

Investigating The Factors Contributing To The Poor Academic Performance Of Liberia's Senior Secondary Students In The West African Senior School Certificate Examination

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Abstract

Education is essential for a society's advancement and growth. The more educated the population of the citizens, the more civilized and disciplined the society will be. Stakeholders and policymakers are becoming increasingly concerned about Liberian students' poor academic performance on the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE). The study's primary purpose is to explore and analyze the factors that contribute to student's poor academic performance in Liberia's WASSCE with a focus on the Paynesville School District, Montserrado County. The study employed a survey as its methodology. The instrument for the study was a closed-ended questionnaire. The population consists of 400 students recruited at random from four different schools. The descriptive statistics included in the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) were used to analyze the data. The study discovered that teacher absenteeism and deferred payment of teacher bribes are teacher-related variables contributing to students' poor academic performance on the WASSCE. In addition, the study demonstrated that bad study habits and frequent absenteeism of students are Student-related factors leading to students' poor academic performance on the WASSCE.

Furthermore, the study established that the absence of a laboratory and a lack of counseling lessons for WASSCE students are school-administration-related factors contributing to students' poor academic performance in the WASSCE. Additionally, the study discovered that a lack of adequate educational policies and a lack of secondary school teacher training are government-related factors contributing to students' poor academic performance in the WASSCE. Finally, the study discovered that parental unemployment and a lack of parental education are the factors responsible for students' poor academic performance in the WASSCE.

Key Words: Poor Academic Performance; Multi-Dimensions Perspectives; High School Students

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I. INTRODUCTION

Everyone will seek to obtain a high-quality education as part of the country's educational ambitions. Education is essential in a person's life because it aids in the development of socially acceptable abilities, attitudes, and behaviors. Quality education has the advantage of allowing a country to adapt to changing needs as the world progresses, and it also allows the country to lead the growth of human resources and the economy. The objective of education, according to (Kimani et al., 2013), is to provide citizens with the values, skills, and knowledge necessary to alter their society and remove inequity. Education must be used as a tool for social change by educational institutions. The school's success is determined by the quality of its students. The success of a school's students on both academic and non-academic exams is regularly used to assess its quality.

One of the most important priorities of the Liberian government since the civil war has been to enhance the country's education system. After a long and terrible civil war, Liberia's educational system is resurrecting. Long-term effects of the conflict, exacerbated by school closures in 2015 due to an Ebola virus (EVD) outbreak, continue to devastate an already unstable educational system. On nearly every educational metric, Liberia lags behind the bulk of other African countries. The net enrolment rate in primary school, for example, is only 44%. Liberia is gradually reconstructing its educational system following years of civil war that destroyed the country's workforce. To address educational concerns like access, instructional quality, and enhanced educational system governance, USAID engages with other donors and the Ministry of Education (MOE). Poor learning outcomes, overage enrolment, many uses of out-of-considerable school children, a poor learning environment, and an excess of inexperienced teachers are just a few of the issues that the education system faces.

Background of the Study

Liberian students' poor academic performance has become a significant source of concern for stakeholders and policymakers in the country. For example, during an interview with Reuters in 2013, former Liberian President Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf described the country's educational system as a shambles after 25,000 high school graduates that year failed to pass the University of Liberia's entrance examination. According to Dr. Emmett A. Dennis, President of the University of Liberia, 13,000 individuals sat for the University of Liberia entrance examinations in 2015. Only Fifteen (15) candidates passed out of the 13,000 candidates that sat for the entrance examination. In addition to the massive failure of senior students in Liberia, 42,000 senior high school students registered and sat for the West African Senior Schools Certificate Examination in 2016, and only one student passed out of the 42,000 who sat, according to the West African Examinations Council (WACE) Liberia Boss, Mr. Dale G. Gbotoe.

Liberian senior high school students have historically underperformed in the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE), especially their regional peers. The WASSCE Exams, originally known as the West African Examination Council (WAEC) Exams, have long been used to assess Liberian students' performance. According to the WAEC officials in Liberia's 2018 WASSCE Report, 61.15 percent of candidates, or 21,580, failed the tests for the academic year 2017/2018, while 34.85 percent, or 11,544, passed successfully.

The research findings will be valuable in developing policies to address the much-needed reforms in Liberia's educational sector.

Demographic Profile of Liberia

Liberia is a West African country situated on the coast near the Gulf of Guinea and shares its borders with the following countries such as Sierra Leone, Guinea, and the Ivory Coast. The country's total surface area is 37,189 square miles (96,320 square kilometers), which ranks 108th in the world in terms of sheer size. Liberia has an estimated population of 4.94 million. This compares to the 2008 census population of 3.47 million. Of the official population, 1.1 million people lived in Montserrado County, the most populous county and home of Monrovia. The Greater Monrovia area is home to about 25% of Liberia's population. The next most populous region is Nimba County, with about 500,000 residents. Liberia has a population density of just 127 people per square mile, and 49 people per square kilometer, which ranks 134th globally in terms of population density (Countrymeters.info., 2019). Liberia has 16 indigenous ethnic groups and several foreign minorities, but English is the national language. 95% of the population are indigenous people. The sixteen (16) ethnic groups include The Gio (or Dan), Mano, Bassa, Kpelle, Grebo, Vai, Gola, Kru, Krahn, Mandingo, Fante, Dei (or Dewoin), Bella, Mende, Loma, and the Americo-Liberians or Congo people (Countrymeters.info. 2019). Table 1 below shows the country's basic demographic profile, including population estimates for 2019, based on the latest United Nations Data (Countrymeters.info. 2019).

Table 1: Population Estimated for Liberia

The projected population for 2019 is 5,028,892	
Total area	111,370 km ² (43,000mi ²)
Population density	45.2 per km ² (117.0 people/mi ²)
Sex ratio	1.10 (2,528,061 men to 2501.149 women)
Median age	18.6 years
Life expectancy (2016)	57.0 years (55.4- men, 58.6- women)
Literacy rate	47.6 %

Note: Based on the latest United Nations Data; Source: Population data for every country as of 2018. Available at <http://contrymeters.info/en/> [Accessed 24 Oct. 2019]

Statement of the Problem

The low Performance of Liberian students in the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) has been a significant source of concern for all Liberians. As a result, the purpose of this study is to investigate and explore the elements that contribute to students' poor academic performance in the Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE). Some Liberians believed that students' poor academic performance might be ascribed to the government. Some blamed the school administration and teachers. On the other hand, Liberians believed that students' poor academic performance could be blamed on both students and their parents. With these conflicting opinions, the researcher thought it prudent to investigate the factors responsible for students' poor academic performance and explore the factors that are most dominantly responsible for students' poor academic performance in the WASSCE and provide the necessary recommendations to policymakers for implementation.

Research Objective

The primary goal of this research is to investigate and explore the factors that contribute to Liberian students' poor academic performance in the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE). The following are the study's Specific goals:

- To find out Teachers'- Related factors responsible for students' poor academic performance in the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE) □
- To find out the Students'- Related Factors responsible for students' poor academic performance in the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE). □
- To find out the Schools'- Administrations- Administrators-related factors responsible for students' poor academic performance in the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE). □
- To find out the Government-Related Factors responsible for students' poor academic performance in the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE). □
- To find out Parents'-Related Factors responsible for students' poor academic performance in the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE). □
- To draw policymakers' attention to the most significant issues contributing to Liberian students' poor academic Performance in the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE) to direct resources toward specific educational needs properly.

Research Questions

This study identifies six primary questions to go into the topic's nitty-gritty:

1. What are the teacher-related factors responsible for Students' poor academic performance in the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE)?
2. What are the student-related factors that are responsible for Students' poor academic in the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE)?
3. What are the School Administrations- Related Factors for students' poor academic performance in the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE)?
4. What are the Government-Related Factors responsible for students' poor academic performance in the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE)?
5. What are the Parents-Related Factors responsible for the student's poor academic performance in the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE)?

The Significance of the Research

This research aims to uncover and identify the factors responsible for Liberian students' poor academic performance in the WASSCE. It will also establish which factors are the most important contributors to students' poor academic performance in the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE). Furthermore, the research would attract policymakers' attention to adopting relevant policies to solve Liberian students' poor WASSCE performance. Moreover, this study will be used as a resource for future academics performing similar research.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A World Bank report, titled "Improving the Results of Secondary Education," published on June 11, 2019, indicates that schools in Liberia also struggle to provide adequate learning opportunities apart from basic facilities. In contrast, of the six hundred forty (junior and senior) public community secondary schools across the country, only fifteen percent report having a functioning science laboratory (with equipment and supplies or in use), with varying disparities across counties. Approximately twenty-two percent of Montserrado County secondary schools have functioning laboratories, while in contrast, the remaining fourteen counties have few if any, laboratories (Maryland has two percent, and River Gee County has none. Liberian students find it challenging to comprehend science knowledge without such fundamental facilities.

(Liberia Education Sector Analysis, 2016) states that the Ministry of Education has not yet finalized school quality standards or developed uniform tools for inspection and monitoring school quality. Similar to (Getting to Best Education Sector Plan, 2016), there are no national school standards for primary education schools in Liberia. Due to the many challenges the county and district education officials, parents, and community leaders face in holding school principals and teachers accountable (EMIS, 2015) also claimed that while the Ministry of Education is employing more qualified teachers than ever before, many teachers are unqualified. It presents the situation of teachers as; less than thirty-four percent of junior and senior high school teachers of the Liberian educational system hold minimum qualifications for their positions.

The poor quality and limited relevance of secondary Education in Liberia is of great concern and has, period, been a subject of debate as to the root cause of this for a long-time problem. In addition to the works mentioned above, this research will utilize the vast contributions of other authors related to this topic to inform

the analysis of this research. For this study, factors such as teachers-related, Student-related, School- School-school-administration-related, Government-related, and Parent-related factors will be discussed in detail.

Teacher-Related Factors

Teachers are the driving factors behind students' growth and development since they have the necessary information to increase students' learning activities, and they are also known as change agents (Kimani et al., 2013). Teacher effectiveness is of significant concern among policymakers, educators, and parents. Internal and external academic performance are frequently used to assess instructor effectiveness. It is widely assumed that students who fail exams are taught by ineffective teachers, whereas very successful teachers teach those who succeed. So far, research has shown that a teacher's efficacy increases students' academic achievement (Priestley et al., 2011), which makes sense given the facilities available in the teaching and learning process. During their interactions with students, they interpret the subject matter and put theory into practice. Because of the critical role they play in providing quality education to students, the teacher is "increasingly becoming the center of interest" (Taal et al., 1996). Instructors are change agents and, as such, are crucial to students' academic success.

More importantly, non-use of verbal reinforcement approach and tardiness to school (Morakinyo and Fagbamigbe, 2017), as well as poor interpersonal interactions (Aremu and Sokan, 2003), were all cited as reasons for students' poor academic performance, difficulty to complete syllabi, and a lack of interest in the children's comprehension of the lesson (Etsey, 2005), as well as inadequate teaching methods (Asikhia, 2010). In addition to constant strikes, poor teaching methods, instructors' incapacity to cover the syllabus, and teachers' lack of ingenuity in teaching, (Aremu and Sokan, 2003) are listed as causes of students' poor academic performance in public examinations.

The Frequent Absenteeism of Teacher

The teacher had a substantial impact on the students' learning. When a teacher is regularly absent, it detracts from a student's learning activities and can lead to poor academic performance. The fewer lessons a teacher will cover from the curriculum, the more days they are out of the classroom. Teacher absenteeism has a detrimental impact on students' academic performance, and as a result, syllabi will not be finished (Ubogu and Zaidat, 2004). For example, research conducted by the Liberia Teacher Training Programme (LTTP II, 2006) indicated that many teachers in rural Liberia abandoned their courses and traveled long distances to collect their paychecks and salaries from banks, resulting in teachers losing instructional time.

The Causes of Teachers' Bribery

Low wages in the public sector, notably in education, account for much of the trivialization of small-scale corruption (BIKOUÉ and BAYEMI, 2020). Teachers frequently seek supplementary money due to insufficient or irregular salaries or accrued debts. Because his income alone does not allow him to make ends meet, a teacher can accept bribes in exchange for a good grade (Vian, 2006). Salary increases are frequently utilized as a technique to relieve financial strains that contribute to corruption. Unfortunately, increasing compensation will not be enough to eliminate corruption. Wage increases lessen the appeal of bribes without eliminating them. Indeed, a large income may lead to the cancellation or decrease of bribes demanded by a needy instructor; but avarice may motivate the teacher to collect even more (Colazingari and Rose-Ackerman, 1998). In reality, in many countries, parents and students present instructors with presents as a mark of appreciation. This isn't a problem as long as nothing in return is expected.

However, this practice can devolve into extortion, and poor parents may believe that their children are not receiving a decent education or are failing tests because they cannot afford to buy presents or pay bribes to professors or lecturers (Colazingari and Rose-Ackerman, 1998). Furthermore, academic corruption is common in countries where societal standards are not founded on meritocracy. Because some taxpayers or consumers of educational services would obtain preferential treatment, corruption harms the principles of merit, fairness, and impartiality upon which education is founded.

Student-Related Factors

According to research, students are to be blamed for their poor academic performance. (Gilbert and Kare, 1994), (Aremu and Sokan, 2003) discovered that the factors affecting students' academic performance are psychological and adjustment difficulties, a lack of interest in the school program, low retention, association with the wrong peer, low accomplishment motivation, and emotional difficulties.

Other studies (Marburger, 2001 & Ekundayo, 2010) have shown that student lack of financial support, absenteeism, truancy, use of local language in the classroom, lack of interest and joy in teachers' lessons, and learning disability low cognitive ability, gender prematurity, medical problems, and the inability for students to understand examination questions are all contributing factors responsible for students' poor academic performance.

Lack of Students' Study Habits

Study habits are the methods by which students prepare for their classes. Students' study habits have a substantial impact on their academic progress. To be successful and succeed, students must read, sketch, compare, memorize, and test themselves throughout time.

The phrase "study habit" is comprehensive and clear for vivid understanding, according to (Mohamed Hussain et al., 2018), because it contains all of the sub-concepts of "attitude," "study technique," and "study abilities." An attitude is a mental and natural state of readiness organized by experience and directly impacts the individual's response to everything and everyone it relates to them. The way children approach learning has a significant impact on how well they do in school.

In furtherance of the above, successful students maintain a good attitude toward their studies and do not spend time or energy on tasks that are not urgent. If the learning experience is enjoyable, the student's attitude and motivation will be positive; nevertheless, if the learning experience is not enjoyable, the student's attitude will most likely be negative. Students' dissatisfaction with their academics can be conveyed in comments like "I can study, but I can't remember what I studied." "I don't understand the lesson since it's too long." According to (Ebele and Olofu, 2017), students must assimilate, digest, reflect on, and articulate course content in written and oral form to succeed in their studies. The ability of students to develop successful study habits is the most crucial factor.

Many students believe that the number of hours spent in class is the most significant factor in education. Students, on the other hand, can study for numerous hours and still leave with little knowledge. The most crucial question is how students should study properly for their lessons. Students must understand that there is time to be in class, study, be with their families, and socialize to develop practical time management skills. Students must have a clear vision to create healthy study habits. A vision of the future they want to build for themselves that is well-articulated. Students' academic achievement depends on their ability to see clearly. Students will develop a passion for what they want to pursue if they have a vision. Passion is essential because it leads to a high level of interest, dedication, and commitment to accomplishing their job goals and objectives. According to (Marc, 2011), students who manage their lives and stick to their study plans are more confident and relaxed when it comes time to take tests. According to (Ashish, 2013), students must abandon negative study habits and acquire excellent ones to maintain academic performance.

According to (Adeninyi, 2011), strong study habits enable students to study freely at home and aspire to a higher educational career. Students' academic performance is based on building good study habits, which begin in secondary school. Unserious students study regardless of technique, according to (Agba, 2013).

School Administrations-Related Factors

The educational system shares some of the burdens for students' poor academic performance. According to (Agba, 2013), large class sizes, restricted teaching supplies, and inadequate textbooks are factors of poor academic performance at school doorsteps. Any school's success is inextricably linked to its leader. In comparison to the previous school leader, the present school leader has several responsibilities. They work in community management, instructional, curriculum, counseling, arbitrator, and specific cause advising roles. For many years, researchers have debated the link between good leadership and good school performance. For example, some authors feel that no school can be greater than its leaders and that a school is only as good as its leadership.

Mphale and Mhlauli (2014) argued that there is a strong link between a school's excellence and its leadership. Other scholars argue that there isn't enough evidence to demonstrate the link between school leadership and student academic achievement (Kythreotis and Pashiardis, 2006).

However, much research on leadership has found that the quality of school leadership has a direct impact on school achievement, teacher effectiveness, and student academic performance. The School Head is in charge of all activities in a school and is responsible for all activities that take place within the school grounds. Their main goal is to improve the school's success by making teaching and learning more fun and efficient. Every school leader hopes to have the community's trust, respect, and praise. School administrators influence students' academic success in a variety of ways. One option is for the principal to act as an educational leader. To encourage student learning and growth, instructional leadership includes creating goals, directing curriculum, monitoring lesson plans, assigning resources, and routinely evaluating teachers (Concordia University, 2001). Effective instructional leadership cultivates a learning culture, provides teaching materials, and organizes the classroom environment to motivate teachers and students. The school's instructional leadership behavior has a critical influence on improving teacher performance and student accomplishment (Leithwood et al., 2013).

The Effect of Examination Anxiety on Students' Academic Performance

The majority of students suffer from phobia or fear to the point where some of them become ill during class tests or examinations. Despite receiving lessons from the beginning of the semester to the finish, these students are nevertheless concerned or agitated when the words test or examination are uttered. These youngsters'

anxiety over tests and examinations is concerning. Also, while taking tests or exams, they may feel psychological symptoms such as phobias, fevers, or sweating. In their research, (Salami et al., 2017) confirmed the occurrence of anxiety among Nigerian pupils. Test anxiety was reported by (Peter et al., 2020) among River State students at all levels of their studies. This aberrant dread has had a considerable impact on students' performance in laboratory task workshops, achievement exams, and intelligence tests. counseling is highly important in our secondary school since it assists students in being more aware of themselves and how they react to behavioral influences in their surroundings (Blöcher et al., 2015).

Lack of Laboratory to Support Students' Learning Activities

The laboratory enables the student to put his or her views, ideas, claims, and theoretical propositions into various forms of experimental testing (Soyibo, 1995). To retain and pique students' interest in laboratory-based studies, the teacher must be actively involved in transferring knowledge and facts to students for them to perform well on tests. In light of this, one can reasonably inquire as to the extent to which the laboratory met its aims. (Odulaja and Ogunwemimo, 1989) emphasized the teacher's role as a dispenser of knowledge, with the laboratory serving as a drill or verification facility. They continued by stating that on the other extreme, the teacher serves as a guide to learning, while the laboratory serves as a repository of knowledge. However, there is mounting evidence that teachers do not demonstrate behaviors that are conducive to accomplishing stated objectives. They include insufficiency or absence of adequately equipped laboratories; high student enrollment; inadequacy of teaching and learning resources; and teacher quantity and quality.

Nwachukwu (1984) discovered that there was a general deficiency of resources for the teaching and learning of biology in some of the new secondary schools in Lagos during her examination of the resources for the teaching and learning of biology. She also discovered that (a) none of the old schools recognized as having laboratories had a well-equipped laboratory, and (b) 40% of schools had no laboratory at all, with the other 60% having rooms labeled "laboratory" but lacking suitable apparatus. She found that teachers would have a tough time teaching biology practicals and that students' learning opportunities would be limited. (Odunmi and Balogun, 1991) argued that no efficient science education program can exist without adequate teaching equipment. (Olatunde, 2010) reported on the state of our secondary schools today, stating that laboratories have devolved into racks of empty chemical bottles. In terms of academic accomplishment, (Soyibo and Nyong, 1984) demonstrated that schools with well-equipped laboratories outperform those with inadequately equipped laboratories on the school certificate science examinations. (Gana and Wall, 1997) confirmed this by stating that students trained solely through laboratory methods had a higher attitude but a lower achievement score than students instructed entirely through the traditional lecture or textbook style. According to (Yadav and Chen, 2007), no course in science or mathematics can be regarded as complete without some form of practical activity. Individuals should carry out practical work in scientific laboratories or classrooms. At the elementary school level, practical work is even more critical, as we learn via experience. As a result, scientific processes and applications become more significant. It is a well-established fact that an object handled firmly imprints the mind more than an object seen from a distance or in an illustration. As a result, practical practice is an integral part of every scientific or mathematics course (Ohchr et al., 2008).

Government-Related Factors

In terms of policy formation, program implementation, finance, administration, and oversight, among other things, the government plays a vital role in educational management. The government's dedication to these roles may affect whether or not the educational system succeeds. As a result, blaming the government for students' poor academic performance is not out of the question. According to studies, the government's inability to implement educational policies, leadership issues, job losses (Bakare, 2011), insufficient supervision of instruction (Antwi, 2019), and inadequate funding of education (Olutayo and Akanle, 2007) are all factors that contribute to poor academic performance. They include unstable teacher remuneration, a shortage of competent and expert teachers in the classroom, and other challenges (Ajayi et al., 2010).

Lack of Training for Teachers

Training equips participants with a complete understanding of how to handle such situations. Individuals who have been trained in the relevant profession can exhibit their existing and potential abilities and efficacy. Teachers must be current on current events and educational ideas and current on the findings of recent field studies (Likoko et al., 2013). They are, nevertheless, unable to resolve professional and social concerns to gain knowledge from their current conditions. Liberia's national government is responsible for teacher education. However, only a minority of people are interested in obtaining tuition to help them develop their skills. These regulatory bodies that oversee schools and staff performance must be established. Staff training has been shown to increase productivity and motivate staff through learning environments, attractive teacher salary packages, increased opportunities for career development, the availability of infrastructure, learning materials, appropriate time

duration, and superficial learning and teaching procedures. These variables contribute to teachers developing new techniques and approaches for overcoming new hurdles, resulting in students who can navigate new course outlines and are skilled enough to use their knowledge in practical areas. Increased motivation facilitates the acquisition of new technical abilities and the production of unique items.

Lack of Adequate Educational Policy

According to (Sahlberg, 2007), in the study "Education Policies for Raising Student Learning; the Finnish Approach," numerous solutions focusing on improving education policies have been offered to boost students' academic accomplishments. Some suggested solutions were based on a menu of elements or functions that needed to be enhanced inside the educational system (Blankstein, 2004). New practices are frequently enforced through passing rules and regulations that compel schools and teachers to change their ways. In contrast, the Finnish approach to boosting all students' learning and achievement was predicated on a long-term vision and a set of basic ideas that had been embraced by Finnish society. The government bears complete responsibility for developing and implementing all educational programs to improve the lives of its citizens. When the government fails to offer necessary educational policies, school administrations, and teachers will be unable to function efficiently, resulting in low academic achievement for students

Parents-Related Factor

Education is vital for societal growth. The better educated a society's inhabitants are, the more civilized and disciplined it becomes. The family is primarily responsible for socializing children so that they can become functional members of society. The more parents actively participate in their children's education, the more likely they are to thrive academically and grow into productive customers of society (Hafiz, 2013).

To put, student academic achievement is intricately related to the country's social and economic prosperity. Students' academic accomplishment is crucial in producing the highest-quality graduates. They will serve as great leaders and workforce for the country and thus be accountable for its economic and social advancement (Ali et al., 2018) exception. Social, psychological, economic, environmental, and individual factors all have an impact. Performance significantly impacts student accomplishment, but it varies from person to person and country to country. Parents have a vital part in their children's education. Parents must supervise and manage their children's academic work in addition to paying fees and providing resources. Parents must routinely attend their students' schools to check their academic development. In this way, when parents visit their children's schools frequently, they will have more opportunities to interact with their children's instructors and school administrators, which will help them evaluate whether or not their children are doing well academically. Parents who visit their children's schools will better understand how their children act at school.

Parents, according to studies, are to blame for their children's poor academic performance. Students' poor academic performance is induced by a polygamous home, according to (Ali et al., 2018). Students' low academic performance due to parents' failure to give breakfast, textbooks, and other necessary materials for disadvantaged children less parental participation with their children (Etsey, 2005). In addition, (Olutayo and Akanle, 2007) acknowledged restricted parental income as a contributing academic performance. Poor academic performance can be attributed to parents' inability to provide the necessary resources for their children to succeed in school and a lack of parental involvement in their children's education. Additionally, (Ajayi et al., 2010) assert that poor academic performance can be attributed to parents' inability to provide the necessary resources for their children to succeed in school and a lack of adequate parental involvement in their children's education. While some of how parents raise their children may be detrimental to their academic progress, parents need to be involved in their children's education. According to studies, parents' parenting style has a detrimental effect on their children's academic progress. For example, a tolerant and uninvolved parenting style will not aid their children's education. When a parent removes restraints and grants their children free will, this is referred to as permissive parenting. Child Fashionable choose when they wish to learn. As such, children reared in this manner usually disregard their homework in favor of immediate gratification and entertainment (Mphale and Mhlauli, 2014). Uninvolved Parental Style has been identified as the most detrimental parental style, contributing to poor academic performance. Disengaged parents cannot assist their children with their homework and provide moral support during an emotional crisis. As a result, their students' academic performance will suffer.

Importance of Parents' Education on their Children's Academic Performance

(Krashen, 2005) revealed that students whose parents are literate get more outstanding marks on standardized tests than those whose parents are illiterate. Educated parents can better communicate with their children regarding school duties, activities, and the knowledge being taught at school. (Farooq et al., 2011), what learners might be assisted in a better way to participate at school by their parents.

III. METHOD

Research Design

The research design was defined as "all the overall strategies that the researcher chooses to integrate the various components of the study coherently and logically, thereby ensuring that the research problem is effectively addressed; it serves as a blueprint for data collection, measurement, and analysis." The study's objective dictates the type of design you should use. There are three types of study designs: qualitative (Santha et al., 2015), and mixed methods. This research aimed to determine the factors responsible for students in Liberia to do poorly in the West African Senior School Certificate Examinations (WASSCE). The investigation focused on four schools in Montserrado County's Greater Monrovia #2 School District. Primary data were chosen because they are original, according to (Kothari et al., 2015)). The term "primary data" refers to data collected specifically for a spa. Because primary data is gathered from sources by someone, it can be trusted.

The Target Population

A target population, as defined by (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999), is one to which the researcher seeks to generalize the results of a study. It is composed of a sample frame from which a representative sample is drawn (White and Folkens, 2005). Therefore, the survey sampled 400 students from four randomly selected schools within the Paynesville District, Montserrado County. A total of 200 students were polled for this investigation. Students were chosen because they were the ones who were directly involved in the learning and teaching activities daily. The researchers chose to share their perspectives on the elements that contribute to pupils' poor academic performance in the WASSCE since they are the ones who have directly experienced this challenge.

Ethical Consideration

(Chang and Gray, 2013) underlines the need for other researchers to conduct research ethically. If their supervisors learn of their responses, the respondents may suffer danger or violence. Because it is not recommended to violate people's rights in the name of knowledge, the researcher notified the administration of the study's four selected schools administrations granted permission for the researcher to conduct the study. Additionally, the researcher informed respondents before completing the research that their submitted data would be anonymous and used solely for research purposes.

Sampling and Sampling Techniques

(Rattray and Jones, 2007) define sampling as "the process of selecting a section of the population to represent the entire population, with the findings from the sample representing the entire group." The selected sample should thus have similar characteristics to the population under study to allow generalization of the results to represent the entire population (Penrod et al., 2003). Probability sampling and non-probability sampling are the two types of samplings. A non-probability sampling method is used in this investigation. The respondents were chosen at random from the Paynesville District's four schools in Montserrado County. The researcher picked students using sample randomization approaches, with 50 students drawn from each of the four schools. The 50 students were randomly chosen from each school, resulting in a sample size of 200. The researchers divided students into two categories for this investigation. The first category of students consisted of individuals who had passed the WASSCE and obtained a diploma. The researcher consulted students who had passed the WASSCE and graduated, as they have first-hand experience with writing examinations. Students in the second category are those who are currently enrolled in school. Students who are currently enrolled in school also have personal experience with the factors that contribute to students' poor academic Performance.

Data Collection

The primary tools for gathering data for this research were the questionnaire and document analysis.

Data Analysis

According to (Saunders et al., 2018), quantitative research data has very little relevance until process processes examined guarantee completeness, uniformity, and readability, and the completed questionnaire was modified. After the data were double-checked, it was structured in a way that made analysis simple. The collected questionnaire was grouped into more significant parts before being processed and loaded into SPSS

IV. Results

Primary Findings

The goal was to have a better understanding of the respondents' backgrounds. The respondent profile is intended to instill trust in the accuracy of the data obtained

Gender Distribution of Respondents

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Male	128	64
Female	72	36
Total	200	100

Source: Field Data 2023

The question was designed to ascertain the respondents' gender distribution. Males 128 (64%) comprised the vast majority of the genders, while females (72) (36%) comprised the remainder. This demonstrates the study's male dominance unequivocally. According to (Mpofu, 2005), gender inequality is a significant issue in Africa, and the majority of institutions have yet to address it.

Age Distribution of Respondents

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
16 Years -18 Years	20	10
19 Years -21 Years	57	28.5
22 Years and above	123	61.5
Total	200	100

Source: Field Data 2023

The question was intended to ascertain the age distribution in the study. According to the table above, 20(10%) respondents are between the ages of 16 and 18, 57 (28.5%) are between the ages of 19 and 21, and the remaining 123 (61.5%) are between 22 and above. This also indicated that the majority of respondents who participated in the study were aged 22 years or older.

Respondents' Parent Level of Education

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
High School Dropout	41	20.5
High School Diploma	69	34.5
Certificate	21	10.5
Bachelor's Degree	52	26
Master	16	8
PhD	1	0.5
Total	200	100

Source: Field Data 2023

The question was posed to ascertain the respondents' parents' education in the study. Table 4:3 above shows that 41 (20.5%) of respondents' parents were high school dropouts, 69 (34.5%) of respondents' parents earned a high school diploma, 21 (10.5%) of respondents' parents earned a certificate 52 (26%) of respondents' parents earned a bachelor's degree, 16(8%) of respondents' parents earned a master's degree, and 1(0.5) respondent's parent earned a Ph.D. This demonstrates unequivocally that the overwhelming majority of respondents' parents earned a high school certificate.

Students- Related Factors

The purpose of this section was to examine the student-related factors that contribute to students' poor academic performance in the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE), with a particular emphasis on the Paynesville district, the WASSCE, with a focus on the Greater Monrovia # 2 School District.

Factors	Responds	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of students' study habits	Yes	188	94
	No	12	6
Frequent absenteeism of students	Yes	185	92.5
	No	15	7.5

Source: Field Data 2023

According to Table 3, 188(94%) of respondents agreed that a lack of students' study habits could contribute to students' poor academic performance West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination

(WASSCE), while (12, 6%) of respondents disagreed. The poll results suggest that the majority of respondents felt that a lack of students 'study habits could contribute to their poor academic performance West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE).

Interestingly, out of the 200 respondents that participated in the study, 185 (92.5%) agreed that frequent absenteeism of students from class during instruction time could cause their poor academic performance WASSCE, while 15 (7.5%) disagreed with the assertion that frequent absenteeism of students from class during instrumental times cannot cause their poor academic performance West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE). The results above clearly reveal that the bulk of the respondents who took part in the study agreed that frequent absenteeism of students from class during instructional times could cause their poor academic performance West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE).

School- Administration Factors

This component of the study intended to determine the school administration factors that contribute to students' poor academic performance West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE) with specific reference to the Greater Monrovia #2 School District.

Factors	Responds	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of equipped laboratory to support students' learning	Yes	57	28.5
	No	143	71.5
Providing counseling lessons to senior students taking the WASSCE to help them overcome their fear	Yes	196	96
	No	8	4

Source: Field Data 2023

According to Table 3 data, 57 (28.5%) of the 200 respondents indicated that their schools had laboratories, whereas 143 (71.5%) reported that their schools did not have laboratories. This finding demonstrates unequivocally that the overwhelming majority of respondents to the research lacked access to a laboratory.

According to the results of Table 4, 192 (96%) of respondents agreed that school administration must provide additional counseling lessons to senior students taking the WASSCE to assist them in overcoming their fear, while 8 (4%) of respondents disagreed. This result demonstrates unequivocally that the vast majority of respondents thought that school administration should provide counseling courses to senior students preparing to write the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE) to alleviate their fear.

Parent-Related Factor

The purpose of this part was to examine the parent-related factors that contribute to kids' poor academic performance on the WASSCE, with a focus on the Paynesville District.

Factors	Responds	Frequency	Percentage
The government provides educational policies	Yes	55	27.5
	No	145	72.5
Training more teachers at the secondary level	Yes	105	52.5
	No	95	47.5

Source: Field Data 2023

According to Table 7, 55 (27.5%) of the 200 respondents agreed that their parents were employed, whereas 45 (72.5%) disagreed. The vast majority of study participants' parents were unemployed, as shown in Table 1. Also, table 7 shows the study's findings, which show that parents' educational levels had a significant impact on their children's academic achievement in the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE), with 105 (52.5%) agreeing and 95 (47.5%) disagreeing among the 200 respondents. Because the majority of respondents agreed with the hypothesis, it was concluded that parents' educational level has a significant impact on their children's academic achievement in the WASSCE.

Government-Related Factors

The purpose of this section was to examine the government-related variables that contributed to students' poor academic performance in the WASSCE, with a particular emphasis on the Paynesville district.

Factors	Responds	Frequency	Percentage
The government provides educational policies	Yes	41	21
	No	158	79
Training more teachers at the secondary level	Yes	42	21

	No	158	79
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Source: Field Data 2013

According to the results of Table 5, 42 (21%) of the 200 respondents agreed that the government had been implementing education policies to help reduce students' poor academic performance in the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE), while 158 (79%) disagreed and said that the government had not been implementing any policies to help reduce students' poor academic performance in the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE). According to the data in Table 1, the vast majority of the survey participants disagreed with the assumption.

According to the results of Table 6, 193 (96.5%) of the 200 respondents agreed that the government should train more secondary school teachers, while 7 (3.5%) disagreed and claimed that the government should not train additional secondary school teachers. The outcomes of this study revealed that the overwhelming majority of individuals surveyed believed that the government should train more secondary school teachers.

V. Discussion

Teachers-Related Factors

The findings of the student-related factors that contributed to Students' poor academic performance in the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE) were summarized in this part.

Teachers' frequent absences during instructional time is one of the reasons contributing to students' poor academic performance West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE). In this vein, 92% of respondents agreed that teachers' absenteeism from class during instrumental times contributed to students' poor academic performance in the WASSCE. The teacher had a substantial impact on the students' learning. When a teacher is frequently absent, it disrupts the learning activities of students and can result in low academic achievement. The fewer days a teacher is absent from the classroom, the fewer lessons they will cover from the curriculum. Absenteeism by teachers harms students' academic achievement. It constrains instructional time, resulting in an incomplete syllabus (Ubugu and Zaidat, 2004).

Additionally, the study findings discovered that bribery of teachers is one of the teacher-related factors significantly contributing to students' poor academic performance on the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE). The majority of respondents stated that teachers collecting bribes from students were a factor contributing to Students' poor academic performance on the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE). As such, 93% of respondents confirmed that teachers accepting bribes from students may have contributed to their students' poor academic performance on the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE).

Students-Related Factor

The student-related Factors that contribute to students' poor academic performance in the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE) were discussed in this section of the research findings. As indicated in the Research findings, one of the student-related variables contributing to students' poor academic performance in the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE) is the lack of students' study habits. For instance, a significant concern is students' lack of study habits, which comprised (94%).

The frequent absenteeism of students is another student-related aspect that affects students' academic performance in the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE). 92.5% of respondents believed that frequent absences from school contributed to their poor West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE) results.

School -Administration-Related Factors

This section provided findings on the school-administration-related variables that contribute to students' poor academic performance on the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE).

The study revealed that fear of the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE) is one of the major contributing factors to students' poor academic performance in the WASSCE. The results of the survey indicated that 196 (96%) of respondents agreed and stated that they are afraid when preparing to write the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE), so school administration should provide counseling courses to students taking the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE) to assist them in overcoming their exam-related worries.

The study also established that the lack of a laboratory to support students' learning is one of the school-administration-related problems that is one most the factors that contribute to student's poor academic performance in the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE). A laboratory is to blame for students' poor academic performance in the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE), according to 71% of those who did the survey. The majority of survey participants stated that their schools lack an adequately

equipped laboratory to facilitate their learning, resulting in poor performance on the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE). (Odubunmi and Balogun, 1991) argued that no efficient science education program can exist without adequate teaching equipment.

Parent-Related Factors

This component of the study focuses on the parental-related factors that contribute to students' poor academic performance in the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE).

According to the Study findings, parental unemployment is one of the parent-related factors affecting students' academic performance on the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE). 72% of respondents believed that one of the causes contributing to students' poor academic performance in the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE) is their parents' unemployment. According to the findings of the study, parents' educational level has a considerable impact on their children's academic performance in the WASSCE, as 105 (52.5%) of the 200 respondents agreed that their parents' educational level has a major impact on their academic achievement in the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE).

Government -Related Factor

The findings on government-related concerns that lead to students' poor academic performance in the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE) were presented in this section of the study. Moreover, the absence of secondary teacher training, as shown in the research findings, is one of the government-related causes contributing to students' poor academic performance in the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE). The government needs to train more secondary school teachers, according to 96.5% of respondents. The study further found that a lack of educational policies is another government-related factor contributing to students' poor academic performance in the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE). A lack of educational policies, according to 79% of respondents, is one of the factors contributing to students' poor academic performance in the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE).

Recommendations:

Concerning the conclusion, the study has the following Recommendations :

Teachers must attend class regularly to ensure that the essential syllables are completed.

- ✓ Teachers should stop accepting bribes in exchange for grades from students and their parents.
- ✓ To decrease teacher bribery, the government and school administration should improve teachers' compensation and benefits.
- ✓ Students should be encouraged to develop appropriate study habits by their parents and teachers.
- ✓ Parents and teachers should urge students to attend class regularly.
- ✓ The school administration should provide a laboratory equipped with the necessary equipment to supplement students' educational activities.
- ✓ The school administration should provide counseling courses to students taking the WASSCE to help them overcome their examination anxieties and enhance psychological resilience.
- ✓ The government should train additional secondary school teachers for all of the subjects that can be administered by the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE).
- ✓ Parents should be employed to assist in the education of their children.
- ✓ Parents should receive more formal education to improve home-schooling

Future Research Directions

- ✓ The researcher proposed that additional research be undertaken in rural regions to ascertain the reasons that contribute to Liberia's students' poor academic performance.
- ✓ The research should be expanded to include Liberia's private and public schools
- ✓ Teachers, students, parents, school administration, and government officials should all be included in the studies.

VI. Conclusions

In conclusion, **Teacher-Related Factors**, according to the majority of respondents, teacher bribery significantly contributes to students' poor academic performance on the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE). As such, 93% of respondents agreed that teacher bribery has a detrimental effect on students' academic performance.

One of the factors contributing to students' poor academic performance in WASSCE is teachers' frequent absences during instructional time. Teachers' absence from class during instrumental times was cited by 92% of respondents as a factor in students' poor academic performance in the West African Senior School Certificate

Examination (WASSCE). The teacher had a significant influence on the students' learning. When a teacher is regularly absent, it disrupts students' learning activities and can lead to poor academic performance. The fewer days a teacher is out of the classroom, the fewer lessons from the curriculum they will cover. Teacher absenteeism hurts students' academic performance. It limits the instructional time, resulting in syllabi that are incomplete (Ubogu and Zaidat, 2004).

Additionally, **Students- Related Factors**, the overwhelming majority of respondents indicated that one of the student-related issues affecting students' poor academic performance in the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE) is a lack of study habits. 94% stated that students' lack of study habits is a significant reason for their poor academic performance on the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE).

According to the respondents, another student-related factor contributing to their poor academic performance in the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE) is the frequent absenteeism of students. 92.5% of respondents believed that frequent absences from school contributed to their poor academic in the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE).

In furtherance, **School-Administration-Related Factors**, the study demonstrated that a lack of a laboratory to support students' learning is one of the school-administration-related factors contributing to students' poor academic performance on the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE). According to 71% of respondents, the laboratory is responsible for pupils' poor performance on the WASSCE. The majority of survey participants stated that their schools lack an adequately equipped laboratory to facilitate their learning, resulting in poor performance in the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE). The study also revealed that fear of the WASSCE is another factor responsible for students' poor academic performance in the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE). 70.5% of respondents agreed and stated that they encountered fear when preparing to write the WASSCE, so school administration should provide counseling courses to students taking the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE) to assist them in overcoming their exam-related worries.

Interestingly, **Government-Related -Factors**, the research also established that a lack of educational policies is another government-related factor contributing to students' poor academic achievement in the WASSCE. A lack of educational policies, according to 79% of respondents, is one of the factors contributing to students' poor academic performance in the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE). The study discovered that a lack of secondary teacher training is one of the government-related issues affecting pupils' academic performance in the WASSCE. The study's findings suggested that a shortage of trained teachers in secondary schools is among the government-related factors contributing to students' poor academic performance in the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE) performance. 96.5% of survey respondents agreed, stating that the government should train additional secondary teachers.

To put, the study found that a lack of proper financial assistance for institutions is one of the government-related issues contributing to students' poor academic performance in the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE).

To conclude, **Parents-related factors**, according to a study, parental unemployment is one of the parent-related factors contributing to the student's poor academic performance on the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE). It is noticeable that 72% of respondents believed that one of the factors contributing to students' poor academic performance in the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE) is their parents' unemployment.

According to the findings of the study, parents' educational level has a considerable impact on their children's academic accomplishment in the WASSCE, as 105 (52.5%) of the 200 respondents agreed that their parents' educational level has a major impact on their academic achievement in the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE).