162 (25%) had credit in the subject ranging from (A1-C6), 1,351,09 candidates (31%) had ordinary pass which is equivalent to failure due to its inability to secure admission in the tertiary institution or university. 1,901,234 candidates (43%) of the total enrolled population failed English Language within this period under review.

From the above analysis of WAEC enrolment from 2000-2004 on students' performance in English Language in the senior secondary school certificate examination, it is very discouraging considering the number and percentage of failure released within this period. It shows that performance of Nigeria students in English Language examination is below average.

Most English Language teachers feel very annoyed because sometimes when students perform poorly like this; teachers are usually blamed in most cases. They are assumed not to have done their job well. Sometimes, they blame it on the individual background, mother tongue interference, comprehension problem, social factor and individual differences etc. Eze (2004) was of the opinion that the reason behind the poor performance of students in English Language examinations can be attributed to their inability to interpret written Language and also answer comprehension questions in their own words. Obinyan (2005) agrees with the above comment by Eze where he said that students can do well in English Language examination, if only they can be able to answer the question in their own words and avoid unnecessary lifting which might result to ambiguous answers.

2.8 Factors Responsible for Students Poor Performance in English Language

Several factors have been attributed to the reason why students perform poorly in English Language examination. Femi (2006) listed the following factors which include;

1. Childs' background
2. Mother tongue inference
3. Teachers' factor
4. Social factor

1. Childs' Background

According to Femi (2006), the background of a child to an extent has a very strong influence on the child's physical and mental development process. A child from rich background develops faster than a child from a poor background who some time experiences some difficulties in the process of growing up.

Chukwuemeka (2006) share the same view with Femi where he said that children from rich background whose parents are educated are usually exposed more than children from poor homes who are usually shy. They always do not to come out to the public place because of their poor status which sometimes leads to inferiority complex.

However, Anada (2006) was of the view that environment where a child grew-up determines the level of achievement and educational attainment of such a child. A child who grew up in an environment where English Language is the language of communication will definitely grow up to know how to speak English unlike a child that grew up in a remote environment where the language of instruction, communication and interaction is in his/her native dialect, such a child will find it very difficult to adopt to a new environment where they speak a different language altogether.

Okereke (2005) added that rich parents usually send their children to the schools in the town for the sole purpose of acquiring the best knowledge, unlike poor parents who experience some difficulty in sponsoring their children in school. In Nigeria to be precise, it is noticeable that children from rich background go to the best school in the country (private schools) whereas children from poor homes are usually seen in public schools which are less expensive.

2. Mother Tongue Interference

Mother tongue is one of the factors that influence child's ability to speak English fluently. Eze (2006) was of the opinion that children find it very hard to learn a new language especially in a situation where they are only been taught how to do things in their native dialect.

This will take a long time for the children to gain familiarity with the new language. In Nigeria for instance, there are several ethnic groups and diverse language, children are taught morals in their various native dialect. So,



there is every possibility that when they want to express themselves in English, there is bound to be some interference in either their information or pronunciation e.g. The vowel sound /i/ and /I:/ look alike but are distinct in terms of functions. Children who have only spoken their natural dialect all their life will find it very difficult to notice the difference between these two vowels in the way they pronounce them.

3. Teachers' Factor

The whole problem of teaching and learning revolved round the teachers whose importance in education system cannot be overemphasized. Holiday, Wright, Horn, and Sanders (2006) were of the opinion that the issue of qualified English teacher is one of the determining factors to the performance of the students in English Language examination. They went further to say that a good English teacher is one of the determining factors to the performance of students in English Language examination. Gwarjiko (2015) stated that a good English teacher ought to know the modern method of teaching language courses in order to bring about moderation, participation and interest. They went further to say that the importance of the modern methodology of teaching English will also aid the teacher and students to acquire the desired objective.

4. Social Factor

This is another factor that may hinder the performance and proficiency of students in English Language in Nigeria considering that Nigeria is linguistically erogenous. Speaking on the social factors that influence the use of English Language Bamgbose (2007) pointed out that the basic errors committed by people using English in bilingual situations are usually grammatical and lexical errors. These errors are caused by the interference of native dialect and Pidgin English. Also, social factor as one of the hindrance to students' performance in English Language and indeed academic work in general has posited by many scholars and researchers. Chinwubar (2006) was of the opinion that high or low performance is not a matter of inheritance, but on the basis of environmental circumstance of the people since everyone is born with the innate ability to do things.

2.9 Factors Responsible for Poor Academic Performance

The causes of low level of academic performance of students in recent years have been a subject of concern to all stakeholders. In Nigeria, studies have sought to explain the trend of students' performance in the West African Senior School Certificate Examinations (WASSCE). Some have attributed the low level of performance to factors inherent in the students and in the syllabuses.

The years (2012-2016) under review shows consistent decline in the performance of the students. Going by the publication of Leadership Newspaper of Tuesday, August 12, 2014, it is disheartening to note that in 2010 Nigeria recorded 75.06% failure rate and 44.66% failure rate in 2011. Also, the failure rate was 61.19% in 2012 while 35.74% and 68.72 was recorded for 2013 and 2014 respectively. This was collaborated by Daily Newswatch Newspaper of Tuesday August 12, 2014 which recorded that only 31% pass SSCE / WAEC in May/June 2014 examinations.

In addition, there have been contentions that the type of school affects learning activities which in turn affect performance of students. The type of school can be viewed from two main perspectives: Private and public. A private school is a school supported and controlled by religious/social organizations or other private/groups/individuals. On the other hand, a public school is any school controlled and/or supported by the State or Federal Government.

According to Adomako (2005) and Asante (2005) students who attend private schools perform better than those who attend public schools. They attributed this to the fact that the class size is small and there is adequate attention for close learning. Similarly, available statistics on schools in the United States of American (USA) National Center for Education statistics indicated that performance on standardized tests was higher in private schools than public schools (Council for American Private Education, 2004). Among the reasons adduced for the relatively lower performance in public secondary schools are ineffective supervision, low parental support and differences in the school climate including indiscipline and insecurity. Others are differences in infrastructural facilities, motivation of teachers, differences in enrolment and student/teacher ratio.

Also, Yvonme and Soyibo (1998) stressed that student performance is very much dependent on socio-economic background and high school students' level of performance had statistically significant difference if linked to their gender, grade level, school location, school type, student type and socio-economic background. In the same vein, Craig and Ronald (2003) posited that differences in students' socio-economic background explained much of the variation in student performance. George (2001) found that weak students do better when grouped with other weak students. While Laosa (2005) findings were somewhat contradicting to George (2001) findings that student's



performance depends on number of different factors and that when weak students are paired with brilliant students the weak paired might reduce the grades of other students.

Fabunmi, Peter, and Isaiah (2007) examined class factor as a determinant of secondary school students' academic performance in Akwa Ibom state between 1997 and 2002. The researchers used multiple regression and One Way Analysis of Variances (ANOVA) to test the two hypotheses at 0.05% level of significance. The findings revealed that the three class factor (class size, students classroom, and class utilization rate) when taken together, contributed significantly to secondary school students' academic performance. These factors when taken separately, determined significantly secondary school student academic performance.

Shodimu (2009) conducted a study on the relationship between resources (teacher quality, availability of classrooms, well equipped laboratories, libraries, workshops and academic learning time) and students' academic performance in the secondary school examination in 2008 in both private and public schools in Lagos State. The researcher used stratified random sampling to select 35 public schools and 3 private schools. He found that public secondary schools' resources were over-utilized while private secondary schools were under-utilized their resources. He found a significant relationship between student/teacher ratio and school's productivity in term of students' academic performance. He further found a statistically significant relationship between the qualities of teachers, laboratories, workshops and academic learning time provided in the school and school's productivity.

Benjamin (2008) conducted a research on school mapping and resources supply as related to students' performance in Kwara State secondary schools. The study involved 3,614 students, 55 teachers and 50 principals. The researcher used T-test and Chi-Square statistics to test the hypotheses. The researcher found that students' academic performance in English Language and Mathematics was significantly related to geographical location of the schools. Factors such as community influence, journey to school, physical facilities, instructional materials and teacher manpower significantly influenced students' academic performance in English Language and Mathematics except physical facilities, which was not significantly related to student; academic performance in English Language.

Akanle (2007) studied socio-economic factors influencing students' academic performance in Nigeria using some explanation from a local survey. The major instrument used in the collection of data for the study was the self-developed instrument tagged "socio-economic and academic performance rating scale of the student". The data collected were analyzed using T-test. A total of 120 questionnaires were administered to participants. The study revealed that insufficient parental income, family type and lack of funding by governments are factors influencing students' academic performance.

2.10 Review of Related Empirical Studies

The following relevant empirical studies were reviewed in relation to the present study so as to ascertain the performances of students in West African Senior School Certificate Examinations in North-West Zone, Nigeria.

Gwarjiko (2015) conducted a study on the effect of mixed-gender streaming on the academic performance of senior secondary school level students in English Language in Niger State. In the course of the work, the researcher compared the performance of male and female students in the mixed-gender streams in English Language. The population of the study was 53,468 from 248 schools of both single and mixed gender streams. Out of this, one mixed-gender class of 44 students made up of 33 males and 11 females was sampled from senior secondary schools in Minna metropolis. The researcher used quasi-experimental research design. The instruments used for data collection were NECO 2011 November/December past question papers that served as the test instruments, the curriculum content and prepared lesson notes used during treatment. Frequency counts and Arithmetic mean were used for descriptive analysis. This study is anchored on Bandura (1986)'s social learning theory. This theory emphasis the importance of biological, social and cultural impacts on human behavioural development and learning especially on gender and genders specific traits and roles. The results revealed that there was no significant difference between the performance of male and female students in mixed-gender streaming. The female students, however, performed better than the male ones and the results of the two genders were generally poor. It was therefore, concluded that the mixed-gender streaming was less effective in enhancing better academic performance especially in English Language in Niger State. Consequently, the researcher recommends that the Niger State Government review the system for better positioning.

This study is very important and relevant to the present study though limited to Niger State. However, the present study is conducted in the North-West Zone of the country and is wider in scope as it embraces other variables such as urban/rural and private/public secondary schools.



Also, Ezeudu and Obi (2013) conducted a study on effect of gender and location on students' performance in Mathematics in Secondary Schools in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State, Nigeria. The study was guided by 3 research questions and 3 hypotheses. The sample of the study was made up of 827 students comprising 493 males and 354 females. Eight secondary schools were sampled using simple random sampling techniques. A proforma was instrument which enable the researchers to copy results from the school past records in the respective schools through the help of the school principals. Mean and standard deviations were used to answer the research questions and t-test statistic was used to analyze the hypotheses. The findings showed that male students; achieved significantly better than the female students in both urban and rural schools. Also there was no significant difference in the academic performance of student in urban and rural schools. The study recommended among others that adequate incentives from federal government, parents and stakeholders of education should be provided to female students to encourage them to perform better.

This study is very important and relevant to the present study though conducted in Enugu State. However, the present study covers all the States in the North-West Zone of Nigeria and is wider in scope as it embrace variable on private/public secondary schools.

Abayomi and Obadara (2013) conducted a study on the performance of students in English Language and Mathematics in West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination in Nigeria. Their research work was conducted with a total of 1,826 public secondary schools from Lagos, Enugu, Akwa-Ibom, Kano, Bauchi and Nasarawa states. The study adopted ex- post facto design and the geographical area for this study is the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria. This study adopted purposive sampling method based on the availability of data. The results of 1,541,608 male and female students from 1,826 secondary schools in the WASSCE conducted by WAEC from 2001-2005 were collected from WAEC National Headquarters, Lagos. The data utilized for this study was mainly secondary due to the nature of the research. Therefore, the data were analyzed using simple percentage distribution. The results indicated that students' recorded poor performance in English Language and Mathematics in all the Geo-Political Zones but more pronounced in North-Central, North-East and South-East. The study among others recommended that necessary infrastructure that would improve the performance of students' be provided. Also, the present students/teacher ratio be reduced to conform with the approved 1:40 ratio stipulated by the National Policy on Education.

This study is very relevant and important to the present study though limited to one state in each of the six geo-political zones in Nigeria. Also, the study is limited in scope and in the use of male and female students for data analysis. The present study is wider in scope as it embraces seven states in the North-West Zone of the country and it included other variables such as private/public, and urban/rural secondary schools.

In a similar study, Yusuf and Adigun (2010) examined the influence of type, sex and location on students' academic performance in Ekiti State secondary schools. The sample of the study consisted of 40 secondary schools. Four private schools were purposively selected for the study while 36 public secondary schools were randomly selected. The school sampled had presented candidates for both West African Examination Council (WAEC) and National Examination Council (NECO) respectively. An instrument, school type, sex, location and students' academic performance inventory was used to collect data for the study. Data collected were analyzed using percentage scores and T-test statistics. Three null hypotheses were generated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. Findings from the study showed that the level of students' academic performance was low. It was also revealed that school type, sex and location had no significance influence on students' academic performance. Based on the findings, it was recommended that educational planners, administrators, and evaluators should appreciate the fact that the Parent Teachers Association (PTA), guidance and counselor, philanthropists, students and society at large have crucial role to play in improving students' academic performance and solicit their supports in this regard.

The study above is relevant and similar in scope with the present study. Variables such as school type (public/private), sex (male/female) and location (urban/Rural) were adequately addressed in this study and in the present study. However, the study is limited to one State in the South-West Geo-Political Zone as against seven States in the North-West Zone of the country covered by the present study.

Alimi, Ehimola and Alabi (2012) conducted a study on school type and academic performance of students in senior secondary school in Ondo State, Nigeria. The survey type designed of the descriptive research was used. The population consists of all senior secondary students in private and public schools in Ondo State. Fifty (50) senior secondary schools were purposively sampled thirty six (36) public and fourteen (14) private. An instrument called Senior Students Academic Performance (SSAP) was used to collect data and was supported by the results (English Language and Mathematics) of the students from sampled schools. The study revealed that there is a



significant difference in performances between private and public senior secondary schools in English Language and Mathematics.

However, the study is limited to one state and private and public secondary school students. Thus, the present study includes other variables like gender (male/female) and location (urban/rural) and seven states in North-West Zone, Nigeria.

All the empirical studies reviewed are relevant to the present study because the studies deal with predictor variables such as gender (male and female), public, private, urban and rural schools which are measured in the present study as intervening variables in the application of students' academic performances in WASC examination. Some of the designs and methodologies of such studies reviewed will be applied in the present study. Besides, the findings of the studies will provide clue and direction for the current study.

3.1 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.2 Research Design

The research design that was adopted for this study was the ex-post facto research design. This design is chosen because the researchers has no control over certain factors or variables, or why differences exist - (WASSCE results). An attempt can only be made to find the cause or reason.

3.3 Population of the Study

The population for this study consisted of all senior secondary students that sat for May/June senior secondary certificate examination conducted by WAEC in the states that constitute the North West Zone, Nigeria (2012 – 2016). The population distribution is represented on Table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of Population of Senior Secondary School Students that Sat for English Language in North West Zone (2012-2016)

States	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total
Kaduna	64,720	80,338	99,840	83,850	90,614	419,362
Kano	53,566	46,420	65,723	62,244	49,829	277,782
Katsina	27,812	34,880	43,065	44,439	20,404	170,600
Kebbi	12,289	16,124	17,536	18,962	23,028	87,939
Jigawa	14,845	18,620	24,806	25,475	25,774	109,520
Sokoto	15,048	17,890	26,332	27,832	27,052	114,104
Zamfara	17,771	22,450	29,120	26,031	27,421	122,793
Total = 7	206,051	236,722	306,422	288,833	264,122	1,302,150

Source: NBS (2019)

Table 1 shows the total population of 1,302,150 secondary school students who sat for May/June West African Senior Secondary School Exminations in all the states that constitute the North-West Zone, Nigeria (2012-2016).

3.4 Sample and Sampling Technique

Due to the large population of the secondary schools for the study, a purposive sampling technique was adopted to select fourteen (14) schools so as to ensure a representative of the population. Therefore, a total of two (2) schools were randomly selected from each state comprising one (1) private, male and female, urban or rural school and one (1) public, male and female and urban or rural school. This is in line with Yusuf (2013) who opined that purposive sampling is ideal when seeking or considering one or more specific predefined groups that are capable of providing the required data. The sample size for this study was 20,367 students comprising 11,561 males and 8,806 females respectively that sat for May/June Senior School Certificate Examinations (SSCE) in North-West Zone, Nigeria (2012-2016). One (1) senior school certificate (SSC) subjects was selected. The subjects was English Language. The choice of the subject was as a result of it relevant status to all other subjects and for the fact that English Language is compulsory subject at secondary school level.

**Table 2: Distribution of Sample of Students that Sat for English Language in North-West Zone (2012-2016)***Source: Field Work, (2021)*

S/NO	States/Name of School	Private Schools	Public Schools	Urban School	Rural School	Selected Secondary Private Schools		Selected Secondary Public Schools		Total	
						Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Kaduna State											
1	Godwill Schools Angwa Yelwa, Kaduna.	1		1		1,277	1,106				
2	Government secondary School GanGora Zonkwa		1		1			914	525	2,191	1,631
Kano State											
1	Federal Government College Zaria Road Along Aminu Kano Teaching Hospital	1			1			1,262	898		
2	Kingskids College Along Bukabu Barracks Kurna		1	1		944	669			2,206	1,567
Katsina State											
1	Government Secondary School barde Bakori		1		1			969	611		
2	Salama International School Layout Bindawa Street	1		1		879	526			1,848	1,137
Kebbi State											
1	Joda Nursery, Primary & Secondary School Burnin-Kebbi	1		1		620	474			1,373	1,115
2	Federal government College Birnin Yauri		1		1			753	641		
Jigawa State											
1	Federal Government Kiyawa LGA		1	1				809	576	1,342	1,035
2	Gateway International School Ban masana Qtrs. Dutse	1			1	533	459				
Sokoto State											
1	Brilliante Footsteps International Academy Along Western Bypass	1		1		452	427			1,265	1,071
2	Government Day Senior Secondary School (GDSSS), Illela		1		1			813	644		
Zamfara State											
1	Government –Day Secondary School, (GDSS) Rawayya Area		1		1			807	727		
2	Prince Along Zaria Road	1		1		529	523			1,336	1,250
Total		7	7	7	7	5,234	4,184	6,327	4,222	11,561	8,806



Table 2 shows the distribution sample of male and female students based on type of school and location of school by state in the North-West Zone, Nigeria 2012-2016. Kaduna state have a total sample of male (2,191) and female (1,631), while Kano State have a total sample of male (2,206) and female (1,567). Also, Katsina State have sample size of male (1,848) and female (1,137), Kebbi State with a male sample (1,373) and female sample (1,115) and Jigawa State with a male sample (1,342) and female sample (1,035). In the same vein, Sokoto State with a male sample (1,265) and female sample (1,071) and Zamfara State with male sample (1,336) and female sample (1,250).

3.5 Instrumentation

The study used May/June WAEC Senior Secondary Certificate examination results from 2012 – 2016 obtained from the sampled schools based on private, public, urban, rural and male and female.

Also, the researchers adopted a proforma titled the “Senior Secondary Students Academic Performances” (SSSAP) for data collection. The proforma include among other things, data on sex (male and female) of student, type of school, (private and public), location of school (urban and rural), and number of students that either pass or fail in English Language in SSS III WAEC examinations from 2012 – 2016.

3.6 Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of the instrument is not tested because the instrument is a tested result. This is because the instrument is already a prepared record. However, a proforma called the Senior Secondary Students’ Academic Performances was adopted by the researcher to solicit information for data gathering.

3.6 Administration of the Instrument

No administration of the questionnaire was conducted. However, a proforma - Senior Secondary Students’ Academic Performance (SSSAP) adopted by researchers was used to solicit information for data gathering.

3.7 Technique of Data Analysis

The data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The statistical techniques are summarized as follows:

1. Frequency counts and simple percentages were used to determine the data collected.
2. Simple percentages contingency coefficient value was used to analyse the data based on the research questions.
3. Chi-Square test for independence was used to test the six null hypotheses in order to analyse the performances of the students based on the variables.
4. All the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

4.1 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.2 Data Analysis on English Language Academic Performances

In analysing the performances of male and female secondary students in English Language, the results of the students in West African Senior School Certificate Examinations were collected and analysed from the secondary schools under study in the North-West Zone, Nigeria (2012-2016). The result is shown in table 3.

**Table 3: Performances (pass/fail) in English Language between Gender (Male/Female) of Students (WASSCE) in North–West Zone (2012-2016)**

North-West Zone (States)	PASSED ENGLISH		FAILED ENGLISH	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
JIGAWA	735	438	607	597
KADUNA	155	1,040	640	591
KANO	1,305	765	901	802
KATSINA	1,293	700	555	437
KEBBI	568	391	805	724
SOKOTO	477	326	788	745
ZAMFARA	512	334	824	916
TOTAL	6,441	3,994	5,120	4,812

Source: Authors' field work.

Table 3: reveals the distribution of male and female students' academic performances in English Language in West African Senior School Certificate Examination in North-West Zone, Nigeria (2012-2016). The total number of male and female students that passed English Language is 6,441 and 3,994 while the total number of male and female students that failed English Language is 5,120 and 4,812.

Table 4: Performances (pass/fail) in English Language between Type (Private/Public) of Students (WASSCE) in North–West Zone (2012-2016)

North-West Zone (States)	PRIVATE		PUBLIC	
	PASSED	FAILED	PASSED	FAILED
JIGAWA	529	463	644	741
KADUNA	1,687	696	904	535
KANO	917	696	1,153	1,007
KATSINA	900	505	1093	487
KEBBI	498	596	461	933
SOKOTO	364	515	439	1,018
ZAMFARA	441	611	405	1,129
TOTAL	5,336	4,082	5,099	5,850

Source: Authors' field work.

Table 4: shows the academic performances in English Language between private and public secondary schools in West African Senior School Certificate Examination in North-West Zone, Nigeria (2012-2016). The total number of private and public schools students that passed English Language is 5,336 and 5,099 while the total failed is 4,082 and 5,850 respectively.

Table 5: Performances (pass/fail) in English Language between Location (Urban/Rural) of Students (WASSCE) in North–West Zone (2012-2016)

North-West Zone (States)	URBAN		RURAL	
	PASSED	FAILED	PASSED	FAILED
JIGAWA	529	463	644	741
KADUNA	1687	696	904	535
KANO	1153	1007	917	696
KATSINA	900	505	1093	487
KEBBI	498	596	461	933



SOKOTO	364	515	439	1018
ZAMFARA	441	611	405	1129
TOTAL	5572	4393	4863	5539

Source: Authors' field work.

Table 5: reveals the academic performances in English Language between urban and rural secondary schools students in West African Senior School Certificate Examination in North-West Zone, Nigeria (2012-2016). The total number of urban and rural schools students that passed English Language is 5,572 and 4,863 while the total number of urban and rural schools students that failed English Language is 4,393 and 5,539.

4.3 Answering the Research Questions

Research Question 1: What is the number of pass and fail in English Language between male and female students in North-West Zone, Nigeria (2012-2016)?

To answer this question, the results of the male and female secondary school students in English Language in West African Senior School Certificate Examination in North-West Zone, Nigeria (2012-2016) were computed and analysed using percentages and contingency coefficient value. The result is shown in table 6.

Table 6: Cross Tabulation of Performances (pass/fail) between Male and Female in English Language (WASSCE) in North-West Zone (2012-2016)

		Sex of Students			
		Male	Female	Total	
Performance of Students	Passed	Count	6441	3994	10435
		Expected Count	5923.3	4511.7	10435.0
		% within Performance of Students	61.7%	38.3%	100.0%
	Failed	Count	5120	4812	9932
		Expected Count	5637.7	4294.3	9932.0
		% within Performance of Students	51.6%	48.4%	100.0%
Total		Count	11561	8806	20367
		Expected Count	11561.0	8806.0	20367.0
		% of Total	56.8%	43.2%	100.0%

Source: Authors' field work.

Table 6 revealed that out of the 20367 male and female, 56.8% (11561) are the total of the male students that participated in English Language while 43.2% (8806) are the total of female students that participated in English Language. A breakdown shows that 61.7% (6441) of the male passed English Language and 38.3% (3994) of the female passed also passed English Language. Also 51.6% (5120) of the male students failed English Language and 48.4% (4812) of the female students failed English Language.

Research Question 2: What is the number of pass/fail in English Language between private and public students in North-West Zone, Nigeria (2012-2016)?

To answer this question, the results of the private and public secondary school students in English Language in West African Senior School Certificate Examination in North-West Zone, Nigeria (2012-2016) were computed and analysed using percentages and contingency coefficient value. The result is shown in table 7.

Table 7: Cross Tabulation of Performances (pass/fail) in English Language between Private and Public Students (WASSCE) in North-West Zone (2012-2016)

		School Type		Total	
		Private	Public		
Performance of Students	Passed	Count	5336	4082	9418
		Expected Count	4825.3	4592.7	9418.0
		% within Performance of Students	56.7%	43.3%	100.0%
	Failed	Count	5099	5850	10949



	Expected Count	5609.7	5339.3	10949.0
	% within Performance of Students	46.6%	53.4%	100.0%
Total	Count	10435	9932	20367
	Expected Count	10435.0	9932.0	20367.0
	% of Total	51.2%	48.8%	100.0%

Source: Authors' field work.

Table 7 revealed that out of the 20367 students from both private and public schools, 51.2% (10435) are the total number of students from private schools that participate in English Language and 48.8% (9932) are the number of students from public schools that participated in English Language. A breakdown shows that 56.7% (5336) of the students from private schools passed English Language and 43.3% (4082) of the students from public schools passed English Language. Also 46.6% (5099) of the students failed English Language from private schools and 53.4% (10949) of the students failed English Language from the public schools.

Research Question 3: What is the number of pass/fail in English Language between urban and rural students in North-West Zone, Nigeria (2012-2016)?

To answer this question, the results of the urban and rural secondary school students in English Language in West African Senior School Certificate Examination in North–West Zone, Nigeria (2012-2016) were computed and analysed using percentages and contingency coefficient value. The result is shown in table 8.

Table 8: Cross tabulation of Performances (pass/fail) in English Language between Urban and Rural students in (WASSCE) in North–West Zone (2012-2016)

		Location of Students		Total	
		Urban	Rural		
Performance of Students	Passed	Count	5572	4393	9965
		Expected Count	5105.6	4859.4	9965.0
		% within Performance of Students	55.9%	44.1%	100.0%
	Failed	Count	4863	5539	10402
		Expected Count	5329.4	5072.6	10402.0
		% within Performance of Students	46.8%	53.2%	100.0%
Total	Count	10435	9932	20367	
	Expected Count	10435.0	9932.0	20367.0	
	% of Total	51.2%	48.8%	100.0%	

Source: Authors' field work.

Table 8 revealed that out of the 20367 students from urban and rural schools, 51.2% (10435) are the students from urban schools that participated in English Language and 48.8% (9932) are the students from rural schools that participated in English Language. A breakdown shows that 55.9% (5572) of the students from urban schools passed English Language and 44.1% (4393) of the students from rural schools also passed English Language. Also, 46.8% (4883) of the students failed English Language from the urban schools and 53.2% (5539) of the students failed English Language from the rural schools.

4.4 Hypotheses Testing

This section presents the result from the test of the hypotheses generated for the study. Chi-Square statistic was used to analyse the data.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between performance (pass/fail) in English Language and gender (male/female) of students in North-West Zone, Nigeria (2012-2016).

To test this hypothesis, the results of male and female secondary school students in English Language from 2012-2016 were analysed using chi-square statistic at (0.05) level of significance. The result is shown in table 9



Table 9: Chi-Square Tests of Performances (pass/fail) in English Language between Male and Female Secondary School Students

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	214.635 ^a	1	.000		
Continuity Correction ^b	214.221	1	.000		
Likelihood Ratio	214.943	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test				.000	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	214.625	1	.000		
N of Valid Cases	20367				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4294.26.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Source: Authors' field work.

The chi-square test yielded the results as presented in table 9. On one degrees of freedom, the chi-square statistic = 214.635 with a (p-value; 0.0000) is less than the level of significance (0.05), hence the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is significance relationship between male and female academic performances in secondary schools in English Language in North-West Zone, Nigeria (2012-2016) in the West African Senior School Certificate examination (WASSCE).

Table 10: Test for significant of the Relationship (Symmetric Measures)

		Value	Asymptotic Standard Error ^a	Approximate T ^b	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.103			.000
	Cramer's V	.103			.000
	Contingency Coefficient	.102			.000
N of Valid Cases		20367			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

c. Based on normal approximation.

Source: Authors' field work.

Phi Value = 0.103 with p-value 0.0000 less than level of significance = 0.05 implies that the relationship between male and female performance is a weak positive relationship and it is significant.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between performance (pass/fail) in English Language and type (private/public) of students in North-West Zone, Nigeria (2012 - 2016).

To test this hypothesis, the results of the private and public secondary school students in English Language from 2012-2016 were analysed using chi-square statistics at 0.05 level of significance. The result is shown in table 11.

Table 11: Chi-Square Tests of Performances (pass/fail) in English Language between Private and Public Students

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	206.184 ^a	1	.000		
Continuity Correction ^b	205.781	1	.000		
Likelihood Ratio	206.594	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test				.000	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	206.174	1	.000		
N of Valid Cases	20367				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4592.70.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Source: Authors' field work



The chi-square test showed the results as presented in table 11. On one degrees of freedom, with a high chi-square statistic (206.184) and a corresponding significance value (p-value; 0.000) which is less than level of significance (0.05), hence the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significance relationship in the academic performances in English Language between the private and public secondary school students in the North–West Zone.

Table 12: Test for significant of the Relationship (Symmetric Measures)

		Value	Asymptotic Standard Error ^a	Approximate T ^b	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.877			.000
	Cramer's V	.872			.000
	Contingency Coefficient	.886			.000
N of Valid Cases		20367			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

c. Based on normal approximation.

Source: Authors' field work.

Furthermore, the phi value (0.877) also showed that there is strong positive relationship in the academic performances in English Language between the private and public secondary school students in the North–West Zone Nigeria in the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE).

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between performances (pass/fail) in English Language and location (urban/rural) of students in North-West Zone, Nigeria (2012-2016).

To test this hypothesis, the results of the urban and rural secondary school students in English Language from 2012-2016 were analysed using chi-square statistic at 0.05 level of significance. The result is shown in table 13.

Table 13: Chi-Square Tests of Performances (pass/fail) in English Language between Urban and Rural Students

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	171.106 ^a	1	.000		
Continuity Correction ^b	170.739	1	.000		
Likelihood Ratio	171.358	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test				.000	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	171.097	1	.000		
N of Valid Cases	20367				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4859.45.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Source: Authors' fieldwork.

The chi-square test yielded the results as presented in tables 13. On one degrees of freedom, with a high chi-square statistic (171.106) with a p – value = 0.000 which is less than level of significance (0.05), hence the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significance relationship in the academic performances in English Language between the urban and rural secondary schools in the North–West Zone.



Table 12: Test for significant of the Relationship (Symmetric Measures)

		Value	Asymptotic Standard Error ^a	Approximate T ^b	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.92			.000
	Cramer's V	.92			.000
	Contingency Coefficient	.91			.000
N of Valid Cases		20367			

- a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.
- b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.
- c. Based on normal approximation.

Source: Authors' field work.

Phi = 0.92 also shows that there is strong positive relationship in the academic performances in English Language between the urban and rural secondary school students in North-West Zone, Nigeria (2012 – 2016) in the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE).

4.5 Discussions of Major Findings

The main objective of the study was to analyse the Effect of Variables on students' performances in English Language in West African Senior School Certificate Examinations (WASSCE) in North-West Zone, Nigeria between 2012-2016. The discussion of findings of this study is based on the results emanating from the test of hypotheses and the relationship between the present results and the findings of previous related studies.

The outcome of hypothesis 1 shows that there was no significant relationship in the academic performances between the male and female secondary school students in English Language in West African Senior Certificate Examination (WASSCE). The findings reveals that the performances of both male and female students in English Language in the North-West Zone, Nigeria (2012-2016) were closely related. This submission is not surprising as it is a good thing for both male and female students to strive hard to compete with each other in English Language. This finding was in consonance with the findings of Adeboye (2003) that there was no significant relationship in the male and female academic performances in WASSCE in English Language in Ondo State, Nigeria. The low level of performances in the subject in the North-West Zone, Nigeria might perhaps be attributed to what Omotoso (1992) described as poor staffing in schools, frequent withdrawal of children from schools, laziness on the account of many students and poor preparation of work in respect of many teachers in the schools.

Hypothesis 2 of this study also reveals that significant relationship existed in the academic performances between the private and public secondary school of students in English Language. The result showed a significant relationship in favour of male and female students in the private schools as against male and female students in the public schools. The finding shows that male and female students from private secondary schools performed better in English Language than their counterpart from the public secondary schools in 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016 respectively. This is also in conformity with the result of the study conducted by Eze (2004) on the academic performance of students in WASSCE and NECO in private and public schools in Enugu State. In a similar study, Wushishi and Usman (2013) found a huge positive relationship in male and female students' academic performances in the private schools as against the male and female students' academic performances in the public schools in English Language as a result of provision of facilities such as textbooks, laboratories, equipment and conducive classrooms. Also, a study conducted by Ofoegbu (2004) on teacher motivation: a factor for classroom effectiveness and school improvement in Nigeria revealed that poor academic performances in public schools can be attributed to poor teachers' performance in terms of accomplishing the task, negative attitude to work and poor teaching habits.

Based on the outcome of hypothesis 3, the study found out that there was significant relationship in the academic performances between the urban and rural secondary school students in English Language. The study revealed that urban schools had better performances than the rural schools. The finding of the study shows that students from urban secondary schools performed better in English Language than the students from the rural secondary schools in 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016 respectively. This study corroborates Oloyede (2003), Nwokocha and Amadike (2005) and Bello and Osagie (2013) that causes of mass failure in the rural schools includes nonchalant attitude of students, dilapidated infrastructure, lack of teaching and learning facilities and incompetent teachers. This finding does not come by chance as there are provisions of social amenities such as electricity, water, good roads, conducive learning environment etc in the urban areas to justify the better academic



performance hence better results are expected from students from the urban areas as against their counterparts from the rural areas.

5.1 CONCLUSIONS

Based on the result of the study, it is concluded as follows:

- i) Gender (male and female) does not affect the academic performance of secondary school students in English Language in North-West Zone, Nigeria (2012-2016);
- i) Type of school (private and public) affect the academic performance of secondary school students in English Language in the North-West Zone, Nigeria (2012-2016);
- ii) Location of school (urban and rural) affect the academic performance secondary school students in English Language in the North-West Zone, Nigeria (2012-2016).

5.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of the study:

1. Since the performance of male and female students are not impressive, efforts should be made by officials of the state ministries of education in the seven states should develop policies and strategies such provision of textbooks, facilities, and regular visit to schools to monitor performance standards in English language.
2. Since the pass rate in private schools are higher than the public schools in English Language, the principals and teachers in the seven states should organize extra lessons and subject the students to regular homework. Doing this, will enhance better performance of the public schools students in WASSCE and help bridge the gap with the students from the private secondary schools.
3. The State Ministry of Education in the seven states should employ qualified teachers and sponsor them to attend seminars and workshops in English Language so as to reduce the failure rate of the students and help bridge the gap with students from the urban schools.
4. A remedial mechanism should be developed and built into the school system by the government in the seven states, educational administrators, educational planners and other stakeholders in education industry. Government should always be conscious of the implication of its policies and positions on schooling and the multiplier effect on academic performance of students and teachers productivity.

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