

FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR MASS FAILURES IN ECONOMICS IN SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS (SSCE) EXAMINATION IN ENUGU EDUCATIONAL ZONE

ONONYE, FeliciaObioma (PhD)

Director Post Graduate Schools, African Thinkers Community of Inquiry College of Education (ATCOI COE), Enugu, Nigeria

Obiakor Mariagoretti Ijeoma

Department of Educational Management and Policy, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka Anambra State.

mi.obiakor@unizik.edu.ng. Phone: 07063842753

Abstract

The objective of this study is to determine the factors responsible for mass failure in economics secondary school examination among secondary students in Enugu Educational Zone. The research design for the study was survey. A close-ended questionnaire was used as the instrument of study. This instrument was validated by two experts. The test re-test method was used to test for the reliability of the instrument. The population includes 1786 teachers from secondary schools in the area, out of which a sample size of 360 was drawn at random. The mean statistic was employed as the method of data analysis. The mean statistic was adopted as the method of data analysis. Findings revealed that over-burdening home activities contribute to mass failure of students in secondary school Economics; parents' action and inaction contribute to mass failure of secondary school students in Economics to a great extent. Poor quality and ineffective teachers contribute to mass failure of secondary school students in Economics to a great extent, and; government failure is responsible for mass failure of secondary school students in Economics to a great extent. The study recommended the need for the employment of qualified teachers who are knowledgeable in Economics to teach in our secondary schools.

Keywords: Economics, Mass failure, and Causes of Mass failure among Secondary School Students

Introduction

The importance of economics to any given society cannot be over emphasized. Every family is a part of economy and every one use the rules of Economy too. From the time we are born, we become consumers of various products and services (say medical services, baby foods and so on). We grow and diversify to attain various different roles as producers, trades mediators and agents. Today's world is that of "economic implication" where

economic factors most importantly money, dictates all the elements of the society. Economics is an issue or discipline which everybody; even ignorant households are learning (Michael, 2014).

In the late 1890s', Professor Lionel Robbins defined Economics is a social science which studies human behavior as a relationship between ends and scarce means which have alternative uses. It is also defined as a science which deals with production, distribution and

consumption of goods and services. There are two schools in economics, namely, micro economics and macroeconomics. The combined result of these two determines the effect of economics on the socio-economic, political and cultural development of the society. The importance of economics as a subject in Nigeria educational system and the nation's technological development has been recognized in many fora.

In today's world, the amount of resources available to us is reducing each day. This condition will only worsen if we keep using our resources with low efficiency and effectiveness. The study of economics provides a mechanism for looking at possible ways to optimize resources utilization and reduce wastages. The study of economics is not restricted to higher education only. That is why economics is studied in secondary school education curriculum in Nigeria.

Nevertheless, the stability of economy is a quest for any economic system or society. Only through economically sound practices can we ensure that the economy is stable and growing at the same time. The knowledge and the practice of economics among economic agents help to stabilize the overall economy.

As a matter of fact, if a society keeps on putting money into a project which yields little or nothing to its growth and development, then the economy becomes inefficient and so does the society. Inefficiency in the use of economic resources leads to undesirable effects in the society. This problem is responsible for the socio-economic disintegration of the society via destructive social evils, like increased crime rate, hunger, unemployment and poverty, etc.

Understanding of economics leads to better planned economy. Subsequently

understanding of economics is important for the growth of individual economically. A person needs to understand the economic situation and stipulations present in his own life. He may not need the hard objective understanding of economics, but he definitely needs to understand the economic practices that he needs to follow to eradicate chances of "going broke" or bankrupt. The study of the subject is important because it covers all areas of human lives and occupies the unique portion of man's activities.

However, despite the above importance attached to the learning and teaching of economics in our educational system, the performance of students in secondary schools in Nigeria has remained an issue of concern to all stake holders (Ajagun 2018).

Explaining reasons for mass failure in WAEC, "the Head of National Office, West African Examination Council (WAEC), Dr. Iyi Uwadiae, attributed the high failure rates in examinations conducted by the council to several factors. He said WAEC, as a body entrusted with the conduct of the examination, should not be seen as a public enemy because the council does not fail candidates deliberately." This message was conveyed on January 24, 2011 by The Deputy Registrar/Controller, Science Department, Mrs. Olayinka Ajibade, to over 900 students from Lagos and Ogun States at the year's Students' Academic Success Summit, held at the University of Lagos. Also speaking at the summit, the representative of the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB), Mrs. Aisha Dahiru, noted the poor percentage of applicants admitted into Nigerian universities over the years to foundation factors, wrong subject combination, poor shading of the script errors associated with online registration and the attitude of some parents that force careers on their children. In

her explanation, less than 20 per cent of the applicants that sat for the admission test were actually admitted into universities.

Similarly, in 2011 May/June WAEC result which was released, it was shown that around one million students who sat for the examination failed. This has been a major concern for government and the society. According to the Head of National Office, West African Examinations Council (WAEC), the causes of massive failure in WAEC can be attributed to some candidates' lack of knowledge of common pitfalls, coupled with inadequate coverage of the syllabus and non-familiarity with test format.

Referring to the roadmap of education by a Non-Governmental Organisation named "the youth of Nigeria," there was a report that West African Examinations Council (WAEC) 2009 results show an overall poor performance with only 26% percent obtaining a credit pass in Mathematics and English (Waecdirect.com, 2009). In the same vein, the National Examinations Council (NECO) November/December 2009 results show 98% failing to clinch five credits, including Economics, English and Mathematics. Only 1.8% got five credits, including Economics, English and Mathematics. Other subject like economic was not left out. It was the poorest result in the history of the examination body.

Commenting (on the issue of mass failure in 2009 November/December NECO examinations) in the Nigerian Tribune of April 5, 2010 by Tope Ademola, a Public Affairs commentator, said that there could not have been a worse period for the Nigerian educational system than the disclosure that 98 per cent of students who sat for the November /December 2009 examination of the National Examination Council (NECO) failed. According to the report, only 4,223 out

of the 236,613 candidates who sat for the examination had credits in five subjects, including English and Mathematics. The figure regretfully represents less than two per cent of those who took the examination. He explained that the recorded mass failure is a reflection of the precipice on which the nation has found itself. While the students have their own portion of the blame, a substantial part of it lies at the doorsteps of the nation's policy makers or leaders, who over the years treated the sector with levity (Aworanti, 2010).

In the same vein, the National Examinations Council (NECO) registered another mass failure in the November/ December external 2010 examinations as out of the 25 subjects taken by students none had up to 50 per cent pass record. This message was reported by the Registrar of the council, Professor Promise Okpala, who announced the results to newsmen in Minna on March 30, 2011. Out of the total number that sat for the English Language examination, 51, 781 candidates passed, constituting only 20 per cent and in Mathematics, 87, 508 translating to 34 per cent of candidates that sat for the examination passed. French Language recorded the lowest pass with no candidate having a credit out of the 473 students that sat for the subject, amounting to 57 per cent failure (Ebije, 2011). This is worrisome because it has strong implication for the study of economics at institutions of higher learning. Thus, the study sought the views of teachers on the causes of inadequate achievement in SSC Economics examinations.

Statement of the Problem

With no iota of hesitation, Uzoma (2012) stated that the rate of mass failure in the school certificate examination in general has been deplorable. The worst case scenario is one conducted in 2010/2017 NECO which

candidates scored about 70% failure in this entire examination.

This makes Stakeholders to continue to trade blames on the causes of mass failure of students in public examinations. Some people shifted the blame on government, students' activities at home, some on parents, some on society and students themselves with the teachers having lion share of the blame. As accusations and counter-accusations on who to blame on the mass failure of students will persist, the fact remains that all the stakeholders have roles to play in solving the problem of abysmal failure of students in public examinations. Nevertheless, there is need to identify the major causes of the problem with a view to providing lasting solutions. It is against this backdrop that this study investigated the causes of mass failure of students in Economics examinations from the perspective of students and teachers who appear to have the lion share of the blame.

Research Questions

This study seeks to find answer to the following questions:

- i. To what extent do parental factors contribute to mass failure of students in secondary school Economics?
- ii. To what extent does teacher factor contribute to mass failure of secondary school students in Economics?

Review of Related Literature

Concept of Economics:

Economics is a social science guiding the way in which resources are used and how the wealth the produce is divided, and of the application of the underlying principles to the needs and prosperity of society. This science

as applied to the financial structure of an organization industry etc.

There are varieties of modern definitions of economics. Some of the differences way reflects evolving views of the subject itself or different views among economics. The earlier term for economics was political economics. It is adopted from the French Mercantilist usage of economics politique, which extended economy from the ancient Greek term for household management to the national realm as public administration of the affairs of state.

The philosopher Adam Smith (1776) defines the subject as "an inquiry into the nature and causes of the wealth of nations". In particular it is seen as a branch of the science of a statesman or legislator with the two-fold objective of providing a plentiful revenue or subsistence for the people to supply the state or common wealth with revenue for the public services. Jean Baptiste Say distinguished the subject from its public – policy uses, defines it as the science of production, distribution, and consumption of wealth on the satirical side. Thomas Carlyle coined 'the dismal science as an epithet for classical economics in this context, commonly linked to the pessimistic analysis of Thomas Malthus. John Stuart Mill defines the subject in a social context as: "The science which traces the laws of such of the phenomena of society as arise from the combined operation of wealth in so far as those phenomena are not modified by the pursuit of any other object".

The study of economics is typically divided into two main parts: Macroeconomics and Microeconomics. Macroeconomics focuses on the behaviour of an entire economy the "big picture". In Macroeconomic is always concern about such national goals as full employment, control of inflation, and economic growth, without been concern about the well-being or

behaviour of specified individuals or groups. The essential concern of macroeconomic is to understand and improve the performance of the economy as a whole. A primary concern of macroeconomics, for example is to determine how much money in total, consumers will spend on goods and services, and the level of total business investment.

Microeconomics however, concerned with the details of this big picture. In microeconomics we focus on the individuals, firms, and government agencies that actually compose the larger economy. Our interest here is in the behaviour of individual economic actors. What are their goals? How can they best achieve these goals with their limited resources? How will the response to various incentives and opportunities?

In microeconomics, the focus is much narrower. In microeconomics, attention is paid to purchase of specific goods and services rather than just aggregated totals. The Macro-Micro distinction does not mean that economics is so highly compartmentalized that every topic can be readily labelled as either macro or micro; many topics and subdivisions of economics are rooted in both. For example, the problem of unemployment is usually treated as a macroeconomic topic (because unemployment relates to aggregate spending). Economists recognise that the decisions made by individual workers in searching for jobs and the way specific product and labour markets operate are also critical in determining the unemployment rate.

Both macroeconomics and microeconomics involves facts, theories, and policies, each contains elements of positive economics and normative economics.

Positive economics and normative economics focus on facts and cause and effects

relationships. It includes description, theory development and theory testing (theoretical economics). Positive economic avoids value judgment. It tries to establish scientific statements about economic behaviour, and deals with what the economic is actually like. Such scientific based analysis is critical to good policy analysis. Normative economics, which incorporates value judgment about what the economy should be like or what particular policy actions should be recommended to achieve a desirable goals. Normative economics looks at the desirability of certain aspects of the economy. It underlies expressions of support for particular economic policies. Positive economics concern what is, while normative economics embodies subjective feelings about what ought to be. When words such as “ought” or “should” appear in a sentence, there is strong chance you are encountered a normative statement.

Concept of Mass failure

In education, examination is a measure of academic achievement and performance. When a student’s academic performance falls below the expected standard, failure is said to have occurred. Mass failure is a situation when failure in examination is recorded by a larger percentage of the students that participated in an examination. Bolu-Steve, Adegoke & Biobaku (2013) observed that the high rates of failure noticed yearly in public examinations are only a symptom of a pervasive national failure syndrome. They pointed out that despite the investment on secondary school education in Nigeria students are not still performing well.

Kpolovie, Ololube and Ekwebelem (2017) carried out a research on the performance of secondary school students in WAEC and NECO from 2004 to 2006 and discovered that the students were not performing as expected.

Hansel (2012) found out that the causes of massive examination failure in WAEC included non-availability of textbooks, environments being too noisy and not convenient for learning and inadequate preparation among others.

Causes of Mass failure among Secondary School Students

There are a lot of factors capable of determining the performance level of students in a particular subject or course of study. These factors are school factors, teacher's qualification, instructional materials, availability of learning facilities, student's characteristics, availability of teachers, pupils to teacher ratio, motivation, and gender among others. Wentzel (2018) states that interest in activities tends to increase the likelihood that individuals formulate goals relating to those activities and invest time and efforts to accomplish them. Moreover, student or individual characteristics such as intelligence, cognitive style, and personality play important roles in learning and instruction as well as the context of learning. It is pertinent to note that individual student's characteristic variables such as motivational orientations, self-esteem and learning approaches are important factors influencing academic achievements. Of all the personal and psychological variables that have attracted researchers in this area of educational achievement, motivation seems to have gained more popularity and leading other variables (Tella, 2018).

Alimi, Ehinola, & Alabi, (2012) discovered that poor provision of instructional facilities in public schools accounts for the poor academic standard. The study revealed that there is a significant difference in the facilities available between public and private senior secondary schools

Aremu & Sokan (2013) posit that the search for the causations of poor academic achievement is unending and some of the factors they put forward are: motivational orientation, self-esteem/self-efficacy, emotional problems, study habits, teacher consultation and poor interpersonal relationships.

Obiakor and Oguejioffer, (2019) posit that school environment related factors such as class size, infrastructure and facilities available in the schools may also influence significantly on the academic performance of students and may be responsible for the observed low performance of students when compared with the effectiveness of their teachers.

Tsinidou, Gerogiannis, & Fitsilis, (2016) categorized factors militating against good academic performance into four principal areas which are:

- i. Causation resident in the child such as basic cognitive skills, physical and health factors, psycho-emotional factors, lack of interest in school programme
- ii. Causations resident in the family such as: cognitive stimulation/basic nutrition during the first two years; type of discipline at home; lack of role model and Finance
- iii. Causation resident in the school such as school location and physical building; interpersonal relationship among the school personnel
- iv. Causations resident in the society such as instability of educational policy; under-funding of educational sector, leadership; Job losses.

Causes of mass failure can be grouped under the following listed sub-heads:

School Factors:

The school environment or organizational characteristics have been considered in other research. Studies indicate student feelings of alienation may be greater in tertiary institutions.

Students who lived in hostel were shown to have a greater sense of community and higher retention rates in their studies. Berger and Braxton (2018) showed that institutional communication, fairness in policy and decision making, and participation was positively related to social integration and had significant indirect effects on student retention as well as their performances in public examinations.

Others believed that the quality of a students' experience in the classroom was central to their retention and performances (Tinto 2017; Ritschel 2015).

Sociologists apply it to groups made up of persons who are of the same age and often to groups of children or of adolescents. Peer group play a normal part in the process of socialization as they provide experiences to those who are growing up, a type that are not available in their own families. The adolescents take solace in interacting with their peers and they prefer to keep longer time with their peers than their parents. The peer group therefore has tremendous influence on the adolescent's pattern of behavior especially on their interests, attitudes, value system, emotional expressions, and interaction patterns and so on. However, the peer group's norms/standards in many cases may run foul to that of the community or society at large. Thus, when an adolescent fall into a bad

group, the chances are high that his/her social behavior would change for bad rather than for good, which can influence his/her academic performance negatively.

Governance problem in term of disjointed or discontinuous government policies also has a negative generational effect on the academic achievement of students. Thus, the attitude of state and federal government towards technical and vocational education determines to a greater extent the quality of TVE colleges in the country. Such poor attitude is reflected in funding pattern, technical and vocational schools development and capacity building of technical and vocational school teachers and instructors. It is equally observed that a good educational policy not well implemented will definitely tell on the performances of students.

Environmental / Structural Factors:

The school system has its own share of the blame for poor academic performance of students. According to Etsey (2005), the causes of poor academic performance traceable to the doorsteps of the school were large class size, limited teaching materials, and inadequate textbooks.

Psycho-social Factors:

Various studies had shown that successful performances of candidates in public examinations may be hindered by some psycho-social factors such as emotional disposition of candidates prior to and during examinations, poverty, ignorance, poor self-concept, ill-health or sudden sickness and poor study habit. Students' creative tendency and routine tendency help them to explore the unknown and to invent something new or to consolidate what they have already known. When such tendencies are disturbed or upset, they arouse emotions of anger and hostility in them. (Oladele, 2015). In the same vein, when

a candidate is suffering from colds, toothache, constipation, indigestion, poor eye-sight or hearing, mal-nutrition and other ailments that affect children, his level of concentration may be thwarted by the resulting annoyance and outburst of temper leading to academic performance.

Children who have low intelligence have been shown to have less control of their emotions. They are less sensitive to danger and cannot foresee consequences of their actions and also have narrow range of interest and desire to satisfy (Oladele, 2015). Other behavioural symptoms that can indirectly affect the performances of candidates include restlessness, un-paired concentration, and examination phobia (Oladele, 2015).

Government factor

Nigeria government has not done well for Nigerian teachers by not paying them well to serve as motivation for them. Unlike in Finland, teachers are well paid and rated very high. Teacher's welfare is very important that teachers in Finland earn very close to the national average salary level, typically equivalent to what mid-career middle-school teachers earn annually in the OECD nations (Sahlberg, 2010). Because of poor condition of service teachers are no longer committed to their duty. According to Inuwa, (2012), the general condition in Nigeria public secondary school is bad and teaching and learning are operating at the lower ebb. These authors concluded that teachers are left with no alternative than to work in a poor condition which has adverse effect on students' academic performance

There is lack of recognition, motivation in term of salary and other incentive and nobody want to be a teacher; no new qualified teacher want to teach again, the old ones are going

away. The resultant effect of this is lack of commitment and ineffectiveness of teachers (Akindutire&Ekundayo 2013).

Government plays crucial roles in the management of educational system in terms of policy formulation, programmes' implementation, funding, administration, supervision among others. The extent to which government is committed to these roles could make or mar the educational system. It is therefore not out of place to blame government for the mass failure of students in public examinations. Studies have shown that the causes of poor academic performance of students attributed to the government were instability of educational policy, leadership problems, job losses (Ajayi & Osalusi, 2013), inadequate poor supervision of instruction (Etsey, Amedahe & Edjah, 2014), inadequate funding of education (Akanle, 2007). Others include irregular payment of teachers' salaries.

Home Factors:

Parents play significant roles in the education of their children and wards. Apart from the fact they pay school fees and other levies, they buy textbooks, uniforms and other materials required by their children and wards. In addition to this, they are expected to supervise their academic works and give them good moral training. They are also expected to visit schools from time to time to find out how their children and wards are behaving with a view to taking corrective measures where and when necessary. However, the failure of parents to play these roles could negatively affect the academic performance of the students (Ajayi & Osalusi, 2013).

Some parents are over protective and over anxious about their children performances. This attitude on the part of the parents can disturb the smooth emotional development of

their children. Similarly, parents who spoil their wards and refuse to make them grow are also breathing emotional instability in them. This may result in the children becoming antisocial or aggressive hence, such children attention would be diverted from studying to antisocial behaviours such as smoking and drinking to mention but a few.

Similarly, social economic status of the family to a greater extent affects academic performance of children. A child from a poor Social Economic Status may not be exposed to such complementary academic related activities which in most cases aid students' understanding and mastery of subject matter. Many parents in Nigeria cannot afford to send their children to the well-established schools where relevant skills can be acquired.

Students Factor

Considerable research evidences abound to show that students are responsible for their poor academic performance. Aremu & Sokan (2013) found out that the students' factors of poor academic performance were poor study habits, psychological adjustment problems, lack of interest in school programme, low retention, association with wrong peers, low achievement motivation and emotional problems. Other studies (Salami, 2004; Etsey, 2015; Karande & Kulkarni, 2015; and Ajayi & Ekundayo, 2010) have shown that students' lack of financial support, absenteeism, truancy, use of local language in the classroom, lack of interest and joy in teachers' lessons and learning disability cause poor academic performance of students. Other causes include low cognitive ability, gender prematurity, medical problems and inability of students to understand examination questions.

Teacher – Related Factors

Various causes of poor academic performance of students which are attributed to the teachers were non-use of verbal reinforcement strategy and lateness to school, poor interpersonal relationships (Aremu & Sokan, 2013). Others include absenteeism, inability to complete the syllabi and less interest in children's understanding of lesson (Etsey, 2015) and poor methods of teaching (Asikhia, 2010). Ajayi&Ekundayo (2010) also identified incessant strike, poor methods of teaching, teachers' inability to cover syllabus and teachers' lack of resourcefulness in teaching as causes of mass failure of students in public examinations.

According to Boyd, Landford, Loeb, Rockoff, & Wyckoff, (2018), the most important educational resources is teacher. Aaronson, Barrow & Sander (2017) opined that a teacher can significantly influence students achievement. Okemakinde, Alabi, &Adewuyi, (2013) opined that teachers have an important role to play to adequately prepare the young for their roles in the society in order to achieve the set national objectives. The quality of any educational system depends to a great extent on the quality of teachers in terms of academic and professional qualifications and experience as well as their level of competency in and level of dedication to their primary functions (Oluremi, 2013). Teachers are the facilitators who are to impact on students the concepts expected to be learnt (Owolabi, 2012). Teachers are the most important factor in the effectiveness of schools and in the quality of a child's education (Akinsolu, 2010).

Nigerian teachers are doing well but there are lots of areas where they need reformation to be able to meet up with the current demand of excellent performance of students in WASCE. Teachers' self-efficacy is an educational construct that both government and researchers in Nigeria are not paying attention

to and is a key factor in teacher's effectiveness. What is teacher self-efficacy? Teachers' self-efficacy is the set of beliefs a teacher holds regarding his or her own abilities and competences to teach and influence student behaviour and achievement regardless of outside influences or obstacle (Steele, 2010). Pendergast, Garvis, & Keogh, (2011) asserted that teachers with a high level of teacher self-efficacy have been shown to be more resilient in their teaching and likely to persist in difficult time to help all students reach their academic potential.

Students are coming into classes from different background; some are brilliant while some are not. Some can easily take to correction while some are not; even some are already spoiled at home and they are in school. Teacher with high self-efficacy will not regard any student to be un-teachable. Teachers with high efficacy perceptions persisted with low-achieving students and used better teaching strategies that allowed such students to learn more effectively. Conversely, teachers with low self-efficacy spent more time on non-academic tasks and used less effective teaching strategies that hindered student learning (Sharma, Loreman & Forlin, 2012).

Many of Nigerian teachers do not preferred poor or average students; they expect all students to always pick at the same time. Those that cannot meet up with their expectation are left behind in the teaching process. Teacher self-efficacy will not enable any teacher see any area in the school curriculum too difficult to approach. We need teacher who knows there is no aspect of his or her work subject too difficult to teach neither is there any student who cannot be taught. Many of the teachers do not cover their syllabus at the right time because they felt there is an area of the subject they are not very

good. Teacher who don't trust his or her efficacy will try to avoid dealing with academic problems and instead turn his or her effort inward to relieve his or her emotional distress (Bandura, 2013). Teachers' self-efficacy has been consistently associated with students' academic achievement (Holden, Groulx, & Bloom, 2011) and (Westbury, Hansen, Kansanen & Björkvist, 2015). When employee (teacher) has high self-efficacy they are more likely to work harder to learn a new task as they will be more confident in their abilities than employee (teacher) with low self-efficacy (Bandura, 2013).

Theoretical Framework

The study is based on Weiner's (1992) attribution theory. The concept attribution describes the cognitive process by which a person perceives the cause of what has happened to him/ her either as caused by himself/herself or by others (Kahn 2001).). According to the attribution theory, we tend to explain the causes of success or failure to either internal or external factors. That is, we succeed or fail because of factors that we believe have their origin with us or because of factors that originate in our surroundings. There is an element of whether we control or do not control the success or failure. This is related to Rotter's (1966) locus of control concept which refers to the extent to which individuals believe that they can control events that affect them. Individuals with an internal locus of control believe that events result primarily from their own actions. Those with an external locus of control believe that other peoples (for example, teachers), fate, bad luck or chance primarily determine events (Vijayashree and Jagdishchandra 2011). An important assumption of the attribution theory is that we will interpret our environment in such a way as to maintain a positive self-image. That is, we will attribute our successes

or failures to factors that will enable us to feel as good as possible about ourselves. For example, when learners succeed in an academic task, they are likely to attribute the success to their own efforts or abilities and when they fail, they will attribute failure to factors over which they have no control, such as lack of resources.

Weiner's attribution theory applies to this study in that learners are most likely to attribute their high failure in mathematics to external factors like mathematics is difficult, teachers are incompetent, teachers are not serious and to internal factors like not working hard or having a negative attitude towards mathematics.

Empirical Framework

Ajayi & Osalusi (2013) investigated the causes of mass failure of students in West African Senior School Certificate Examinations (WASSCE) from the perspective of the teachers. It also examined the trend of mass failure of students in the examination between 2003 and 2010. A descriptive research of the survey design was adopted in the study. The sample comprised 200 secondary school teachers selected from ten public secondary schools in Ado-Ekiti Local Government Area of Ekiti State using simple random sampling techniques. A self-designed questionnaire was used to collect data for the study. The data collected were analysed using frequency counts and percentage scores. The study revealed a fluctuating trend of mass failure of students in WASSCE between 2003 and 2010 with an average of 78.65% of students without at least five credit passes in English Language and Mathematics. Moreover, from the teachers' perspective the students, teachers, government, parents and schools were responsible for the mass failure of students in WASSCE.

Research Method

The research design adopted for the study was survey design. In this design, questionnaire is used to elicit information from different individuals on a particular issue relating to the population.

This survey design was adopted because the data collected from a few members of the population is used to generalize and make reference to the population. This method is easy and cheap to conduct.

The population of the study was selected from all the teachers in twenty-six (26) public secondary schools in the Enugu Educational Zone. This figure was put at one thousand

seven hundred and eighty-six (1786) according to the figures obtained by the researcher from the Research and Statistics Department of the Post-Primary Schools Management Board (PPSMB) Enugu in January 2016. Using a simple random sampling technique, the researcher selected thirty (30) teachers each of the twelve (12) schools in the local government area under the zone. Thirty teachers were selected at random without bias from each of the schools to arrive at a sample of 360 teachers. This represents about 20.16percent of the parent population.

The instrument used for data collection is questionnaire designed by the researcher. The questionnaire was made of two sections; section A and section B. Section A is made up of personal data of the respondent while Section B contained the (12) twelve question items that are used to answer the research questions. The respondents were required to respond to a four-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD). The question items were designed in a close-ended form to ensure that individual or subjective opinions were avoided.

Data Analysis

Research Question One:

To what extent do parental factors contribute to mass failure of students in secondary school economics?

Table 1: Mean Response on the extent to which parents contribute to mass failure of students in Economics. N = 360

S/N	Items	Mean	Decision
1.	Lack of parental encouragement of students' performance to a great extent.	3.41	Agree
2.	Lack of parental involvement in students' class activities to a great extent	3.43	Agree
3.	Poor motivation and poor supervision by parents lead to mass failure of students in Examinations to a great extent.	3.40	Agree
Grand Mean		3.41	Agree

Source: field study 2020

Table 1 above shows the various responses given by the respondents on the extent to which parental factors contribute to mass failure of students in secondary school economics. All the mean responses were above the threshold of 2.5, with the mean scores (3.41, 3.43, and 3.40) for question items 1 to 3 respectively. The result indicates that: lack of encouragement of students by

parents 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. The grand mean was calculated as 3.41, implying that parents contribute to mass failure of secondary school students in Economics to a great extent

UNIJERPS

Research Question Two

To what extent does teacher-factor contribute to mass failure of secondary school students in Economics?

Table 2: Mean Response on the extent to which teacher factor contribute to mass failure of students in Economics. N= 360

S/N	Items	Mean	Decision
4.	Lack of qualified teachers affects students' performance in Economics to a great extent	2.80	Agree
5.	Teachers' absenteeism affects students' performance in Economics to a great extent	3.05	Agree
6.	Ineffective teaching method causes mass failure of students in Economics to a great extent.	3.15	Agree
Grand Mean		3.0	Agree

Source: field study 2020

In Table 2 above, the questions items were designed to determine the extent to which teacher-factor contribute to mass failure of secondary school students in Economics? All the mean responses were above the threshold of 2.5, with the mean scores (2.80, 3.05, and 3.15) for question items 7 to 9 respectively. The result indicates that lack of qualified

teachers, teachers' absenteeism and ineffective teaching methods lead to mass failure of students in Economics to a great extent.

The grand mean was calculated as 3.0, implying that teacher-factor contributes to mass failure of secondary school students in Economics.

Discussion of Findings

The data investigation and analysis in this study has led the researcher to some findings. The first research question was designed to identify the extent to which parental factors contribute to mass failure of students in secondary school economics. The analysis of the second research question indicates 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 Economics to a great extent.

The second research question sought to find out the extent to which teacher factor contribute to mass failure of secondary school students in Economics. The result indicates that: lack of qualified teachers, teachers' absenteeism and ineffective teaching methods lead to mass failure of students in Economics to a great extent. This implies that teacher-factor contributes to mass failure of secondary school students in Economics. This present findings agrees with the outcome of the study by Ajayi&Osalusi (2013) who discovered that from the teachers' perspective the students, teachers, government, parents and schools were responsible for the mass failure of students in WASSCE.

Conclusions

It has been asserted that that the high rates of failure noticed yearly in public examinations are only a symptom of a pervasive national failure syndrome. The performance of students in Senior Secondary Examination in Nigeria has remained an issue of concern to all stake holders. The report by Ojerinde (2018) on the survey of the performance of candidates in science subjects in Nigeria over the years revealed a discernible decline. This perennial decline has remained a source of concern to science educators, mathematicians and mathematics educators (Nnaka and Anaekwe, 2014). To the best of the researchers' knowledge no study has investigated the causes of mass failure of students in Economics among secondary school students in Enugu Educational Zone This is the gap which this study is set out to fulfill. Having formulated three research questions to guide the study, the researcher after reviewing the literature set out on a survey mission, using teachers themselves as respondents to elicit information from them

on what they perceived as the reasons for mass failure in Economics by secondary school students in Enugu Educational zone. With a population of one thousand, seven hundred and eighty six (1786) teachers in Enugu Educational zone, and a sample of three hundred and sixty (360) who were drawn and served as respondents in this study, the researcher employed the mean method of data analysis and came out with the following conclusions: over-burdening home activities contribute to mass failure of students in secondary school Economics; parents' action and inaction contribute to mass failure of secondary school students in Economics to a great extent. Poor quality and ineffective teachers contribute to mass failure of secondary school students in Economics to a great extent, and; government failure is responsible for mass failure of secondary school students in Economics to a great extent.

Recommendations

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

1. 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
2. Parents should serve as mentors to their children by encouraging them in class work. They should be involved in students' activities in schools and encourage them, not just paying school fees.
3. There is need for the employment of qualified teachers who are knowledgeable in Economics to teach

in our secondary schools. This will improve the teaching and learning of the subject.

Florida Journal of Educational Administration & Policy, 3(2): 86-103.

REFERENCES

- Aina, J. K., Ogundele, G. A., & Olanipekun, S. S. (2013). Causes of Poor Performance in West African School Certificate Examination (WASCE) in Nigeria, *Scholars Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences*
- Ajagun, G.A. (2000). A study of the performance of students in the senior secondary school certificate examination in selected schools in Kano State. *Tambori: Kano Journal of Education* 6(1): 10-21.
- Ajayi, I. S. & Osalusi, F. M. (2013). Mass Failure of Students In West African Senior School Certificate Examinations (WASSCE) In Nigeria: The Teachers' Perspective, *Case Studies Journal* Vol- 2-Issue 4, 1-5.
- Akanle O.B (2007) Socio-economic factors influencing students academic performance in Nigeria. Some explanation from a local survey. *Sociology and social work community*. Free Online Library.
- Akindutire I.O. & Ekundayo H.T. (2013). Teacher education in a democratic Nigeria: Challenges and the way forward. *Educational Research*, 2012; 3(5): 429-435.
- Akinsolu, A. O. (2010). Teachers and Students' Academic Performance in Nigerian Secondary Schools: Implications for Planning. *Florida Journal of Educational Administration & Policy*, 3(2): 86-103.
- Aremu, O. A & Sokan, B. O. (2013). A multi-causal evaluation of academic performance of Nigerian learners: issues and implications for national development.
- Asikhia, O.A. (2010). Students and teachers' perception of the causes of poor academic performance in Ogun State secondary schools, Nigeria. *Implications for Counselling for National Development*. *European Journal of Social Sciences*. 13: 238-240.
- Aworanti, O. A. (2010). Why Candidates Fail In Public Examinations, paper presented at The Federal Ministry Of Education National Stakeholders Consultative Meeting On Improving Performance In Public Examinations At The National Universities Commission (NUC) Abuja
- Bakare, C. G. M. (2016). Mass failure in public examinations: Some psychological perspectives. *Monograph*. Department of Guidance of Counselling, University of Ibadan, Ibadan.
- Bandura A. (2013). Perceived Self-efficacy in Cognitive Development and Functioning. *Educational Psychologist*, 28(2): 117- 148.
- Berger, J. B. and J. M. Braxton. (2018). Revising Tinto's Interactionist Theory of Student Departure Through Theory Elaboration: Examining the Role of Organizational Attributes in the Persistence Process, *Research in Higher Education*, 39(2). 103-119.

- Boyd D, Landford H, Loeb S, Rockoff J, & Wyckoff J. (2018). The Narrowing Gap in New York City Teacher Qualifications and Its Implications for Student Achievement in High-Poverty Schools. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 27(4): 793–818.
- Christmann, E.P., & Budgett, J.L. (2013). A Meta-Analytic Comparisons of the Effects of Computer-Assisted Instruction on Elementary Students' Academic Achievement. *Information Technology in Childhood Education Annual*, 4(1), 91-104.
- Ebije, A.I (2011): Neco Records Another Mass Exam Failure, *Daily Trust* of Thursday, March 31,
- Etsey, Y. K. A.; Amedahe, F. K. & Edjah, K. (2015). Do private primary schools perform better than public schools in Ghana? Unpublished paper. Department of Educational Foundations, University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast.
- Ezeokoli, F.O. (2015). Home language as Determinant of Reading Interests of Senior Secondary Students in Oyo State, Nigeria in Dauda, A., Abimbola, A., and Kolawole, O.O. (eds). *Issues in language communication and education*, Ibadan Constellation Books pp. 15 – 31
- Hansel, P. (2012). Causes of massive examination failure. Retrieved September 23, 2013 from <http://www.spurmeg.com/blog/2012>
- Holden M. E. Groulx J, Bloom M. A. & Weinburgh MH (2011). Assessing Teacher self-efficacy through an outdoor professional development experience. *Electronic Journal of Science Education*, 12(2): 1-25.
- Karande, S. & Kulkarni, M. (2005). Poor school performance. *Indian Journal of Pediatrics*. 72(11): 961—967.
- Michael, S.O. (2014). Restructuring US higher education: Analyzing models for academic program review and discontinuation. *The Review of Higher Education*, 21(4), 377-404.
- Morakinyo, A. (2003). Relative efficacy of systematic desensitization, self statement monitoring and flooding on subjects test anxiety. Unpublished Phd. Thesis. University of Ibadan.
- Nnaka, C.U. & Anaekwe, M.C. (2014). Application of Research Findings in Science, Technology and Mathematics (STM) Education to enhance Classroom instruction: the place of Cooperative Learning strategy. *Science Teachers' Association of Nigeria Proceedings of the 45th Annual conference*.
- Obiakor M.I. and Oguejiofor D. N (2019) An Evaluation Of The Relationship Between Classroom Size and Secondary School Students Academic Achievement: *Advance Journal of Education and Social Sciences Adv. J. Edu. Soc. Sci* Volume: 5; Issue: 04 ISSN: 2237 – 1470 Impact Factor: 4.732 Institute of Advance Scholars (IAS) Publication www.iaspub.org.uk/AJESS/
- Okemakinde T, Alabi C. O. Adewuyi JO (2013). The Place of Teacher in National Development in Nigeria, *European Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 19(1), 963-980.

- Oladele, J.O. (2005). Fundamentals of Educational Psychology. Johns-Lad. Lagos.
- Oluremi, O. F. (2013). Enhancing Educational Effectiveness in Nigeria through Teacher's Professional Development. *European Scientific Journal*, 9(28): 422-431
- Onuka, A. O. U. & E. O. Durowoju (2013) Motivation and Gender As Determinants of Achievement In Senior Secondary School Economics, *European Journal of Educational Studies* 3(2)209-216
- Park S, & Oliver J. S. (2017). Revisiting the conceptualization of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK): PCK as a conceptual tool to understand teachers as professionals. *Research in Science Education*, 38(3): 261–284.
- Sahlberg P. (2010). The secret to Finland's success: Educating teachers. Stanford Centre for Opportunity Policy in Education- Research brief.
- Salami, S. O. (2014). Affective characteristics as determinants of school-going adolescents: Implications for counselling practice. *Sokoto Education Review*.7:145—160.
- Tata U. S., Abba A., & Abdullahi M.S. (2014). The Causes of Poor Performance in Mathematics among Public Senior Secondary School Students in Azare Metropolis of Bauchi State, Nigeria, *IOSR Journal of Research & Method in Education* Volume 4, Issue 6 Ver. III, PP 32-40
- Tella A.(2018). Teacher variables as predictors of academic achievement of primary school pupils mathematics. *International Electronic Journal of Elementary Education*, 1(1): 17-33.
- Tinto, V. (2017). Classrooms as Communities. *Journal of Higher Education*, 68, 6,: 599-623.
- Tsinidou, M., Gerogiannis, V., & Fitsilis, P. (2016). Evaluation of the factors that determine quality in higher education: an empirical study. *Quality Assurance in Education*, 18(3), 227- 244.
- Weiner B (1992). *Human Motivation: Metaphors, Theories, and Research*. Newbury Park, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Wentzel, K. R. (1998). Social relationships and motivation in middle school: The role of parents, teachers, and peers. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 90, 202–209.
- Westbury I, Hansen S. E, Kansanen P, & Björkvist O. (2015). Teacher education for research-based practice in expanded roles: Finland's experience. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 49: 475-485.