

**WASHBACK EFFECT OF SCHOOL LEAVING CERTIFICATE
EXAMINATIONS OF MIZORAM BOARD OF SCHOOL
EDUCATION ON THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF
ENGLISH IN MIZORAM**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF
PHILOSOPHY**

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BY

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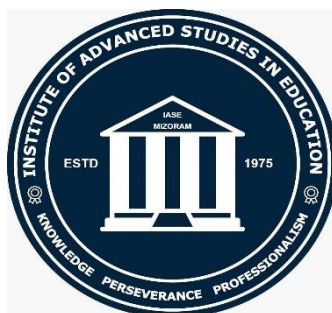
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Submitted

**In partial fulfilment of the requirement of the Degree of Doctor of
Philosophy in Education of Mizoram University, Aizawl.**



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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 ENGLISH AS A GLOBAL LANGUAGE

English holds the status of a global language due to its extensive use in commerce, administration and international communication. It is regarded as a critical tool for achieving social progress, gaining access to quality education and improving career opportunities (Crystal, 2003). As the dominant medium for global business, international dialogue and cultural exchange, English has become indispensable in various sectors (Graddol, 1997). Furthermore, with the rapid advancement of informatization and globalization, English serves as the primary language enabling people from diverse regions to communicate effectively (Kirkpatrick, 2007). This growing reliance underscores its role as the preferred lingua franca for international collaboration and understanding (Seidlhofer, 2011, as cited in Alptekin, 2012).

The English language also plays a significant role in advancement of connections across borders. Proficiency of English language is often considered a fundamental skill for individuals who are out searching for economic opportunities and individual growth. In a wider context, it is also seen as an essential factor in driving national economic development that enables countries to engage more effectively in the global economy and compete on an international stage.

As English has taken on such a significant role, various researchers have sought to define it in terms that reflect its use across different contexts. It has been referred to as “General English” “World Standard (Spoken) English” and in 1997, David Crystal introduced the term “English as a global language”. This has been followed up with terms like “English as a Lingua Franca”, with other researchers coining the phrase “English as an International Language”, “World English” and the like. Among these, the most widely used expressions are “English as a global language,” “English as a lingua franca,” and “English as an international language.” Despite the differences in

terminology, these terms essentially convey the same idea: English is the most widely spoken and used language across major fields around the world. (Rao, 2019)

English has firmly established itself as the primary language of international communication, making proficiency in this language more important than ever (Crystal, 2003). As a global lingua franca, it serves as the common medium for people from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds to communicate effectively. English is essential in fields such as business, science, technology and education, as it facilitates the global exchange of ideas and knowledge (Seidlhofer, 2011). For instance, the majority of scientific research papers, international business transactions and academic materials are produced in English, which further solidifies its status as the language of global progress (Graddol, 1997).

Furthermore, proficiency in English is increasingly regarded as an essential skill for individuals who aim to improve their career opportunities and obtain quality education. Many multinational companies prioritize hiring employees with strong English language abilities, as it enables them to engage in global markets and communicate effectively with international clients. Similarly, many prestigious universities around the world use English as the primary medium of instruction. This makes it essential for students who aspire to study abroad or engage with academic research (Phillipson, 2018).

The rapid advancement of globalization and technological innovation has further amplified the significance of English. Digital platforms including social media, online learning resources and global communication tools predominantly use English as the default language. This allows individuals to connect, learn and collaborate regardless of geographic boundaries (Crystal, 2003).

The need for English language skills keeps increasing across different fields and professions, whether in education, business, or social interactions. However, mastering a new language is not a simple academic task; it is a dynamic and evolving process. It demands consistency in effort, practice and opportunities to immerse oneself meaningfully in the language. This combination of dedication and exposure enables learners to develop not only linguistic competence but also cultural

understanding which is essential for effective communication in diverse contexts. (Kim, 2023). According to Rao (2019), the dominance of English has grown so much that it has become unstoppable, much like a snowball that is too big to prevent.

1.1.1 Status of English in India

India is a nation characterized by immense linguistic diversity, with a wide array of languages spoken throughout its vast regions. However, no single language serves as a unifying medium as none is universally spoken or understood across the entire country. This linguistic divide has necessitated the adoption of English, a non-Indian language, as a common medium of communication to bridge the gap and serve as a unifying force within Indian society (Kachru, 1990; Mohanty, 2006).

Following independence, the role of English in India underwent significant changes. The Indian Constitution recognised Hindi in Devnagiri script as the official language. However, due to its long roots in the system, English was declared the associate language with Hindi until 1965. Various educational commissions in India have stressed the importance of using the mother tongue for instruction while emphasizing the study of English. Although the Constitution recognized Hindi in Devanagari script as the official language, attempts in 1960 to make it the language of the judiciary faced resistance in non-Hindi-speaking regions. To address this, the 1961 Chief Ministers' Conference recommended teaching English alongside Hindi, particularly for All India Services. A 1967 law declared English an associate official language indefinitely. The University Education Commission also highlighted the need to teach English in schools and universities to access global knowledge. (Syal, 2019)

English has become an important tool for communication and understanding in today's connected world. It is no longer just a way to speak with others; it also helps people access knowledge, take part in international business and engage in cultural exchanges. Because of this, learning English in India has become a must in education. From the early years of school, English is part of the curriculum and plays an important role in helping students access global information and academic knowledge. Being

good at English is seen as necessary for success in various fields like science, business and international relations (Phillipson, 2003).

In India, knowing English is considered an important step for personal and social progress (Syal, 2019). Many schools, especially in cities, use English as the main language of teaching and it is essential for higher education and competing in the global job market. The importance of English is also seen in government communications, media and online spaces which further shows its role in connecting with the world. English has become the language through which much of the world's research and discoveries are shared, making it a key factor in advancement (Rao, 2019). As a result, English proficiency is highly valued and being fluent in the language opens doors to many opportunities both in India and internationally (Jenkins, 2003).

The importance of English in India is also linked to its role in the job market. It is often considered a necessary skill for getting jobs with international companies or competing for positions in highly competitive industries (Graddol, 2006). English is more than an academic skill; it is a valuable tool that enables individuals to obtain better jobs, develop professional networks, and enhance their social status. As India becomes more involved in the global economy, knowing English will continue to be an important skill for personal and national growth (Seidlhofer, 2001).

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 also shows the importance of English but also makes sure that no language is forced on students. It follows the three-language formula, where English can be one of the chosen languages. The policy suggests that children should study in their mother tongue or local language at least until Grade 5, and preferably till Grade 8, so they can understand better in the early years. At the same time, it also says that good English teaching should be provided and that subjects like science and maths can be taught with books in both English and the local language. English is seen as important because it connects students to the world, helps them in higher studies, gives more job opportunities, and is useful when moving between different states in India. Since most research, study materials, and global communication are in English, NEP 2020 accepts its value but tries to balance

it with local languages, so students keep their culture while also being ready for global opportunities.

Overall, English has become an essential part of education in India and around the world. From a young age, students are taught English and it is used as the main language of instruction in many schools. The growing focus on English shows how important it is for students to connect with global knowledge, improve their communication skills and prepare for a competitive, interconnected world. English is seen as key to academic success and future career opportunities.

1.1.2 Present Status of English in Mizoram

In Mizoram, English is introduced as a second language right from the entry level in schools, which means that it lays the foundation for its use throughout a student's academic journey. The Mizoram Board of School Education (MBSE) has established English as the medium of instruction and evaluation at both the secondary and higher secondary levels. This means that textbooks, classroom teaching and assessments at these stages are primarily conducted in English. The emphasis on English at these levels highlights its importance in the state's education system. The objective seems to be equipping students with language skills that are necessary for higher education, employment opportunities and global communication.

Despite being introduced early, many students lack proficiency in English even at the secondary level. Many students in higher institutions in Mizoram struggle to communicate in English with fluency and correct grammar in both writing and speaking. This raises questions about how they managed to pass their Secondary and Higher Secondary levels, where most subject textbooks and the medium of instruction are in English. It seems likely that many of these students relied on rote memorization rather than truly understanding the concepts (Lalchhanhima, 2024). In her paper "The Problems of English Teaching and Learning in Mizoram" Lalsangpuii (2015) has listed several problems that stands in the way of proficiency in the language. Some of those are lack of exposure, geographical isolation, syllabus structure, use of translation

method, attitude towards English language, sociocultural setting, inappropriate method of teaching, lack of practice, learning methods, question setting pattern etc.

It can be seen that Mizos are facing isolation in terms of geography and language. Lack of exposure is listed as one of the reasons. “Mizos have a homogeneous unilingual society, the use of English in this situation is limited. The students could easily get whatever they want as long as they know Mizo.” (Lalsangpuui, 2015). Students in Mizoram hesitate to speak English due to fear of judgment, ridicule, or criticism, which hampers their language proficiency. The Mizo community, united by organizations like YMA, KTP and TKP, primarily uses Mizo, limiting opportunities for English conversation. This in fact means that main source of learning and using the language is schools thus enunciating the cruciality of schools in English education. Most schools rely on the ineffective translation method to teach English. Teachers often overlook the goal of language teaching, which is to develop practical communication skills alongside reading, writing, listening and speaking. The content of the syllabus can also be regarded as the contributing factor to the incompetency. The syllabus structure “is mostly based on poetry, grammar and literature. One can easily learn by heart the lessons without much improvement in the communication skills.” (Lalsangpuui, 2015).

An analysis of the current situation in Mizoram has shown that students face challenges related to their use of English. There are not many chances for them to use English in everyday conversations, as the local language is more commonly spoken. In most cases, English is seen mainly as a way to get better job opportunities or access higher education. Because of this, students focus more on performing well in examinations rather than working on improving their actual English language skills. This creates a gap as the emphasis on examination results limits their ability to fully develop their language abilities and use English confidently in real-life situations.

“One of the factors responsible for the deterioration of educational achievement in general in Mizoram is the pattern of question setting. It is easy to predict what questions would be asked and from what sections of the textbooks in examinations. The students highly rely on the bazaar notes which are based on the

compilation of the question papers asked for a number of preceding years in State Board examinations. The students simply have to memorize the answers for these “important” questions. The teachers also teach only those aspects which are important for the examination. Thus, the whole learning process is very much examination-oriented and there is little scope for language development.” (Lalsangpuui, 2015, p.183)

1.2 ASSESSMENT SYSTEM IN MIZORAM

According to the Mizoram Board of School Education Act of 1975, the Board of Secondary Education, Assam, no longer had authority over High and Higher Secondary Schools in Mizoram after the Act was passed by the Legislative Assembly. During this period, Mizoram was still a Union Territory. The Act facilitated the creation of an educational regulatory body responsible for overseeing, supervising and inspecting school education, along with other related academic activities. Consequently, the Mizoram Board of School Education (MBSE) was officially established on December 23, 1976. As an autonomous body with perpetual existence, MBSE was formed through an act of the Legislative Assembly to regulate and enhance the administration of school education in Mizoram (Zoramthangi, 2016).

The secondary school assessment system in Mizoram is primarily overseen by the Mizoram Board of School Education (MBSE), which conducts board examinations for Grade 10 and Grade 12 students. These examinations are considered high-stakes and play a crucial role in determining students’ academic and career paths. The Grade 10 examination, known as the High School Leaving Certificate (HSLC) examination, is taken by students at the end of their secondary education and is an important milestone in a student’s academic journey. The Grade 12 examination, known as the Higher Secondary School Leaving Certificate (HSSLC) examination is conducted for students who have completed their higher secondary education and is often required for admission to universities or higher education institutions.

1.2.1 Internal Assessments

In Mizoram, schools carry out internal assessments to monitor students' progress. These assessments include periodic tests, assignments, projects and practical evaluations which are designed to track the progress of students throughout the school year. By using these assessments, teachers can get a better understanding of each student's strengths and weaknesses and are important in giving a clearer picture of a student's overall performance. However, these internal assessments usually carry less weight in the overall grading system, typically accounting for only 20% of the total marks. In comparison, the final board examinations are considered much more important, as they make up the majority of a student's academic assessment. The board examinations are seen as the key factor in determining a student's future academic and professional opportunities, which make the said examinations the primary focus in a student's educational journey.

1.2.2 Board Examinations

The Mizoram Board of School Education (MBSE) is responsible for conducting the board examinations, which take place every year in March or April. After the examinations are finished, the results are usually made available a few months later. These results provide a comprehensive evaluation of how well students have performed throughout their studies. The board examinations are an important milestone for students, as they mark the end of their academic journey for both the High School Leaving Certificate (HSLC) and the Higher Secondary School Leaving Certificate (HSSLC). The outcomes of these examinations help assess the students' overall academic abilities and achievements.

1.2.3 Grading System

For subjects that do not have practical examinations, students are graded based on a total of 80 marks. However, for subjects that do include practical examinations, the total marks are split into two parts: the theory part of the subject is worth 70 marks, while the practical part is worth 10 marks. This system ensures that students are tested not only on their knowledge and understanding of the subject but also on their ability to apply what they have learned through practical work. It helps provide a more

balanced assessment of both theoretical and practical skills in the subjects that require them. To pass the examinations, a candidate must score at least 33% in each theory and practical paper, as well as in the overall aggregate. They must also achieve at least a 'D' grade in internally assessed subjects. Candidates must pass separately in both theory and practical papers, as well as in internal assessments and board examinations.

1.3 WASHBACK: A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

Washback or backwash, a term now commonly used in applied linguistics, refers to the influence of testing on teaching and learning (Alderson & Wall, 1993). The concept is based on the idea that tests or examinations have the power to have an influence on the way teaching is performed. That being so, this impact extends to the learning process, as teaching strategies are often altered to meet the requirements of the tests. Assessments serve as tools to guide educators and students, shaping teaching methods and focus to match examination objectives. Teachers often design their lessons based on the content of end-of-term assessments, adjusting their teaching methods to ensure students are well-prepared for these tests. This alignment means that classroom activities, assignments and discussions primarily focus on topics likely to appear in the examinations. As a result, students may spend more time practicing test-related skills rather than exploring subjects in depth or developing critical thinking abilities (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2019). Research has shown that this test-driven approach can limit students' overall learning experience and reduce opportunities for creative and analytical thinking (Alderson, 2005).

The idea of washback was first recognized and discussed in academic research during the early 1990s. Before this term became widely recognized, scholars in the field of applied linguistics used a range of terminologies to describe the influence that examinations have on teaching and learning practices. These terms aimed to capture the ways in which assessments shape classroom instruction, student behaviour and broader educational policies. Washback is a relatively recent yet intricate phenomenon studied in both language and general education. Prior to the 1990s, the term "washback" was not commonly found in academic literature. However, with the

influential work of Alderson and Wall and the growing prominence of external standardized tests worldwide, research on washback has gained significant attention. As a result, numerous empirical studies on language testing have been conducted since then. (Rahman et al., 2023). The idea of washback brought a more unified and focused perspective to the discussion of examination effects, emphasizing the interconnected relationship between testing and educational outcomes. (Alqahtani, 2021)

Washback has been referred to as measurement-driven instruction (Popham, 1987, as cited in Alderson & Wall, 1993). Scholars have proposed various definitions of washback, ranging from simple to complicated. It has been assigned various terms such as systemic validity (Creswell, 2009, as cited in Alebachew & Minda, 2019), test impact (Cohen, et.al. 2007; Brown, 2012, as cited in Alebachew & Minda, 2019), consequential validity (Anderson and Bachman, 2008, as cited in Alebachew & Minda, 2019), backwash (Hughes, 2003, as cited in Alebachew & Minda, 2019) and washback (Brow, 2004, as cited in Alebachew & Minda, 2019).

The majority of our knowledge about washback and the effects of testing was established during the 1990s, with further research expanding on these ideas in the early 2000s (Nodoushan, 2021). During this period, scholars explored how assessments influence teaching methods and student learning behaviours. Studies highlighted that high-stakes exams often lead teachers to modify their instructional strategies to align with test content, while students focus more on exam-related skills rather than overall subject mastery. As research progressed, educators and policymakers gained a deeper understanding of the ways in which testing systems shape education, leading to ongoing discussions on improving assessment practices to support meaningful learning.

Assessment is a crucial component and plays a key role in education. It can take various forms, such as multiple-choice tests, short-answer questions, classroom observation, or portfolios. Regardless of its form, assessment benefits all stakeholders if it is reliable and valid. Both formative and summative assessments, whether teacher-made or national, impact learners and teachers. Tests are expected to create positive effects inside and outside the classroom. Classroom tests help teachers

identify students' strengths and weaknesses. This allows teachers to make revisions and improve instruction if needed. High-stakes test results, however, have greater consequences. The reason for some tests being labelled 'high-stakes' is because the results of such tests are seen "rightly or wrongly- by students, teachers, administrators, parents, or the general public, as being used to make important decisions that immediately and directly affect them" (Madaus, 1988, p. 87). The stress and results of these tests create clear effects. When tests have a big impact on the future of students, they automatically have an influence on the process of teaching and learning. This influence is known as washback (Alderson & Wall, 1993).

1.3.1 Washback Hypotheses

Alderson and Wall (1993) conducted a significant and influential study on the washback effect of language testing in Sri Lanka, spanning a period of four years (1988-1991). Their research focused on assessing the impact of a newly introduced English examinations within the country's education system. As part of their investigation, they explored how the introduction of these examinations influenced the practices of both teachers and students. Alderson and Wall (1993) argued that tests have a significant impact on many different aspects of education. They highlighted how testing affects not just the assessment process but also the broader educational system. In their study, they outlined fifteen hypotheses which suggests that the implementation of testing has a direct and significant impact on teaching methods and learning outcomes, shaping the way educational processes unfold. These hypotheses are organized into four main categories: teaching, learning, teaching and learning together and other factors that are not directly related to either teaching or learning. Each of these categories covers different dimensions of education, showing how testing can shape the behaviours and practices of both teachers and students, as well as the overall educational environment. These hypotheses aim to better understand the consequences of testing and how it interacts with educational goals.

Hypotheses

Teaching:

A test will influence teaching

A test will influence WHAT teachers teach.

A test will influence HOW teachers teach.

A test will influence the RATE and SEQUENCE of teaching.

A test will influence the DEGREE and DEPTH of teaching.

Learning:

A test will influence learning.

A test will influence WHAT learners learn.

A test will influence HOW learners learn.

A test will influence the RATE and SEQUENCE of learning

A test will influence the DEGREE and DEPTH of learning

Teaching and Learning:

A test will influence attitudes to the content and methods of teaching and learning.

Others:

Tests that have important consequences will have washback.

Tests that do not have important consequences will have no washback.

Tests will have washback on all learners and teachers.

Tests will have washback effects for some learners and some teachers, but not for others.

Many studies have been conducted on these hypotheses, but the research is unevenly distributed. Some hypotheses have been explored more extensively, while others have received less attention and are underrepresented in the literature. According to Wei (2017), a substantial amount of research on washback has focused

primarily on teaching-related hypotheses, receiving significant scholarly attention. On the other hand, the impact of testing on the learning process has not been fully studied that creates a gap in the literature that needs further research to understand washback effects in education.

Similarly, the remaining hypotheses which are connected to the characteristics of the test itself or the purposes for which the test scores are utilized - categorized under “Others” - have also been largely overlooked. Despite the significant role these areas could play in enhancing our understanding of the broader implications of washback in educational contexts, they have not received sufficient research attention and remain largely under-researched.

1.3.2 Aspects of Washback

Buck (1988) had described washback and argued that teachers and learners have a natural inclination towards adjusting their classroom behaviours and procedures in such a way as to ensure high test scores. This is understandable because school authorities often judge teachers’ success on the basis of their students’ test scores. He argued that this can be harmful if attempts at boosting test scores do not result in higher learning. According to Buck (1988) there exists an argument that both teachers and learners naturally adjust their classroom behaviours and methods to achieve high test scores has. This tendency is understandable as school authorities often evaluate teachers’ success based on the test results of their students. However, Buck (1988) warned that this approach can be detrimental if efforts to improve test scores do not lead to actual improvements in learning. This in turn means that there is indeed the presence of two kinds of washback: (1) positive or beneficial and (2) negative or harmful.

1.3.2.1 Positive Washback

Alderson and Wall (1993) suggest that tests can have a positive effect on washback if they encourage students to focus more on the lessons and prepare thoroughly. For example, an oral proficiency test is introduced to enhance the teaching

of speaking skills. Positive washback happens when a test promotes effective teaching practices.

In other words, positive washback occurs when the objectives of the curriculum and that of the subsequent test coincides. When the curriculum and the test objectives match, students are more likely to focus on the right areas and teachers can tailor their instruction to better meet the needs of the test. This alignment helps create a learning environment where both teaching and assessment are in harmony, leading to more meaningful learning experiences.

For example, if a test emphasizes critical thinking skills, teachers might focus on strategies that promote problem-solving and analysis, helping students develop these skills. As a result, both students and teachers are working towards common goals, which leads to more effective learning and better outcomes for the students. Positive washback ensures that tests serve as a tool for improving education, rather than just assessing it.

1.3.2.2 Negative Washback

Negative washback occurs, according to Taylor (2005), when a content of tests or format is limited to a narrow view of language ability which restricts the teaching and learning environment. For example: “If, for instance, writing skills are assessed solely through multiple-choice questions, there is strong pressure to practice those types of questions instead of focusing on improving writing skills themselves.” (Davies et. al 1999, as cited in Taylor, 2005). According to Nodoushan (2021), many tests, especially high-stakes standardized language examinations have been criticized for their harmful effects on teaching.

The idea that washback can be negative is not a new concept. It has been recognized for some time that tests can have harmful effects on teaching and learning. Negative washback occurs when a test encourages undesirable behaviours or focuses on areas that do not truly benefit students’ learning. This might happen when teachers focus too much on test preparation at the expense of broader educational goals, or

when students are taught to memorize information instead of developing deeper understanding and skills. Negative washback can limit the overall quality of education and thereby reducing the value of learning beyond the test.

In 1956, Vernon had argued that curriculum can be distorted by tests as teachers often focus only on what is needed to help students pass the test. They ignore other teaching materials or content that might not improve test scores and only use resources that help students pass. Students who attend these teaching sessions are paying for test preparation, so they are not truly motivated to learn but are just focused on passing the test. These students cannot be considered genuine learners; they are rather seen as people trying to cheat the system. The teachers in these situations cannot be considered as true educators either as they only help students cheat to get their desired results (Nodoushan, 2021).

1.4 WASHBACK AND IMPACT

1.4.1 Impact on LSRW Skills

LSRW (Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing) skills are the four core language skills of listening, speaking reading and writing. The washback effect can have a significant impact on students' LSRW skills. Depending on the focus of assessments, some skills may receive more attention while others are neglected, shaping the overall language proficiency of students (Alderson & Wall, 1993).

1.4.2 Washback effect on listening skills

Test preparation can help learners develop important strategies like identifying keywords, recognizing discourse markers and predicting content, all of which contribute to overall listening proficiency (Green, 2007). When examinations do not include testing of listening skills, students may not prioritize developing their listening abilities. This can lead to difficulty in understanding spoken English, especially in real-life situations where accents, speed and informal expressions vary (Cheng, 2008). Without proper listening practice, students may struggle to follow conversations, lectures, or instructions which limits their ability to engage effectively in communication (Green, 2007). High-stakes tests that excludes listening discourages

active engagement with authentic audio materials and thereby reduce exposure to real-world spoken language (Harding, 2011).

1.4.3 Washback effect on speaking skills

Many examinations emphasize written skills over oral skills which can cause students to neglect speaking practice which impacts their confidence and fluency in communication (Cheng, 2008). Since many tests do not assess speaking ability, students may focus on rote memorization of vocabulary and grammar rules rather than engaging in meaningful spoken interactions. This can result in limited conversational skills, poor pronunciation and a lack of spontaneity when expressing ideas (Bailey, 1996). In real-world contexts, effective communication requires more than just knowledge of language structures—it demands the ability to speak fluently and appropriately in different situations which may not always be encouraged by testing (Green, 2007).

1.4.4 Washback effect on reading skills

Since many language examinations focus heavily on reading comprehension, students often spend a lot of time practicing strategies like skimming, scanning and analysing texts just to find the right answers (Alderson & Wall, 1993). While these skills are useful, they can also lead to a test-focused mindset where students prioritize examination techniques over actually understanding and enjoying what they read. If reading assessments follow predictable patterns, students might not develop the ability to engage with different types of texts in a meaningful way (Cheng, 2008). Building strong reading skills requires balancing success in examinations with preparation for real-world reading.

1.4.5 Washback effect on writing skills

When an examination places a strong emphasis on structured essays, grammar accuracy and formal writing, students often focus only on perfecting these aspects (Bailey, 1996). While this can help them organize their ideas and follow academic writing rules, it may also stifle creativity and make their writing feel rigid. Too much focus on memorization can lead to formulaic responses rather than authentic self-

expression (Green, 2007). In reality, writing is not just about essays - it includes everything from casual emails to reports and creative storytelling. If examinations only test one style of writing, students may miss out on developing the diverse writing skills they need for real-world communication (Cheng, 2008).

1.4.6 Impact on teacher's teaching strategies

The HSLC and HSSLC examinations have a significant impact on how teachers structure their lessons. These high-stakes examinations greatly impact students' academic futures and shift the focus of teachers on preparing them for expected questions. As a result, teachers tend to emphasize skills like reading comprehension, essay writing and problem-solving which are directly related to the content of the examination (Alderson & Wall, 1993). However, this focus on exam-specific skills can mean that less time is spent on other important areas of language learning such as listening and speaking, which are not given as much weight (Cheng, 1997). The pressure to help students succeed in these tests can limit the variety and depth of teaching methods, leading to an increased emphasis on exam preparation at the expense of a more holistic educational experience (Hughes, 2003). Dall'occo et al. (2024) talk about the frustration of teachers with the overcrowded curriculum which leaves little room for flexibility or creative teaching. Teachers feel pressured to cover extensive content that leaves no time for engaging activities like projects, field trips, or real-world learning experiences. This rigid approach to teaching suppresses excitement and limits opportunities for more dynamic and meaningful education.

1.4.7 Impact on Students in the Long Run

Exam- oriented teaching and learning does have an impact: immediate and long term. The washback effect can have long-term consequences for students especially when their learning is primarily shaped by the pressure of high-stakes exams. In the short term, students may focus on exam-specific skills such as reading comprehension and writing which can lead to success in those areas. However, in the long run, this narrow focus can limit their ability to develop a well-rounded proficiency in the language. Students may struggle with essential skills like listening and speaking, which are not heavily tested in examinations (Alderson & Wall, 1993). Additionally,

the pressure to memorize information for examinations may prevent students from engaging in deeper learning, critical thinking and problem-solving which are vital for success in higher education or the workforce. Focusing on impact in higher education, Zhao (2023) found that exam-focused English education has negatively impacted university students. Since their learning mainly focused on passing exams, they struggled with practical communication skills for daily professional interactions.

This limitation showed that while students might perform well in written examinations, they were not fully prepared to use English effectively in real-world job settings. Students felt that their matriculation exam focused too much on certain areas, like reading and writing while ignoring important skills like speaking and listening. They believed that if the examination had included these skills, they would have been better prepared to handle their college studies. Being able to speak and listen well in English would have helped them understand lectures, participate in discussions and communicate more effectively in an academic setting.

Eventually, the washback effect shapes students' long-term education and career outcomes by promoting a narrow learning approach that ignores the importance of practical language use.

1.5 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

English plays a crucial role in the Indian education system, both nationwide and in Mizoram. In India, English holds the status of an associate official language and is widely used as the medium of instruction in various educational institutions. As stipulated by the Constitution of India, English is recognized as a second language and its influence extends beyond the classroom. It serves as a key language for higher-level communication in social interactions and professional settings. India has a long-standing and established tradition in English language education, reflecting its importance in the broader educational landscape. The Kothari Commission (1964-66) noted that although English is central to the education system, many students, especially those from rural and underprivileged backgrounds, find it difficult to access

and view it as a foreign language. The Commission emphasized the need to bridge this gap, as it recognized that making English more accessible to these students is critical for their educational development. They stated, “We have to take English to them,” underscoring the necessity of providing opportunities for all students to learn and use the language.

In Mizoram, English is a second language for most people, so it is often seen as distant or unfamiliar. Raja and Selvi (2011) state that since many students are from rural areas, teachers use a bilingual approach in language classes and conducts the instruction in both the local language and English. This method helps students understand but it can also limit how well they learn. It does not allow them to fully experience English which can slow their language development. As a result, the standard of learning may be adversely affected. In addition to that, this method of teaching increases the washback effect, changing how English is taught and how students perceive and engage with the subject. This ultimately affects their learning outcomes.

In India, the Grade 10 and Grade 12 board examinations are seen as very important and are considered ‘high-stakes.’ These examinations are crucial because the results can heavily influence students’ future choices in education and careers. Due to the pressure created by these examinations, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 suggests changes to reduce the associated stress. The NEP has decided that the board examinations for these two grades will still take place, but with some changes to make them less stressful. The new policy suggests that students will have the chance to take the examinations twice in the same school year. The first examination will serve as the primary assessment, while the second will provide students with an opportunity to retake the test in order to improve their scores. This change aims to give students a second chance and reduce the pressure, thus making the examination process less stressful.

Although this reform is in place, school board examinations continue to significantly influence teaching and learning processes in both India and Mizoram. The pressure and importance attached to these examinations often influence how

teachers approach their lessons and how students engage with their studies. As students prepare for board examinations, many feel stressed and resort to negative learning habits. It has been observed that instead of understanding the material, they focus on memorizing facts. This leads to shallow learning where students recall information for the examination but do not truly understand it. Cramming becomes common, with students trying to learn everything at the last minute. This leaves little time for critical thinking. They also focus only on what they think will be on the test, ignoring other important topics. These habits can harm their ability to fully understand and apply what they have learned.

The high-stakes aspect of the examinations tends to shape the educational environment, driving a focus on examination preparation and performance often at the expense of broader learning and student development. This focus influences not only how teachers approach instruction but also how students engage with learning. After reviewing the related literature, the researcher found that most studies on washback mainly focus on teachers' perceptions, while fewer studies explore the issue from the perspectives of students. Although there are other ways to study this, the washback effect is best understood by looking at the views of those most directly involved in education - namely the teachers and the students. The word "perception" refers to a personal experience that is unique to each individual. It is how a person or group sees and understands something, influenced by their own memories, experiences and how they process information. There is no single, objective perception, as everyone's viewpoint is shaped by their own background and understanding. This study will explore how examinations affect both the teaching and learning processes by gathering the views of teachers and students in Mizoram, aiming to understand the impact of these examinations from their personal perspectives.

Anderson & Wall (1993) have conducted a study which simplifies the washback effect confining it to the relationship between test and teaching and learning. This study will take into account the role of other factors such as: the perceptions of teachers and the students of their own learning in Mizoram regarding the washback effect; also, their awareness regarding the said effect.

Concern regarding the impacts of tests on education is an old concept. However, the pioneer research regarding washback is marked by Alderson & Wall in 1993 where they formulated 15 hypotheses indicating the influence of tests on teachers, students, contents, methods, degree, depth and how the examinations that are considered important have washback and those which are considered unimportant, do not. This research has been followed by a number of researches in the last 30 years and it is safe to say that it is a trending topic of study, especially in language testing. However, compared to washback studies found in other parts of the world, there is a scarcity of the said study in India. The researcher was able to find only a handful of studies conducted in India and no evidence of such study in the state of Mizoram.

This study has attempted to address the rising concern regarding the increase of influence of examinations from the perceptions of teachers and students regarding the high-stakes school leaving certificate examinations, their beneficial and harmful effects. The findings of this study could provide significant benefits for various individuals and groups involved in education in Mizoram. It could offer valuable insights to those responsible for designing the MBSE examination questions, helping them understand how their choices might impact teaching and learning. Teachers, education practitioners and school administrators would also find the results helpful, as it could guide them in improving their methods and strategies. Moreover, the findings could be useful for other stakeholders such as students; by giving them a better understanding of how the examination process affects their learning experience. Overall, the study could contribute to improving educational practices in Mizoram.

Public awareness of the true ideals of education and the pursuit of knowledge should be increased, showcasing the importance of learning for its own value rather than only for obtaining degrees. This mindset should be encouraged and promoted to the general public. In addition, the study gives useful suggestions to improve the positive effects of the examinations while reducing their negative impacts on the education system in Mizoram. These ideas aim to make the examinations more helpful and less stressful for students. The suggestions focus on finding ways to improve teaching and learning, making the education process better for everyone. By following these recommendations, it could lead to a more balanced and effective system where

examinations help students learn without causing too much pressure. These ideas could help teachers, school leaders and policymakers make better choices to improve education in Mizoram.

Hence, in conclusion, this study has been taken up by the researcher as it is imperative for the development and progress of English teaching and learning in Mizoram.

1.6 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The primary issue explored in this thesis revolves around the absence of assessments that specifically measure the phenomenon known as the ‘washback effect,’ as well as the overall lack of research in Mizoram and the limited research on this topic across India.

In India, school board examinations play a crucial role in shaping both teaching methodologies and learning outcomes. Mizoram is not immune to this influence, as these high-stakes examinations have a substantial impact on how education is delivered in schools. The pressure and significance of these examinations often dictate the ways in which teachers teach and students learn, influencing the entire educational process. This situation presents a significant challenge, making it urgent to examine both the extent and nature of the influence these examinations have. Such an investigation, particularly through the perspectives of teachers and students, is necessary to better understand the dynamics at play and to gain deeper insights into how these assessments shape educational experiences.

The problem under investigation is thus stated as *Washback Effect of School Leaving Certificate Examinations of Mizoram Board of School Education on the Teaching and Learning of English in Mizoram.*

1.7 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF THE TERMS USED

Washback Effect: In the present study, washback effect refers to the influence of School Leaving Certificate Examinations on teaching and learning process.

Mizoram Board of School Education (MBSE): Mizoram Board of School Education is an autonomous governmental body for academic administration in Mizoram, India, having its jurisdiction from elementary to higher secondary education.

School Leaving Certificate Examinations: High School Leaving Certificate (HSLC) and (Higher Secondary School Leaving Certificate (HSSLC) Examinations.

English: In the present study, English refers to an academic subject taught in secondary and higher secondary schools.

Senior teacher: Senior teacher here refers to teachers who have over 15 years of teaching experience.

Junior teacher: Junior teacher here refers to teachers with 15 years or less of teaching experience.

Professional Qualification: In the present study, professional qualification refers to B.Ed (Bachelor of Education) degree.

Subject Specialization: In this study, subject specialization refers to the teachers' academic qualifications in their respective fields.

1.8 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study aims to explore the following questions:

1. What are the perceptions of secondary and higher secondary students on the washback effect of the School Leaving Certificate Examinations on the Teaching and Learning of English?

2. Are there any differences between the perceptions of students on the washback effects of School Leaving Certificate Examinations based on zones, gender, locale, home language, level of education, type of school management, father's educational qualification, mother's educational qualification and academic achievement?
3. What are the perceptions of secondary and higher secondary English teachers on the washback effect of the School Leaving Certificate Examinations on the Teaching and Learning of English?
4. Are there any differences between the perceptions of English teachers on the washback effects of School Leaving Certificate Examinations based on - teaching experience, professional qualification and subject specialization?
5. What are the alignments and discrepancies between the aims and objectives outlined in the English Curriculum prescribed by the MBSE and the subsequent School Leaving Certificate Examinations?

1.9 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. a) To develop and standardize a perception scale for students to assess the washback effect of the School Leaving Certificate Examinations on the Teaching and Learning of English.
b) To develop a perception scale for English teachers to assess the washback effect of the School Leaving Certificate Examinations on the Teaching and Learning of English.
2. To assess the perceptions of students on the washback effect of the School Leaving Certificate Examinations on the Teaching and Learning of English.
3. To compare the perceptions of students on the washback effects of School Leaving Certificate Examinations based on:
 - a) zones
 - b) gender
 - c) locale
 - d) home language

- e) level of education
 - f) type of school management
 - g) father's educational qualification
 - h) mother's qualification
 - i) academic achievement
4. To assess the perceptions of secondary and higher secondary English teachers on the washback effect of the School Leaving Certificate Examinations on the Teaching and Learning of English.
 5. To compare the perceptions of English teachers on the washback effects of School Leaving Certificate Examinations based on:
 - a) teaching experience
 - b) professional qualification
 - c) subject specialization
 6. To examine the alignments and discrepancies between the aims and objectives outlined in the English Curriculum prescribed by MBSE and the question designs in the subsequent school leaving certificate examinations.

1.10 RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

The study is based on the following research hypotheses:

1. There is a significant difference between the students from different zones of Mizoram on the washback effect of the School Leaving Certificate Examinations on the Teaching and Learning of English.
 - a) There is a significant difference between students from Central and North zones.
 - b) There is a significant difference between students from Central and West Zones.
 - c) There is a significant difference between students from Central and East zones.
 - d) There is a significant difference between students from Central and South zones.
 - e) There is a significant difference between students from North and West zones.

- f) There is a significant difference between students from North and East zones.
- g) There is a significant difference between students from North and South zones.
- h) There is a significant difference between students from West and East zones.
- i) There is a significant difference between students from West and South zones.
- j) There is a significant difference between students from East and South zones.

1. There is a significant difference between the perception of male and female students on the washback effect of the School Leaving Certificate Examinations on the Teaching and Learning of English.

- a) There is a significant difference in impact on LSRW skills with respect to gender.
- b) There is a significant difference in views on HSLC/HSSLC examinations with respect to gender.
- c) There is a significant difference in views on teacher's teaching strategies with respect to gender.
- d) There is a significant difference in views on personal learning with respect to gender.

2. There is a significant difference between the perception of urban and rural students on the washback effect of the School Leaving Certificate Examinations on the Teaching and Learning of English.

- a) There is a significant difference in impact on LSRW skills with respect to locale.
- b) There is a significant difference in views on HSLC/HSSLC examinations with respect to locale.
- c) There is a significant difference in views on teacher's teaching strategies with respect to locale.

d) There is a significant difference in views on personal learning with respect to locale.

3. There is a significant difference between the perception of students whose home language is Mizo and others on the washback effect of the School Leaving Certificate Examinations on the Teaching and Learning of English.

a) There is a significant difference in impact on LSRW skills with respect to home language.

b) There is a significant difference in views on HSLC/HSSLC examinations with respect to home language.

c) There is a significant difference in views on teacher's teaching strategies with respect to home language.

d) There is a significant difference in views on personal learning with respect to home language.

4. There is a significant difference between the perception of secondary and higher secondary students on the washback effect of the School Leaving Certificate Examinations on the Teaching and Learning of English.

a) There is a significant difference in impact on LSRW skills with respect to level of education.

b) There is a significant difference in views on HSLC/HSSLC examinations with respect to level of education.

c) There is a significant difference in views on teacher's teaching strategies with respect to level of education.

d) There is a significant difference in views on personal learning with respect to level of education.

5. There is a significant difference between the students based on type of school management on the washback effect of the School Leaving Certificate Examinations on the Teaching and Learning of English.

a) There is a significant difference in impact on LSRW skills with respect to type of school management.

b) There is a significant difference in views on HSLC/HSSLC examinations with respect to type of school management.

c) There is a significant difference in views on teacher's teaching strategies with respect to type of school management.

i) There is a significant difference in views on teacher's teaching strategies between government and private school students.

ii) There is a significant difference in views on teacher's teaching strategies between government and ad-hoc aided school students.

iii) There is a significant difference in views on teacher's teaching strategies between private and ad-hoc school students.

d) There is a significant difference in views on personal learning with respect to type of school management.

i) There is a significant difference in views on personal learning between government and private school students.

ii) There is a significant difference in views on personal learning between government and ad-hoc aided school students.

iii) There is a significant difference in views on personal learning between private and ad-hoc school students.

6. There is a significant difference between the students based on their father's educational qualification on the washback effect of the School Leaving Certificate Examinations on the Teaching and Learning of English.

- a) There is a significant difference in impact on LSRW skills with respect to their father's educational qualification.
- b) There is a significant difference in views on HSLC/HSSLC examinations with respect to their father's educational qualification.
- c) There is a significant difference in views on teacher's teaching strategies with respect to their father's educational qualification.
- d) There is a significant difference in views on personal learning with respect to their father's educational qualification.

8. There is a significant difference between the students based on their mother's educational qualification on the washback effect of the School Leaving Certificate Examinations on the Teaching and Learning of English.

- a) There is a significant difference in impact on LSRW skills with respect to their mother's educational qualification.
- b) There is a significant difference in views on HSLC/HSSLC examinations with respect to their mother's educational qualification.
- c) There is a significant difference in views on teacher's teaching strategies with respect to their mother's educational qualification.
- d) There is a significant difference in views on personal learning with respect to their mother's educational qualification.
 - i) There is a significant difference in views on personal learning between students with mothers who are below matric and matric to graduates.
 - ii) There is a significant difference in views on personal learning between students whose mothers are below matric and masters and above.
 - iii) There is a significant difference in views on personal learning between students whose mothers are matric to graduates and masters above.

9. There is a significant difference between the students based on their academic achievement on the washback effect of the School Leaving Certificate Examinations on the Teaching and Learning of English.

i) There is a significant difference between low and average achievers based on their academic achievement.

ii) There is a significant difference between low and high achievers based on their academic achievement.

iii) There is a significant difference between average and high achievers based on their academic achievement.

a) There is a significant difference in impact on LSRW skills with respect to their academic achievement.

i) There is a significant difference in impact on LSRW skills between low and average achievers.

ii) There is a significant difference in impact on LSRW skills between low and high achievers.

iii) There is a significant difference in impact on LSRW skills between average and high achievers.

b) There is a significant difference in views on HSLC/HSSLC examinations with respect to their academic achievement.

i) There is a significant difference in views on HSLC/HSSLC examinations between low and average achievers.

ii) There is a significant difference in views on HSLC/HSSLC examinations between low and high achievers.

iii) There is a significant difference in views on HSLC/HSSLC examinations between average and high achievers.

c) There is a significant difference in views on teacher's teaching strategies with respect to their academic achievement.

i) There is a significant difference in views on teacher's teaching strategies between low and average achievers.

ii) There is a significant difference in views on teacher's teaching strategies between low and high achievers.

iii) There is a significant difference in views on teacher's teaching strategies between average and high achievers.

d) There is a significant difference in views on personal learning with respect to their academic achievement.

i) There is a significant difference in views on personal learning between low and average achievers.

ii) There is a significant difference in views on personal learning between low and high achievers.

iii) There is a significant difference in views on personal learning between average and high achievers.

1.11 NULL HYPOTHESES

The following null hypotheses has been formed from the research hypotheses:

1. There is no significant difference between the students from different zones of Mizoram on the washback effect of the School Leaving Certificate Examinations on the Teaching and Learning of English.

a) There is no significant difference between students from Central and North zones.

b) There is no significant difference between students from Central and West Zones.

- c) There is no significant difference between students from Central and East zones.
- d) There is no significant difference between students from Central and South zones.
- e) There is no significant difference between students from North and West zones.
- f) There is no significant difference between students from North and East zones.
- g) There is no significant difference between students from North and South zones.
- h) There is no significant difference between students from West and East zones.
- i) There is no significant difference between students from West and South zones.
- j) There is no significant difference between students from East and South zones.

2. There is no significant difference between the perception of male and female students on the washback effect of the School Leaving Certificate Examinations on the Teaching and Learning of English.

- a) There is no significant difference in impact on LSRW skills with respect to gender.
- b) There is no significant difference in views on HSLC/HSSLC examinations with respect to gender.
- c) There is no significant difference in views on teacher's teaching strategies with respect to gender.
- d) There is no significant difference in views on personal learning with respect to gender.

3. There is no significant difference between the perception of urban and rural students on the washback effect of the School Leaving Certificate Examinations on the Teaching and Learning of English.

- a) There is no significant difference in impact on LSRW skills with respect to locale.

- b) There is no significant difference in views on HSLC/HSSLC examinations with respect to locale.
- c) There is no significant difference in views on teacher's teaching strategies with respect to locale.
- d) There is no significant difference in views on personal learning with respect to locale.

4. There is no significant difference between the perception of students whose home language is Mizo and others on the washback effect of the School Leaving Certificate Examinations on the Teaching and Learning of English.

- a) There is no significant difference in impact on LSRW skills with respect to home language.
- b) There is no significant difference in views on HSLC/HSSLC examinations with respect to home language.
- c) There is no significant difference in views on teacher's teaching strategies with respect to home language.
- d) There is no significant difference in views on personal learning with respect to home language.

5. There is no significant difference between the perception of secondary and higher secondary students on the washback effect of the School Leaving Certificate Examinations on the Teaching and Learning of English.

- a) There is no significant difference in impact on LSRW skills with respect to level of education.
- b) There is no significant difference in views on HSLC/HSSLC examinations with respect to level of education.
- c) There is no significant difference in views on teacher's teaching strategies with respect to level of education.
- d) There is no significant difference in views on personal learning with respect to level of education.

6. There is no significant difference between the students based on type of school management on the washback effect of the School Leaving Certificate Examinations on the Teaching and Learning of English.

- a) There is no significant difference in impact on LSRW skills with respect to type of school management.
- b) There is no significant difference in views on HSLC/HSSLC examinations with respect to type of school management.
- c) There is no significant difference in views on teacher's teaching strategies with respect to type of school management.
 - i) There is no significant difference in views on teacher's teaching strategies between government and private school students.
 - ii) There is no significant difference in views on teacher's teaching strategies between government and ad-hoc aided school students.
 - iii) There is no significant difference in views on teacher's teaching strategies between private and ad-hoc school students.
- d) There is no significant difference in views on personal learning with respect to type of school management.
 - i) There is no significant difference in views on personal learning between government and private school students.
 - ii) There is no significant difference in views on personal learning between government and ad-hoc aided school students.
 - iii) There is no significant difference in views on personal learning between private and ad-hoc school students.

7. There is no significant difference between the students based on their father's educational qualification on the washback effect of the School Leaving Certificate Examinations on the Teaching and Learning of English.

- a) There is no significant difference in impact on LSRW skills with respect to their father's educational qualification.
- b) There is no significant difference in views on HSLC/HSSLC examinations with respect to their father's educational qualification.

- c) There is no significant difference in views on teacher's teaching strategies with respect to their father's educational qualification.
- d) There is no significant difference in views on personal learning with respect to their father's educational qualification.

8. There is no significant difference between the students based on their mother's educational qualification on the washback effect of the School Leaving Certificate Examinations on the Teaching and Learning of English.

- a) There is no significant difference in impact on LSRW skills with respect to their mother's educational qualification.
- b) There is no significant difference in views on HSLC/HSSLC examinations with respect to their mother's educational qualification.
- c) There is no significant difference in views on teacher's teaching strategies with respect to their mother's educational qualification.
- d) There is no significant difference in views on personal learning with respect to their mother's educational qualification.
 - i) There is no significant difference in views on personal learning between students with mothers who are below matric and matric to graduates.
 - ii) There is no significant difference in views on personal learning between students whose mothers are below matric and masters and above.
 - iii) There is no significant difference in views on personal learning between students whose mothers are matric to graduates and masters above.

9. There is no significant difference between the students based on their academic achievement on the washback effect of the School Leaving Certificate Examinations on the Teaching and Learning of English.

- i) There is no significant difference between low and average achievers based on their academic achievement.
- ii) There is no significant difference between low and high achievers based on their academic achievement.

- iii) There is no significant difference between average and high achievers based on their academic achievement.
- a) There is no significant difference in impact on LSRW skills with respect to their academic achievement.
 - i) There is no significant difference in impact on LSRW skills between low and average achievers.
 - ii) There is no significant difference in impact on LSRW skills between low and high achievers.
 - iii) There is no significant difference in impact on LSRW skills between average and high achievers.
- b) There is no significant difference in views on HSLC/HSSLC examinations with respect to their academic achievement.
 - i) There is no significant difference in views on HSLC/HSSLC examinations between low and average achievers.
 - ii) There is no significant difference in views on HSLC/HSSLC examinations between low and high achievers.
 - iii) There is no significant difference in views on HSLC/HSSLC examinations between average and high achievers.
- c) There is no significant difference in views on teacher's teaching strategies with respect to their academic achievement.
 - i) There is no significant difference in views on teacher's teaching strategies between low and average achievers.
 - ii) There is no significant difference in views on teacher's teaching strategies between low and high achievers.
 - iii) There is no significant difference in views on teacher's teaching strategies between average and high achievers.
- d) There is no significant difference in views on personal learning with respect to their academic achievement.

- i) There is no significant difference in views on personal learning between low and average achievers.
- ii) There is no significant difference in views on personal learning between low and high achievers.
- iii) There is no significant difference in views on personal learning between average and high achievers.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A literature review is essentially a comprehensive exploration into the existing research, books, articles and other relevant resources connected to a current research project. It serves as the foundation that allows the researcher to gain a comprehensive understanding of existing knowledge in the field, which enables them to build upon it and generate new insights. It gives the researcher a chance to position their work within the bigger picture and see how their research question fits into the broader conversation.

As Aggarwal (1966) puts it, studying related literature means finding, reading and evaluating previous research reports, as well as any casual observations or opinions that relate to the researcher's planned project.

This process is key to understanding where the field stands and helps in shaping the research hypothesis. By looking at previous studies, the researcher can see what worked well and where there may be gaps or weaknesses. By exploring a range of scholarly books, scientific papers, recent studies and articles from reputable journals, the researcher can define clear objectives and set boundaries for their study. It also prevents redundancy and the unintentional duplication of established findings. Ultimately, this review directs the researcher toward unexplored areas where they can provide new insights which can enhance the impact of their contribution to the field.

The literature review has been broadly categorized into 5 sections:

- 1) Concept Studies
- 2) Studies conducted from the perception of teachers
- 3) Studies conducted from the perception of students
- 4) Studies conducted from the perception of teachers and students
- 5) Studies conducted through analysis of documents and system of examination

2.1 Concept Studies

Alderson and Wall (1993) in their paper “*Does Washback Exist?*” developed a series of Washback Hypotheses using a basic framework that presumed that test results have an impact on teaching. Six of their fifteen hypotheses directly address teaching. The findings revealed that washback on teaching content exist, while washback on teaching methods was not found.

Messick (1996) in his paper “*Validity and Washback in Language Testing*” examines the concept of washback an example of how a test’s validity can have real-world effects. Positive washback happens when tests are designed to reflect real skills and knowledge (authentic and direct assessments). He determines that to achieve this, tests should fully cover what they are supposed to measure and avoid unnecessary obstacles that do not relate to the actual skill being tested.

Allan (2020) had written a paper which was titled “*Tests as drivers of change in education: Contextualising washback and the possibility of wash-forward*” in which he discussed how washback is one of the means to adapt to a new form of test, which often fail to occur as intended. The paper aimed to discuss how to place washback in the context of other possibilities. Henrichsen’s hybrid approach of the diffusion/application of innovation in education systems inspired the notions of adaptive implementation and programmed implementation. Washback is demonstrated to operate in parallel with but different from programmed implementation. Van Lier’s idea of wash-forward, first proposed in 1989 and largely ignored in the literature, completes the picture as a whole. He cited an example of wash-forward which he claimed is provided by the implementation of the National Matriculation English Test (NMET) in China. The goal is to provide a more easily visualised, refreshed and comprehensive view of the processes that occur when a new test is introduced as part of a strategy aimed at driving changes in teaching and learning practises; a scenario that is very relevant to the current movement towards four-skills English testing in East Asia and around the world.

2.2 Studies conducted from the perception of teachers

Manjarrés (2005) carried out a study called *“Washback of the Foreign Language Test of the State Examinations in Colombia: A Case Study”* to examine how the Colombian state exam influenced teaching and learning. To understand this impact, the researcher collected and analysed different data, including official documents of the Foreign Language Test, the tests from September 2003 and April 2004, classroom observations, interviews with students and teachers and the English test used in class. After analysing the data, the study found that the exam had a generally positive effect because students recognized the importance of learning English. However, it also revealed a decline in communicative skills. Students focused more on grammar, text structure and coherence, while other skills like writing, speaking and giving presentations were mostly ignored. The study used convenience random sampling and selected 45 university professors as participants. Most of them were positively influenced by the exam. The data also showed that they were fully aware of how their teaching methods and attitudes changed over time to match the exam’s requirements.

Ghorbani et al. (2008) conducted a study titled *“The Washback Impact of the Iranian University Entrance Examination on Pre-University English Teachers.”* They examined teaching experience, educational background, professionalism and gender as independent variables. Using stratified random sampling, they selected 377 pre-university English teachers (PETs) to complete questionnaires. The results showed that PETs perceived the University Entrance Examination (UEE) as having a negative impact on students. They also believed that the authorities should reform the system as soon as possible.

Shih (2010) carried out a case study in Taiwan titled *“The Washback of the General English Proficiency Test on University Policies: A Taiwan Case Study.”* In Taiwan, university students were required to take a specific English test as part of their degree requirements. This policy became possible following the introduction of the General English Proficiency Test (GEPT). The study gathered data from two applied foreign language departments at technological universities—one that did not require

an English test for graduation and another that required day students to pass the GEPT's intermediate-level listening and reading sections. The head of the department and two or three teachers from each department were interviewed and departmental documents and records were reviewed. The findings indicated that before deciding to enforce English requirements, teachers needed to take into account various factors, including social and educational issues, school policies and students' family backgrounds.

Wang (2010) explored the impact of washback in a Chinese context where English is a second language in his study titled "A Study of the Role of the 'Teacher Factor' in Washback". In this study, a mixed methods approach was used, which included both qualitative and quantitative data gathering and analysis approaches. Data was collected by a teacher survey and in-depth case studies (through targeted group/individual interviews and classroom observations). The findings of this research indicated that the washback effect is facilitated by the CET (College English Test) in combination with different connected components of the 'teacher factor.' Given the intricacies of the washback phenomena, curricular and evaluation reforms alone would be insufficient to cause teachers to adjust their pedagogical practises.

Ahmad and Rao (2012) examined high-stakes examinations in Asian contexts where assessment-driven curricula lead to negative washback. Their study aimed to investigate how this practice influences teaching methodologies. The researchers used various tools, including document analysis for empirical evidence, questionnaires for quantitative data and classroom observations and interviews for an in-depth exploration of the issues. A total of 128 teachers from both public and private institutions responded to the questionnaire. The data analysis revealed that examinations significantly impact teachers, who often guide students towards exam-oriented help-books. Likewise, students were found to expect their teachers to help them achieve high scores rather than focusing on genuine learning.

Dağtan (2012), in his Master's thesis titled "*An Examination on the Washback Effect of the Interuniversity Board Foreign Language Test (The Example of Dicle University)*," investigated the IBFLT, a foreign language test in Turkey primarily used

by university faculty members and candidates to demonstrate linguistic competence. Out of 575 faculty members, 161 were randomly selected from 13 different schools within the university. Most of the participants were assistant professors. Data collection involved a questionnaire, followed by semi-structured interviews. The findings showed that private tuition was the most common study method among IBFLT candidates. In terms of test performance, females outperformed males, English test-takers performed better than those taking German or French and candidates from the Health Sciences group outperformed those from other disciplines. Respondents were most in favour of an all-inclusive test assessing all four language skills. Regarding washback effects, the study found that IBFLT mainly improved reading skills, while listening, speaking and writing were often neglected during exam preparation.

Salehi and Yunus (2012) conducted a study titled “*The Washback Effect of the Iranian Universities Entrance Exam: Teachers’ Insights*,” focusing on the multiple-choice high-stakes test. The examination was designed to assess test-takers’ qualifications for entry into higher education. A sample of 132 high school English teachers was selected using stratified random sampling. A survey questionnaire was administered to the participants. The data analysis indicated that the EEU negatively influenced teachers by limiting their ability to teach beyond the exam’s content and format. Furthermore, since speaking, writing and listening skills were not assessed in the EEU, these areas received little attention in the classroom.

Tayeb et al. (2014) studied the washback effect of the general secondary English examination (GSEE) on teaching and learning in Yemen. The primary goal of their research was to get preliminary insights into the relationship between the washback effect and teaching and learning elements. It focused on eight pedagogical variables, four of which are related to teachers (teaching techniques, teaching experiences, content evaluation and beliefs) and four of which are related to students (learning styles, learning activities, attitudes and motivation). Three English teachers with over ten years of teaching experience participated in a semi-structured interview. Based on the interview, a questionnaire was developed and distributed to 30 Yemeni English teachers teaching 12th grade English lessons. SPSS software, version 20, was

used to analyse the data. The findings revealed that the test had a significant impact on learners and teachers, particularly on teaching methods and learning styles. The conclusions were validated by triangulation with qualitative data. As a result, the study provides ample proof of the exam's washback effect on the components of Yemen's language teaching-learning processes, as well as its influence on what and how teachers teach and learners learn.

Turner (2014) conducted a study in Canada titled *“Examining Washback in Second Language Education Contexts: A High-Stakes Provincial Exam and the Teacher Factor in Classroom Practice in Quebec Secondary Schools.”* The primary objective was to explore how teachers bridge the gap between classroom evaluation activities and preparing students for external examinations. The study focused on four key areas: washback research in second language (L2) and general education, the role of teachers in washback, the alignment between internal and external assessments and mixed-methods research. The sample included ESL secondary teachers from the French education system in Quebec. The findings revealed that while teachers followed common overall approaches, their individual practices varied. Initially, they used formative assessment to introduce new exam material, but as the exam date approached, they shifted to summative assessment methods. The study highlighted a blending or ‘blurring’ of formative and summative assessment in an effort to align classroom evaluation with external exams.

Kılıçkaya (2016), in the study titled *“Washback Effects of a High-Stakes Exam on Lower Secondary School English Teachers’ Practices in the Classroom,”* examined the impact of the foreign language section of the Transition Examination from Primary to Secondary Education (TEOG) in Turkey on English teachers’ classroom methodologies. The study involved 30 English language teachers from lower secondary schools across Turkey. The findings indicated that various factors, including the structure and content of the exam, significantly influenced teaching practices. Since the exam did not assess listening, speaking, or writing skills, these areas were largely ignored in classroom instruction, which was found to be detrimental to students’ overall language development. Other factors negatively affecting teaching included textbook selection, the medium of instruction, classroom assessment

practices and teacher and student anxiety. The study concluded that high-stakes examinations have serious consequences for all stakeholders. In the Turkish context, overreliance on exams can lead to several issues, such as the neglect of important skills and broader learning achievements.

Dawadi (2018) contributed a chapter to a book titled *“The Impact of the School Leaving Certificate Examination on English Language Teaching and Student Motivation to Learn English.”* The study examined the effect of the School Leaving Certificate Examination (SLCE), taken at the end of ten years of schooling in Nepal. It aimed to understand English teachers’ perceptions of the exam and how it influences teaching methods. Data were collected through a questionnaire administered to 120 secondary-level English teachers. Eight teachers were also observed during their classroom teaching, followed by interviews. The analysis revealed that while opinions were somewhat mixed, most teachers had a negative view of the grading system, believing it prioritised raising students’ scores rather than genuinely developing their skills. The study also found that the exam had a negative impact, as students tended to ignore listening and speaking skills, focusing only on reading and writing, which were tested. Furthermore, teachers adapted their teaching by selecting only content included in the exam and were hesitant to use communicative teaching methods.

Podolski and Kini (2019) investigated whether teachers become more effective with experience by reviewing findings from research conducted in the United States. They analysed 30 research papers published since 2003, focusing on the relationship between teaching experience and student performance. The findings suggested that, over time, experienced teachers contribute to better student achievement, not only in standardised tests but also in broader academic and personal development. The study also indicated that teachers improve more effectively when working in supportive and collaborative environments or when they gain experience within the same grade level, subject, or school district. The review highlighted the need for further research on teacher effectiveness, especially with advancements in data analysis that provide a deeper understanding of how experience influences teaching quality.

Grace (2020) conducted a study titled *“A Study Surveying the Understanding of the Washback Effect of Tests and its Implications for Teaching by ESL Teachers in Engineering Colleges in Tamil Nadu.”* The findings revealed that many tertiary-level English teachers lacked a clear understanding of the term *washback* and its impact on students. Teachers relied on question banks to classify questions by difficulty level, skill type and mark distribution, which resulted in negative washback. Both teachers and students were found to be frustrated with the testing system. Many teachers were unaware of the philosophy behind tests, leading them to neglect proper test analysis.

Bac and Dan (2022) investigated the washback effect of reading comprehension tests in their study, *“EFL Teachers’ Practices of Their Testing Reading Comprehension and Their Perceptions of its Washback Effects.”* Their findings indicated that reading comprehension exams had a positive washback effect on EFL learners in Vietnamese high schools. The study revealed that these tests encouraged students to read actively, reduced boredom, increased interest in reading materials and enhanced thinking skills. However, the results also suggested that these exams influenced teachers’ allocation of time, choice of teaching strategies and selection of instructional materials.

Canli and Çakır (2022), in their study *“The Washback Effect of the Undergraduate English Placement Examination on Language Teaching from the Perspectives of the Teachers,”* examined the impact of the English placement test on teachers in Turkey. The findings demonstrated that teaching activities in language preparation classes significantly decreased due to the test. The qualitative findings supported the quantitative data, revealing that teachers’ instructional methods were negatively influenced. The study concluded that efforts should be made to reduce the negative effects of the test while increasing its positive washback. The researchers suggested that exam authorities should share the responsibility of developing a more effective language testing system.

Shijun (2022) conducted a study titled *“Consequences, Impact and Washback of CET Test Within Assessment for Use Argument to Validation,”* which explored the influence of the College English Test (CET) on workplace performance. The results

indicated strong similarities between the language skills assessed in the test and those required in professional settings. Employers and employees regarded the CET as fair, reliable and beneficial for employment decisions, confirming its relevance in evaluating job-related language competencies.

Ali and Hamid (2023) explored the role of teacher agency in responding to high-stakes examinations in rural Bangladesh in their study *“Teacher Agency and Washback: Insights from Classrooms in Rural Bangladesh.”* The findings suggested that a deterministic perspective on washback might not fully account for how teachers adjust their instructional methods to align with broader educational goals. The study revealed that teachers demonstrated autonomy in making pedagogical decisions despite the pressures of exams.

Aytac (2023) conducted a study titled *“Teachers’ Perceptions of the Curriculum Using Metaphor Analysis”* to understand how teachers conceptualise the curriculum. Using a phenomenological research design, the study identified 48 metaphors representing the curriculum, which were categorised into five themes: guide, problem, system, complex structure and need. The findings indicated that teachers predominantly associated the curriculum with positive metaphors, suggesting a generally favourable perception.

Kuang (2024) conducted a review of empirical research in the study *“Empirical Research Examining the Washback Effect of English Language Tests on Various Aspects of Classroom Teaching.”* The findings highlighted both positive and negative washback, influenced by factors such as variations in test content, alignment with course objectives and teachers’ instructional strategies. The study emphasised the complexity of washback and its implications for educators and researchers in the field of language assessment.

2.3 Studies conducted from the perception of students

Cheng et al. (2011) carried out a study titled *“Impact and Consequences of School-Based Assessment (SBA): Students’ and Parents’ Views of SBA in Hong Kong.”*

The study examined students' and parents' perceptions of SBA and how these perceptions influenced learning. Data were collected through surveys. The findings showed significant differences in students' views on past and present learning activities. Parents' understanding of SBA and opportunities to learn about it significantly influenced their support for their children's learning. Parents' educational background and time spent with their children also played a role, though to a lesser extent. Moreover, parents' negative attitudes toward SBA were directly linked to their children's perceptions of it.

Raja and Selvi (2011) conducted research titled *"Causes of Problems in Learning English as a Second Language as Perceived by Higher Secondary Students."* The study used a survey method to identify key difficulties in learning English and examined whether factors like gender, location and reading or listening habits played a role. The sample included 400 students—207 male and 193 female. The findings revealed that the primary issue was the learning environment. Male students faced more challenges than females, while students from rural areas struggled more than their urban peers. A lack of reading and listening habits was identified as a major factor contributing to difficulties in learning English.

Safa and Goodarzi (2014) explored the washback effect of task-based language assessment (TBLA) in their study *"The Washback Effects of Task-Based Assessment on the Iranian EFL Learners' Grammar Development."* The study employed an experimental design, with 74 pre-intermediate EFL students randomly selected from 110 learners and divided into control and experimental groups. The findings indicated that TBLA had a positive washback effect on grammatical development. The study concluded that TBLA could serve as an effective alternative to traditional assessment methods by fostering improved educational outcomes.

Xiao (2014) examined the impact of the College English Test (CET) in China in a study titled *"The Intensity and Direction of CET Washback on Chinese College Students' Test-taking Strategy Use."* The study used a questionnaire to collect data from 284 non-English major students to assess their use of test-taking strategies and the extent of CET's washback effect. The results showed that students primarily used

test-oriented strategies rather than strategies aimed at language acquisition and real-world application. The washback effect was moderate, with a positive impact on cognitive strategy use and a mild effect on test management and test-wiseness strategies. The overall washback direction was found to be positive.

Allen (2016), in his study *“Investigating Washback to the Learner from the IELTS Test in the Japanese Tertiary Context,”* examined the influence of IELTS on students’ test preparation strategies, score improvement and the mediating factors affecting washback when learners were not enrolled in test preparation courses. The study followed a longitudinal approach, administering two IELTS examinations to 190 university students in Japan over a year. Data were collected through surveys on test preparation strategies and test scores were compared to assess progress. 19 students participated in interviews to explore factors influencing washback. The results indicated significant improvement in speaking skills, with more rigorous test preparers also showing greater progress in listening. Between the two test administrations, students shifted their focus toward speaking and writing while reducing emphasis on reading. Interview data revealed that sociocultural and educational factors played a key role in shaping students’ test preparation and access to learning resources.

Khan et al. (2016) conducted a study titled *“Washback Effect of School-Based English Language Assessment: A Case Study on Students’ Perceptions.”* The research aimed to explore students’ perceptions of SBA and external assessments, as well as the challenges involved in implementing SBA. Data were gathered through a questionnaire. The findings revealed that students had generally negative attitudes towards both SBA and external examinations.

Munoz (2017) investigated the washback effect on learners’ attitudes towards testing in the study *“The Effect of Washback on EFL Learners’ Attitudes Toward Tests.”* The research adopted an action research design, where two groups of learners were observed. The experimental group received washback activities after their tests, while the control group did not. Observations and in-depth interviews were conducted to gain deeper insights into learners’ attitudes. The findings showed that the experimental group demonstrated a statistically significant improvement in their

attitude towards testing which suggest that positive washback can enhance students' perceptions of examinations.

Khanshan (2018) conducted a study titled *An examination of the washback effect on Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension: Any implications for text difficulty in the classroom?* The research aimed to explore the washback effect on reading comprehension and its influence on the selection, difficulty level and effectiveness of classroom reading materials. The study involved 48 MA-level English Language Teaching (ELT) students, with data collected through a researcher-developed questionnaire and open-ended questions. The findings revealed a positive washback effect on reading comprehension. Students found that textbooks of moderate difficulty were the most effective for learning.

Razavipour et al. (2018) conducted a study titled *Construct ambiguity and test difficulty generate negative washback: The case of admission test of English literature to graduate programs in Iran*. This research examined the washback effect of the English Literature Module in Iran's Admission Test of English Literature (ATEL) on students' learning, attitudes and test preparation materials. A total of 100 graduate students participated by completing a questionnaire. On one hand, the results indicated that the test had a significant impact on students' perspectives and understanding of English literature. On the other hand, as the test was beyond their level of challenge, most students focused on the general proficiency module instead, leading to negative attitudes towards the test.

In her doctoral thesis, Dawadi (2019) explored the impact of Nepal's Secondary Education Examination (English) in a study titled *"The impact of the secondary education examination (English) on students and parents in Nepal"*. The study involved 247 Grade 10 students and their parents, using a mixed-methods approach with surveys, oral diaries and interviews. Findings showed that 79% of students were motivated to learn English before the test, but this motivation decreased afterward. Initially, students and parents believed the test was fair and accurate, but after taking it, they considered it unfair and unreliable. The test significantly influenced students' learning, restricting them to test-related content. Parents played an active role

in their children's preparation, sometimes pressuring them to follow specific test strategies and study intensely.

Hung and Huang (2019) conducted a study in Taiwan titled *Standardized proficiency tests in a campus-wide English curriculum: A washback study*. This research examined the washback effects of an English proficiency test on student learning in a university-wide English curriculum. A total of 694 students from engineering, business and foreign language-related departments participated. The findings revealed that the test influenced students' self-image, motivation, emotions and career prospects. A statistically significant relationship was found between washback and proficiency level, but no significant differences were observed based on gender or academic major.

Kutlu et al. (2020) conducted a study titled *The significance of the Higher Education Institution-Foreign Language Test in Turkey*. This research examined university candidates' attitudes toward the annual Foreign Language Test. Data were collected from 42 participants through open-ended questionnaires. The findings indicated that most students had negative perceptions of the exam. The study highlighted the need for improvements in test content, structure, reliability and validity. Furthermore, participants relied heavily on memorization strategies rather than acquiring deeper language skills, believing that familiarity with test-taking techniques was more important than achieving advanced English proficiency.

Nguyen (2020) carried out a study in Vietnam titled *Beyond the washback of the English National Exam on learning: Subsequent impact on language learning strategies of first-year English majors*. The research examined how the English National Exam (ENE) influenced first-year English majors at the University of Foreign Language Studies. A total of 120 students completed questionnaires and 10 were interviewed. Findings revealed that students relied heavily on memorization for test preparation, focusing on grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation while neglecting listening, speaking and writing skills. The study suggested that test-takers should adopt learning strategies beyond exam requirements to develop a broader range of language skills.

Amaelia and Prastikawati (2021) investigated the washback effect in their study titled *Washback of microteaching test on EFL students' overseas teaching practice*. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, the researchers collected data through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews with 10 EFL students. Findings revealed that 80% of participants believed the microteaching test had a significant impact on their teaching practice, improving their teaching abilities, confidence and reducing anxiety. The test was beneficial in areas such as lesson planning, classroom management, material delivery and time management.

Gashaye (2021) conducted a study in Ethiopia titled *The washback of the Ethiopian National English Examination (ENEE) for Grade 10 on students' practice: Debre Markos secondary schools on focus*. The study involved 270 Grade 9 and 10 students, using both quantitative and qualitative methods such as questionnaires, focus group discussions, document analysis and classroom observations. The findings indicated that students primarily focused on grammar and technical aspects of writing and speaking, often without consulting textbooks. Exam ambition, test awareness and teachers' exam-focused instruction influenced their learning. The study concluded that the test negatively impacted communicative language teaching.

Izadpanh and Abdollahi (2021) carried out a quasi-experimental study titled *"The washback impacts of task-based assessment on Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary learning and grammatical ability."* The research involved 184 first-year senior high school students, selected through multistage cluster sampling. Various assessment tools, including TOEFL-based vocabulary tests, teacher-made quizzes and pre- and post-tests, were used. The findings indicated that task-based language assessment (TBLA) had a positive washback effect, improving students' vocabulary and grammar. The study also suggested that TBLA could effectively replace traditional evaluation methods.

Sadeghi et al. (2021) conducted a study titled *The washback effect of TOEFL iBT and a local English proficiency exam on students' motivation, autonomy and language learning strategies*. The research aimed to determine how these high-stakes exams influenced students' approaches to language learning and their levels of

motivation and independence in studying. The study compared the effects of the widely recognized TOEFL iBT with a local English proficiency test. The findings revealed that neither test had a significant washback effect on students' motivation, autonomy, or use of learning strategies. This suggests that while these exams play an essential role in assessing language proficiency, they do not necessarily drive students to adopt more effective learning habits or develop greater self-sufficiency in language acquisition.

Umam and Zabidi (2021) examined the influence of online language assessments in their study titled *The washback effect in online language assessment on students' learning interest*. The study employed a descriptive-qualitative approach, gathering data through online interviews via Google Forms with 30 students enrolled in an English Education Department seminar proposal course. The research aimed to understand how online assessments shaped students' perceptions of learning and their level of engagement in language studies. The findings indicated that the assessment had a positive washback effect, as students believed it enhanced their English skills and overall language abilities. The study highlighted that online language assessments, when structured effectively, could serve as valuable tools for encouraging students to improve their language proficiency and actively participate in their learning process.

Sabillawati and Ardiana (2022) conducted a study in Indonesia titled *Washback effects of English reading test in UTBK: Students' insights*. The research focused on the English section of the high-stakes UTBK university entrance exam, using a case study approach. Data were collected from six senior high school students through online questionnaires. Findings showed that the test had both positive and negative washback effects. Although students felt the test accurately reflected their language competence, they were uncertain whether it actually improved their English communication skills.

Zhao (2022) explored the long-term effects of test-oriented teaching in China in a study titled *The influence of test-oriented teaching on Chinese students' long-term use of English*. The research involved 600 university students and used a quantitative approach with questionnaires. Findings indicated that examination-focused teaching

had long-term negative effects, making it difficult for students to use English effectively in real-life situations, particularly in the workplace.

2.4 Studies conducted from the perception of both teachers and students

Sukyadi and Mardiani (2011) conducted a study titled *Washback Effects of the English National Examination (ENE) in Indonesian Secondary Education*, which aimed to explore the impact of the ENE on both teachers and students across three secondary schools, classified based on their success in the national examination. The study found that English teachers and students held different perceptions regarding the ENE. The examination influenced teachers' instructional practices, including how they allocated time, selected teaching materials, chose teaching topics, applied instructional methods, adopted teaching strategies and assessed students. The ENE also affected students' learning experiences in the classroom, as teachers predominantly focused on test preparation, emphasizing test-taking strategies and practice exercises. The study highlighted that the washback effect of the ENE was both positive and negative, with varying intensity and specificity. Furthermore, the impact was often temporary, suggesting that while the examination shaped teaching and learning practices, its influence might not be sustained in the long term.

Aftab, Qureshi and William (2014) conducted a study in Pakistan titled *Investigating the Washback Effect of the Pakistani Intermediate English Examination*, which explored the nature and extent of the washback effect in a public sector college. The study employed a qualitative approach, collecting data through semi-structured interviews with a sample of six teachers and six students. The data was analysed using open coding to identify recurring themes and patterns. The findings indicated that the examination had a negative washback effect, influencing teaching methodology, content selection and students' learning approaches. Teachers primarily focused on preparing students for the exam rather than fostering comprehensive language skills, while students adopted rote memorization techniques instead of engaging in meaningful language learning. This suggests that the examination system restricted

both instructional practices and learning outcomes, limiting the development of broader English language proficiency.

Zenuni (2015) investigated the washback effect of the *State Matura Examination (SME)* in Albania in a study titled *Washback Intensity of the State Matura Examination in Albanian High Schools*. The SME, introduced in 2006, assesses students' knowledge at the end of high school and serves as a university entrance examination. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study surveyed 401 students and 141 teachers from 50 schools through questionnaires. The findings revealed both positive and negative washback. Teachers primarily focused on examination content, narrowing classroom activities under mild pressure from stakeholders, indicating negative washback. However, the SME also expanded course content, leading to positive washback. While the examination influenced instructional practices by restricting flexibility, it also encouraged a broader curriculum, demonstrating both limiting and beneficial effects on teaching and learning.

Vennakkadan (2016) carried out a study at Calicut University titled *Examination Washback on Teaching and Learning English as a Second Language: Testing Versus the Four Skills at UG Level*. The research explored teachers' and students' attitudes towards examinations and their impact on practical proficiency in the four language skills. It also examined stakeholders' views on whether adopting direct testing methods and skill-based examinations could enhance the teaching-learning process. A mixed-methods approach was used for data collection. The findings revealed that high-stakes examinations negatively affected students' learning. Both teachers and students expressed dissatisfaction with current testing methods and strongly supported changes. They favoured a system where, alongside writing assessments, a significant focus was placed on evaluating speaking skills, which they believed would lead to a more effective and balanced approach to language learning.

Kennedy (2016) conducted a study titled *Working Towards Positive Washback: Changing Teaching and Learning by Changing Testing* to examine the connection between teaching practices, learning and testing methodologies. The study surveyed 100 ESL teachers and 100 students from Arts and Science Colleges. Findings revealed

that teachers primarily taught to the test and students focused on what was assessed rather than developing language skills. The examinations measured content knowledge rather than proficiency. A strong correlation was observed between teaching methods and testing, which did not encourage language learning. To address this, the researcher introduced a new test that prioritised skill-based assessment. The results demonstrated that students' language abilities improved when assessments encouraged practical language use, suggesting that test design significantly influences teaching methods and learning outcomes.

Oruganti (2017) conducted research at The English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad, titled *The Impact of Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) on the Teaching and Learning of English: A Focus on Diagnosis, Remediation and Learner Progress*. The study explored how evaluation helps diagnose students' difficulties and enables teachers to adjust their instruction. A total of 22 teachers and 155 students from Kendriya Vidyalayas in Hyderabad and Secunderabad participated. Using questionnaires, interviews and classroom observations, the study found that teachers viewed CCE positively, as regular assessment allowed them to develop new strategies to address learners' needs. Students also experienced reduced stress, enabling them to be more creative and independent in learning rather than relying on memorised responses. The findings suggested that continuous evaluation fosters a more student-centred approach, ultimately improving English language learning.

Umashankar (2017) conducted a PhD study in Sri Lanka titled *Washback Effects of Speaking Assessment on Teaching English in Sri Lankan Schools*. The research examined the impact of introducing speaking assessments at national and school levels, considering perspectives from policymakers, teacher trainers, teachers and students. A mixed-methods approach was used to collect data. Findings showed that teachers' instructional practices and students' attitudes towards speaking in the classroom were influenced by the assessment changes. While some policy goals were achieved, the extent of washback depended on various factors such as teacher training and classroom resources. The study concluded that assessment reforms could drive changes in teaching and learning, but the washback effect was complex and shaped by multiple external influences beyond the evaluation itself.

Bailey (2018) conducted a study in Japan titled *A Study of the Washback Effects of University Entrance Examinations on Teaching Pedagogy and Student Learning Behaviour in Japanese High Schools*. The research examined how grammar-based entrance examinations affected teaching and learning in Japanese high schools. The study involved 20 teachers and 20 students who completed questionnaires, followed by interviews with teachers. Findings revealed that entrance examinations strongly influenced teaching methods, as teachers prioritised test preparation over developing students' communication skills. Similarly, students focused on memorising vocabulary and grammar rather than improving their speaking abilities, despite their desire to do so. The study suggested that for classrooms to adopt a more communicative approach, entrance examinations should include a test of communication competence to encourage both teachers and students to focus on practical language use.

Khongwir (2018) conducted a study titled *The Washback Effects on the ESL Teaching-Learning at the Secondary and Higher Secondary Levels in Meghalaya: A Comparative Study* to examine how ESL tests influenced teaching and learning. The study compared secondary and higher secondary levels, involving 680 students, 47 teachers, 20 parents and 5 MBOSE officials. Data was collected through questionnaires and interviews. Findings revealed that ESL examinations significantly affected both teachers and students. Teachers prioritised exam preparation over language development, while students relied on rote learning due to the predictable test patterns. This approach limited creativity and independent thinking. Both teachers and learners viewed test scores as indicators of their listening, speaking, reading and writing (LSRW) skills, despite the test's inability to assess all aspects equally. The study highlighted the exam-driven nature of ESL education in Meghalaya.

Nahdia and Trisanti (2018) conducted a study titled *Examining Washback of National Examination: EFL Teachers and Students' Perceptions* to investigate the impact of the 2017 English national school examination in Semarang, Indonesia. The study involved two ninth-grade teachers and sixteen ninth-grade students from a junior high school. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, data was gathered through questionnaires and interviews. Findings showed that the national examination had both

positive and negative effects. While students spent more time studying English in preparation for the exam, they primarily focused on subjects tested in the national exam. Teachers also adapted their teaching strategies to align with the test content, concentrating mainly on reading and writing skills. The study highlighted how the national examination shaped both teaching and learning approaches, often at the expense of holistic language development.

Abute (2019) examined the washback effects of Ethiopia's pre-college English examination in a study titled *An Investigation into the Washback Impact of Pre-College English Examination on Instructional Practices of Teachers and Students in Some Selected Government and Private Secondary Schools of Hadiya Zone, Ethiopia*. The study analysed micro-level effects on teaching, learning styles and curriculum planning. It involved 776 students and 48 teachers, using surveys, interviews, focus group discussions and classroom observations. Findings showed that the washback effect was more intense in private schools than in government schools. Experienced teachers were highly exam-focused, tailoring their instruction to the test format. Observations also revealed that students saw exams as a crucial step to success, leading to an exam-driven learning culture. The study highlighted the strong influence of exams on classroom practices and student motivation.

Hedayatullah (2019) conducted a case study titled *Investigating the Washback Effect of English Language Test at the Undergraduate Level in JMI: A Linguistic Study* to examine the impact of the compulsory 'General English' examination at Jamia Millia Islamia University in New Delhi. The study involved 160 students and 17 teachers. Findings indicated a predominantly positive washback effect, particularly for students from a Madrasa background, as the structured exam preparation helped improve their English proficiency. The level of prior English exposure significantly influenced how students adapted to the test. Those with limited English skills benefitted the most from the structured learning process. The study concluded that while the exam shaped both teaching and learning practices, its effectiveness depended on students' educational backgrounds and familiarity with English.

Teng and Fu (2019) conducted a study titled *The Washback of Listening Tests for Entrance Exams on EFL Instruction in Taiwanese Junior High Schools* to explore how Taiwan's Comprehensive Assessment Programme (CAP) influenced EFL education. The study involved 30 English teachers and 298 students from three junior high schools, using questionnaires and interviews. Findings revealed that both teachers and students welcomed the addition of a listening test in the entrance exam. Teachers adjusted their instructional methods by incorporating diverse teaching materials and activities to enhance students' listening skills. Students were also more motivated to practise English listening. The study concluded that the CAP listening test had a positive washback effect, as it encouraged a shift towards improving listening comprehension in EFL classrooms.

Wiyaka (2020) investigated the washback effects of a performance-based reading test in a study titled *Washback of the Performance-Based Test of Reading for EFL Learners in Indonesia*. This low-stakes test involved 10 English teachers and 50 junior high school students in Semarang. Data was gathered through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Findings showed that the test had a positive impact on students' engagement, critical thinking skills and enthusiasm for reading. Teachers adjusted their teaching methods, materials and time management to align with the test. As the test carried low stakes, students felt minimal pressure compared to traditional exams. Although some students prepared in advance, they did not experience significant stress. The study suggested that performance-based assessments could enhance reading skills by making learning more interactive and meaningful.

Rahman et al. (2021) conducted a study titled *Washback of Assessment on English Teaching-Learning Practice at Secondary Schools* to examine how Bangladesh's Secondary School Certificate (SSC) English exams influenced teaching and learning. Findings revealed that the SSC exams had a strong negative washback effect. There was a clear mismatch between the curriculum's objectives and the exam format, leading teachers to focus primarily on test preparation rather than language development. Students relied on memorisation techniques rather than engaging in meaningful language learning. The study highlighted that the SSC examination system

reinforced an exam-oriented approach, limiting students' ability to use English effectively in real-life situations.

Salma and Prastikawati (2021) explored performance-based assessment in a study titled *Performance-Based Assessment in the English Learning Process: Washback and Barriers*. The study used a qualitative research design, involving two teachers and 72 students, with data collected through open-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Findings revealed that performance-based assessment had a positive impact on teachers, enabling them to assess students' true competence and enhance their teaching effectiveness. For students, it increased motivation, confidence and engagement while reducing boredom. The study concluded that performance-based assessment was beneficial for both teachers and students, improving the overall quality of teaching and learning.

Liu and Chen (2022) conducted a study titled *A Study of the Washback Effect of Oral English Sampling Test on Primary School English Teaching* to examine the impact of oral English assessments in Chinese primary schools. The study used quantitative and qualitative methods, involving two teachers and 149 students. Findings showed that oral assessments had a positive effect on students' speaking skills, helping them improve their language abilities. Some negative washback effects were observed. Teachers felt pressured to teach specifically for the test, while students focused on passing rather than developing real communication skills. Despite these challenges, the study concluded that oral English assessments were effective in enhancing students' speaking abilities, though external factors such as test pressure influenced the learning experience.

2.5 Studies conducted through analysis of documents and system of examination

Luxia (2005) conducted a study in China titled *National Matriculation English Test (NMET): A Study of Washback Effects* to analyse the test's impact on English language teaching (ELT). The NMET was designed not only for university selection but also to promote ELT reforms. However, the study found that it failed to achieve the latter objective. Data were collected through interviews and questionnaires from 8

NMET constructors, 6 English inspectors, 388 teachers and 986 students. Findings indicated that the exam's dual purpose—selection and reform—was contradictory. While it effectively determined university admissions, it encouraged "teaching to the test" rather than fostering meaningful language learning. Teachers and students focused on test-taking strategies rather than improving English proficiency. The study concluded that the NMET's structure limited its ability to generate positive washback in ELT classrooms, making it an ineffective tool for educational reform.

Jianrattanapong (2011) investigated the washback effects of Thai university entrance exams on students' learning strategies in a study titled *The Washback Effect of the Absence of Direct Writing Tests in Thai University Entrance Exams*. The study highlighted that the exclusion of writing assessments led students to neglect writing skills. Multiple-choice questions dominated the exams, failing to accurately measure writing abilities. The author recommended the inclusion of direct writing tests to encourage students to develop writing proficiency. To ensure reliability, the study suggested employing at least two trained raters for each response and incorporating technological solutions like ETS Technologies' E-rater, which had proven effective in evaluating GMAT essays. The study concluded that the absence of writing tests negatively influenced students' learning, reinforcing an imbalanced approach to English language acquisition, with an overemphasis on reading and grammar rather than productive skills like writing.

Paker (2013) conducted a study titled *The Backwash Effect of the Test Items in the Achievement Exams in Preparatory Classes* to examine the assessment of language skills in English preparatory programs at Turkish universities. Achievement test samples were collected from 13 institutions to analyse the language abilities evaluated and their washback effects on learning and teaching. Findings revealed that all universities assessed reading, vocabulary and language use, while 70% also tested listening, writing and speaking. Also, 15% included translation in their exams. The study concluded that, although most institutions assessed all four language skills to some extent, reading remained the primary focus. The findings suggested that assessment practices influenced instructional priorities, leading teachers to align their

methods with test content. The study highlighted the need for a balanced evaluation approach to ensure comprehensive language learning outcomes.

Sumardi (2017) explored performance-based assessment in a study titled *Performance-Based Assessment as a Current Trend in ELT: Investigating its Washback Effects on Secondary-School Students' Learning*. The research argued that traditional assessment methods, such as multiple-choice and true-false questions, fail to capture students' practical language skills and primarily encourage memorisation. Using in-depth interviews, classroom observations and document analysis, the study examined how performance-based assessments influenced student learning. Findings indicated that such assessments motivated students, fostering greater engagement and effort in learning. Participants viewed this evaluation method positively, as it provided opportunities to demonstrate their abilities beyond rote memorisation. The study suggested that integrating performance-based assessments into ELT could enhance students' motivation and learning experiences by encouraging the development of real-world language skills rather than focusing solely on exam performance.

Atmojo (2021) conducted a literature review study titled *Facilitating Positive Washback through Authentic Assessment in EFL Assessment* to examine how authentic assessments contribute to positive washback in English language teaching. The study argued that when assessment methods align with course objectives, they encourage meaningful learning experiences. It emphasised that teachers should carefully select assessment formats that accurately reflect learning goals. Authentic assessments, which include real-world tasks, allow students to demonstrate their language skills in practical contexts. Findings suggested that such assessments not only improve student engagement but also enhance their ability to apply language skills in real-life situations. The study concluded that the more authentic the evaluation process, the more effectively students can express their knowledge using various cognitive abilities. This approach fosters positive washback by encouraging a deeper understanding of the language.

Khattak et al. (2022) analysed the washback effects of Pakistan's Punjab Examination Commission (PEC) English question papers in a study titled *Washback*

Effects of Exams on English Language Learning: An Analysis of PEC English Question Papers in Pakistan. The study examined the content of Grade 5 and Grade 8 English exams based on Bloom's taxonomy and their influence on students' language learning. Findings indicated that the exams primarily focused on knowledge and application levels, neglecting higher-order thinking skills. The assessments tested only reading and writing, excluding listening and speaking skills, which negatively impacted students' linguistic competence. The study concluded that the exam's limited scope hindered the development of comprehensive language abilities, reinforcing an imbalanced approach to English learning. It suggested revising exam content to include all four language skills to enhance learning outcomes.

Javaid et al. (2023) conducted a study in Pakistan titled *Effect of Assessment Practices on Teaching Contents at Secondary Level* to examine how assessment methods influenced English language instruction. The study analysed secondary-level exam papers to determine their impact on teaching materials and practices. Findings revealed that current evaluation practices promoted rote memorisation and discouraged critical thinking. Teachers relied heavily on textbooks, focusing on selective content likely to appear in exams, while speaking skills were largely ignored. The study concluded that assessment-driven teaching narrowed students' learning experiences, limiting their ability to use English effectively in real-life situations. To improve learning outcomes, the study recommended revising assessment strategies to promote a more balanced and skill-oriented approach in English language education.

2.6 OVERVIEW

A total of 68 related studies have been reviewed which ranges from the year 1993 to 2024, covering a span of 31 years. The reviewed studies have been categorised as:

Concept studies	:3
Studies conducted on the perception of teachers	:21
Studies conducted on the perception of students	:20
Studies conducted on the perception of both teachers and students	:17

Studies conducted through analysis of documents and system of examination :7

A brief overview of the studies is given below:

2.2.1 Concept Studies

Out of the 68 reviewed literature, 3 are about the concept of washback. Alderson and Wall (1993) developed a framework to understand washback, highlighting how tests affect teaching and learning, including materials and methods. Messick (1996) linked washback to test validity, stressing that tests should have positive educational effects. Allan (2020) provided a fresh view of wash-forward instead of washback in his paper.

Studies conducted on the perception of teachers

Out of the total reviewed literature, twenty-one (21) studies have been conducted from the perception of teachers. Research on washback effects is mixed. Some studies highlight positive effects, such as increased motivation and improved learning outcomes, while others suggest negative impacts. Many studies report negative washback, where teachers' and students' focus primarily on exam preparation, often leading to neglect of speaking, listening and writing skills. This is observed in studies like Salehi and Yunus (2012), Ahmad & Rao (2012), Kılıçkaya (2016) and Dawadi (2018), where teachers adapt their teaching methods solely to meet the demands of the examination. In some contexts, the washback effect can be positive, especially where examinations like CET in China (Wang, 2010) or GEPT in Taiwan (Shih, 2010) promote a focus on improving test-related skills (e.g., reading and listening). Similarly, Bac & Dan (2022) in Vietnam highlight the positive washback in terms of increased enthusiasm and engagement with reading comprehension.

Several studies (Wang, 2010; Tayeb et al., 2014; Canli & Çakır, 2022) note that teachers tend to modify their teaching practices in response to the pressure of standardized examinations. This often includes focusing more on reading and grammar, as these are emphasized in examinations, while other language skills are downplayed.

Studies, like Manjarrés (2005) and Grace (2020), show that high-stakes exams may initially motivate students to engage with the language but can eventually lead to disillusionment, as they focus only on examination success rather than comprehensive language proficiency. Some studies, such as Ghorbani et al. (2008) and Shijun (2022), focus on how the test's design can affect both teaching and workplace applications. Shijun (2022), for example, emphasizes that the College English Test (CET) is highly relevant to workplace performance, suggesting that washback may extend beyond the classroom in some contexts.

The study by Ali and Hamid (2023) contrasts with others by focusing on the agency of teachers in rural Bangladesh. Here, teachers are seen to negotiate their pedagogy in response to examinations but also to broader curricular goals, challenging the deterministic view of washback commonly found in other studies. Another study by Podolski and Kini (2019) found that teaching experience is generally linked to improved student achievement over time.

Studies conducted on the perception of students

Washback effect has also been studied from the point of view of students and twenty (20) of them are reviewed here. The studies discussed share a common focus on the washback effect of assessments, particularly in language learning contexts and how different types of assessments influence students' learning strategies, attitudes and skills. Many studies indicate that assessments, whether school-based or high-stakes examinations, have a significant impact on students' perceptions and behavior, often pushing them toward test-specific strategies (like memorization) rather than broader language acquisition. Many studies highlight the negative impact of high-stakes testing, where students focus more on test-specific skills rather than overall language development. A common theme is the influence of test preparation on students' learning strategies, with some tests encouraging more focused and strategic learning (e.g., CET in China, IELTS in Japan). Parental support and involvement often play a role in how students approach assessments, as seen in the studies from Hong Kong and Nepal.

Some studies focus on task-based or school-based assessments (e.g., Safa & Goodarzi, Izadpanh & Abdollahi), showing more positive washback effects, like improvements in grammar and vocabulary, while others highlight the negative effects of standardized examinations on broader learning (e.g., Zhao in China, Gashaye in Ethiopia). The impact of test preparation varies, with some studies suggesting that preparation enhances specific language skills like speaking and listening (e.g., Allen's study on IELTS), while others show limited effects outside of the exam content (e.g., Nguyen in Vietnam, Dawadi in Nepal). The role of students' backgrounds, such as gender, location and academic major, varies, with some studies (like the one in Taiwan by Hung & Huang) showing differences in washback effects based on these factors, while others report more general impacts.

In essence, the research underscores the multifaceted nature of washback, showing both positive and negative effects depending on the assessment type, preparation methods and student characteristics.

Studies conducted on the perception of both teachers and students

Studies on washback effects from the perspectives of both students and teachers, numbering seventeen (17) in total, reveal varied outcomes. Positive washback was found in cases like Sri Lanka's speaking assessments (Umashankar, 2017), performance-based assessments in Indonesia (Wiyaka, 2020) and listening tests in Taiwan (Teng & Fu, 2019), which enhanced classroom engagement and skill development. Negative washback was seen in studies such as Aftab, Qureshi and William (2014), where examinations focused teaching on test preparation, as well as in Japan (Bailey, 2018) and Bangladesh (Rahman et al., 2021), where examinations led to a narrow focus on grammar and rote learning. Some studies showed mixed effects, like Albania's State Matura Examination (Zenuni, 2015), which both narrowed curriculum and expanded course content and Indonesia's national exam (Nahdia & Trisanti, 2018), which motivated students but limited focus to reading and writing. Overall, examinations shaped teaching methods, but often at the cost of broader educational goals.

Studies conducted through analysis of documents and system of examination

A total of seven (7) studies were reviewed which highlights how examination designs and assessment methods shape both teaching practices and student learning outcomes, with varying effects depending on the assessment type and their alignment with educational goals.

One major similarity among the studies is their shared emphasis on how assessment practices shape teaching methods and student learning strategies. Luxia (2005), Parker (2013) and Javaid, Iqbal and Haq (2023) all highlight how high-stakes exams encourage teaching to the test, limiting meaningful language learning. Teachers primarily focus on test-related content, leading to an overemphasis on memorisation rather than language proficiency development. Similarly, Jianrattanapong (2011) and Sumardi (2017) argue that assessment design dictates the prioritisation of language skills, with traditional multiple-choice and text-based assessments sidelining productive skills such as speaking and writing.

Another common theme is the critique of traditional assessment methods. Luxia (2005), Sumardi (2017) and Atmojo (2021) argue that current testing structures fail to foster deep learning, as they mainly focus on reading comprehension and grammatical knowledge rather than communicative competence. The findings of these studies indicate that performance-based and authentic assessments result in more positive washback, motivating students to engage more actively with learning materials.

The studies also agree that assessment reform is necessary to promote positive washback. Jianrattanapong (2011), Atmojo (2021) and Khattak, Sultan and Kanwal (2022) suggest integrating alternative assessment formats such as direct writing tests and authentic assessment to enhance language skills. These findings suggest that a balanced assessment approach, incorporating various skills and cognitive levels, is essential for effective English language learning.

Although the studies share some similarities, they differ in focus and methodology. Luxia (2005) and Javaid(2023) mainly examine large-scale, high-stakes assessments, while Parker (2013) and Sumardi (2017) concentrate on achievement tests at the institutional level. This difference influences their findings: large-scale exams

usually have stricter formats and a stronger impact on national curricula, whereas institutional tests offer more flexibility.

The studies differ in their geographical contexts which influences their findings. For example, Luxia (2005) discusses the conflict between selection and reform in China's NMET, while Jianrattanapong (2011) focuses on the absence of direct writing assessments in Thailand's university entrance exams. In contrast, Khattak, Sultan and Kanwal (2022) highlight the limitations of Bloom's taxonomy application in Pakistan's primary and middle school English exams. These differences reflect how assessment-related issues vary across educational systems.

Another key distinction is the approach to data collection. Luxia (2005) and Sumardi (2017) use qualitative methods, such as interviews and classroom observations, to understand teacher and student perspectives on washback effects. In contrast, studies like Paker (2013) and Khattak, Sultan and Kanwal (2022) use content analysis of test papers to evaluate assessment practices. This variation in methodology impacts the depth and type of insights gained.

Altogether, the studies show that assessment has a strong influence on how English is taught and learned. They point out that traditional testing methods are still most common, but these often ignore other essential skills like speaking and writing. The studies also suggest that changing the way assessments are carried out can bring positive effects. Although the studies come from various locations and use different methods, the main point is clear: well-designed tests that align with language learning objectives can enhance both teaching and learning.

Summary

Review of Studies on Examination Washback Based on Categories, Year Span, and Duration

S.no	Categories	No of studies Conducted	Year Span	Duration of Reviews
1	Concept studies	3	1993 - 2020	28 years
2	Studies conducted on the perception of teachers	21	2005 - 2024	20 years
3	Studies conducted on the perception of students	20	2011 - 2022	12 years
4	Studies conducted on the perception of both teachers and students	17	2011 - 2022	12 years
5	Studies conducted through analysis of documents and system of examination	7	2005 - 2023	19 years
Total		68		

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Methodology is a crucial component of any research study which serves as a blueprint that guides researchers through the entire investigative process. It outlines the systematic procedures followed and ensures consistency and reliability in the findings of the study. A well-structured methodology should clearly describe the research approach, define the target population and sampling methods, detail the tools and techniques used for data collection, explain the process of administering and gathering data and specify how the collected data is organized and analysed using statistical methods.

The current chapter covers the following aspects:

- 3.1 Research design
- 3.2 Population, sample and sampling design
- 3.3 Tools/Techniques used for data collection
- 3.4 Administration of tools and collection of data
- 3.5 Tabulation of data
- 3.6 Procedure adopted for data analysis

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design is like a blueprint that directs a researcher through the process of answering important questions and testing ideas. It helps determine the best methods for gathering and analysing data and ensures that the study is well-structured, reliable and meaningful. By carefully planning each step, researchers can confidently explore their topics and draw accurate conclusions.

According to John W. Creswell, research is “a process of steps used to collect and analyse information to increase our understanding of a topic or issue.” It involves

defining research questions, selecting methodologies and addressing ethical considerations.

The present study employs sequential explanatory mixed methods design with quantitative as well as qualitative components for data collection and analysis.

Quantitative research is a way to explore social or human issues by testing theories through measurable data. It involves collecting numerical information, analysing it using statistical methods and identifying patterns or relationships. This approach provides clear, objective insights that help in making informed decisions and refining existing theories.

On the other hand, qualitative research helps in understanding social issues by looking at them through the experiences and perspectives of people. Instead of focusing on numbers, it explores the meanings individuals attach to these problems. This approach involves methods like interviews, observations, field notes, focus groups and document analysis, allowing researchers to gain deeper insights into human thoughts, behaviours and interactions.

3. 2 Population

The population for the study comprises of all secondary and higher secondary schools in Mizoram; involving the students and the English teachers within these schools. For the purpose of this study, the state has been segmented into five zones: Central, East, South, West and North. Table 1 provides a detailed overview of the districts within each zone along with the respective number of schools.

Table 1
Population for the Study

Sl. No	Zone	Districts	No. of Secondary Schools			No. of Higher Secondary Schools			Total	
			Govt.	Private	Aided	Govt.	Private	Aided	District	Zone
1	Central	Aizawl	63	102	31	12	54	8	270	330
2		Serchhip	22	13	13	2	7	3	60	
3	East	Champhai	21	15	18	1	8	0	63	156

4		Khawzawl	9	14	5	0	3	2	33	
5		Saitual	24	14	12	3	6	1	60	
6	South	Hnahthial	12	4	6	1	5	2	30	290
7		Lawngtlai	29	31	5	3	18	0	86	
8		Lunglei	43	35	17	4	23	1	123	
9		Siaha	17	13	10	1	10	0	51	
10	West	Mamit	31	15	11	2	3	0	62	62
12	North	Kolasib	26	10	10	2	5	2	55	55
Total			297	266	138	31	142	19	893	

Source: Directorate of School Education (as on 20.04.2022)

Sample and Sampling Design

In the present study, schools are taken as the sampling unit. The study employs stratified proportionate random sampling technique for collecting quantitative data while purposive sampling is utilised for collecting qualitative data.

In Mizoram there are approximately 650 secondary and higher secondary schools with 40000 students in secondary schools and 25000 students in higher secondary schools. The required sample size was calculated using Yamane's (1967) formula for known population sizes which gives the formula as:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N e^2}$$

where n = required sample size

N = total population size

e = Margin of error

The sample size is calculated separately for secondary and higher secondary students using a margin of error $e = 0.05$ (5%). The sample size for secondary students was calculated to be 396 and that for higher secondary students was 393. Thus, the total sample size was calculated as $396 + 393 = 789$. To account for non-responses and incomplete responses, data was collected from 900 students (450 each from secondary and higher secondary students respectively).

A mixed sampling design was utilised to identify the respondents. In the initial stage, the researcher randomly selected 25 secondary schools and 25 higher secondary schools, with approximate proportional numbers in each zone. The researcher then randomly selected 20 students from each school with approximately proportional numbers from each gender.

Table 2
Sample of Schools

Zones	Secondary			Higher Secondary			Total
	Govt	Aided	Pvt	Govt	Aided	Pvt	
Central	3	2	3	2	1	6	18
East	1	1	1	1	1	2	7
South	4	1	3	1	1	5	15
West	1	1	1	1	0	1	5
North	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
	10	6	9	6	4	15	
Total		25			25		50

Data was collected from all the English teachers from the selected sample of schools; the details of which are presented in Table 3.

Table 3
Sample of Teachers

Teacher Category	Number of Teachers
Secondary School Teachers	55
Higher Secondary School Teachers	49
Total	104

To gather qualitative data, purposive sampling was employed, selecting a small group of participants for in-depth exploration. In each zone, eight students were chosen

to participate in a Focus Group Discussion. Additionally, a group of nine English teachers was selected from the five zones as representatives for discussion.

3.3 Tools Used for Data Collection

The following tools were used for data collection:

- 1) Washback Effect Perception Scale for Students (2024)
- 2) Washback Effect Perception Scale for Teachers.
- 3) Focus Group Discussion
- 4) Primary Documents from the MBSE Official Website for Document Analysis

3.3.1 Washback Effect Perception Scale for Students (2024)

The researcher has developed Washback Perception Scale containing 30 items which was administered to secondary and higher secondary school students. The scale was constructed following Likert's method. The scale follows a five-point rating system, consisting of *Strongly Agree*, *Agree*, *Neutral*, *Disagree* and *Strongly Disagree* to capture varying levels of agreement or disagreement.

The perception scale was divided into four dimensions –

- i) Impact on LSRW Skills
- ii) Views on HSLC/HSSLC Examinations
- iii) Views on Teacher's Teaching Strategies
- iv) Views on Personal Learning

The test-retest reliability was calculated using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, yielding a coefficient of 0.76. The internal reliability was assessed using Split-half method wherein the items in the test were divided into two halves, consisting of even and odd items. Here the coefficient correlation obtained was 0.58. In addition, norms for the scale were developed and presented using z-scores.

Since one of the main objectives of this study was to construct and standardize the 'Washback Effect Perception Scale for Students,' a comprehensive explanation of the methods and procedures used can be found in Chapter IV. Moreover, a sample of the scale is included in **Appendix I** for reference.

3.3.2 Washback Effect Perception Scale for Teachers

A perception scale for teachers was also developed by the researcher which contained 24 items which was administered to secondary and higher secondary school English teachers. The items in the scale were distributed across the following four sections:

- i) Awareness of MBSE English Curriculum and English question setting patterns in HSLC/HSSLC Examinations.
- ii) Reflections on own teaching methods.
- iii) Assessment methods practiced.
- iv) Views on Student's Learning

The content validity of the perception scale was established by taking the feedback of from 44 experts in total from IASE, Department of Education, Mizoram University and faculty from schools and colleges across the state. A sample of the scale is attached in **Appendix II**.

3.3.3. Focus Group Discussion

Students: Focus group discussions were conducted across all five zones, with each zone having a group of eight students. These groups comprised four students from secondary schools and four from higher secondary schools, ensuring an equal representation of two males and two females from each category.

Teachers: A total of nine teachers participated from each zone, including five English teachers from secondary schools and four from higher secondary schools.

The list of open-ended questions for the Focus Group Discussion is attached in **Appendix III**.

3.4 ADMINISTRATION OF TOOLS AND COLLECTION OF DATA

The Washback Effect Perception Scale, developed by the researcher, was administered to 859 students from both secondary and higher secondary schools.

First, approval was secured from the head of each school prior to the visit. Before starting, the purpose of the study and instructions for completing the scale were

clearly explained to ensure clarity. Students had ample time to reflect on each statement, which enabled them to respond sincerely. They were also assured that their responses would remain strictly confidential and used solely for research purposes. Throughout the process, careful attention was given to addressing their questions and handling any required personal information with respect and discretion.

Data from the teachers was gathered in two ways: through Google Forms and in-person interactions. 78 teachers filled out the Google Form, which the researcher sent via WhatsApp, while 26 teachers were approached directly by the researcher.

For the students, the focus group discussions (FGDs) took place online using Zoom Meet and Google Meet. These discussions were recorded to be analysed later. The researcher, who also moderated the discussions, made sure to introduce the questions and topics clearly to the participants. To ensure everyone's privacy, students were given coded labels like B1, B2, B3, B4 for boys and G1, G2, G3, G4 for girls.

The teacher FGD was also conducted online via Zoom Meet, given that the teachers were located in various regions.

The data collection took place over a six-month period, from May to October 2024.

3.5 TABULATION OF DATA

The data collected from 859 secondary school students was carefully reviewed, sorted and evaluated using standard procedures. After the responses from the Washback Effect Perception Scale were assessed, the results were organized in a tabulation process. Each student was assigned a unique identification number based on the specific variable being studied. The collected scores were then entered into an Excel spreadsheet and analysed using the appropriate statistical methods outlined for the study.

Additionally, the data from the focus group discussions were transcribed and translated. Once that was done, the transcriptions were thoroughly analysed to ensure they addressed the specific objectives of the study.

3.6 PROCEDURE ADOPTED FOR DATA ANALYSIS

3.6.1 Analysis of Quantitative Data

Given the nature of the data and the objectives of the study, the researcher used the following statistical methods for analysis:

1. *Descriptive statistics measures:* Various measures of central tendency, standard deviation which is a measure of variability, percentage and z-score, were employed to understand the distribution of scores and to classify students into different categories based on the nature of their scores.
2. *Test of significance for mean difference:* A t-test was applied to determine the significance of differences in mean scores between different groups categorized by gender (male and female), by locale (urban and rural), by home language (Mizo and others), by level of education (secondary and higher secondary). Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to compare the means of multiple groups categorized by type of school management (government, private and ad hoc-aided), by father's educational qualification (below matric, matric to graduate and masters and above), by mother's educational qualification (below matric, matric to graduate and masters and above), by academic achievement (low achiever, average achiever and high achiever). Chi-square test was also used to analyse and compare the responses from the teachers.

3.6.2 Analysis of Qualitative Data

After collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, the researcher took the following steps for data analysis:

1. *Transcription and translation:* The qualitative data collected from the Focus Group Discussions were meticulously transcribed and translated.
2. *Data familiarization:* The researcher thoroughly reviewed the transcripts multiple times to gain familiarity with the data.

3. *Initial and thematic coding:* Initially, recurring words and phrases were identified through coding. Thematic coding was then applied, organizing similar responses into distinct categories.
4. *Identify similarities and differences:* These categories were further examined to highlight both common and differing opinions.
5. *Alignment with the objectives:* The researcher ensured that the findings were aligned with the study's objectives.
6. *Triangulation of data:* The data was then compared with the interpreted quantitative data to validate the findings.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter deals with the analysis and interpretation of data. The information obtained through different methods was processed and analysed using appropriate statistical methods.

Data analysis and interpretation is the process of analysing the collected data, which refers to transforming and interpreting both organized and unstructured data to identify patterns and trends. This process is crucial in research because it integrates studies and outcomes with real-world situations and it also raises the reliability of researchers' hypotheses and results.

For the purpose of simplified interpretation, the data in the present study was organized in MS-Excel and presented in the form of tables and figures.

4.1 DEVELOPMENT AND STANDARDIZATION OF WASHBACK EFFECT PERCEPTION SCALE FOR STUDENTS

The researcher identified a lack of tools that is designed to measure the Washback Effect on language learning among secondary school students. The necessity of a tool tailored to the needs and characteristics of this group was acknowledged which led to the researcher developing a new tool. This tool aims to assess its reliability and validity within this specific demographic while updating its norms. To achieve the desired accuracy, the researcher developed and standardized a Washback Effect Perception Scale (WEPS) for students using Likert's technique. This new tool is specifically adapted for secondary school students and gauged based on the sample. The following steps were involved in the development and standardization of the tool.

4.1.1. Selection of Statements

In the initial stage, the researcher thoroughly reviewed existing literature on the Washback Effect. A total of 85 statements were compiled for evaluation using a 5 -

point Likert scale. These statements aim to capture students' perceptions of the Washback Effect from various angles i.e. their knowledge of their prescribed English curriculum, their views on the teaching strategies adopted by their teacher, classroom activities and how they perceive their own learning method.

4.1.2. Content Validation

The preliminary draft was shared with 60 experts across the state, asking them to evaluate each statement based on criteria like language clarity, statement redundancy and alignment between the tool and study objectives. A total of 44 responses were received, providing valuable feedback. Based on these inputs, several statements were revised and some were removed. The revised statements were then sent to 6 experts for a final review. After incorporating their suggestions, the updated version of the WEPS now includes 50 items, grouped into four dimensions: Impact on LSRW Skills, Views on HSLC/HSSLC Examinations, Views on Teacher's Teaching Methods and Views on Personal Learning.

4.1.3. Try Out

The WEPS, containing 50 items, was subsequently administered to a random sample of 100 students from two schools, one government-run and one privately managed. The sample included 43 males and 57 females, with ages ranging from 14 to 20. Students were encouraged to respond honestly and truthfully. The response categories followed a 5-point Likert scale with differential weighting. For positive items, the category 'Strongly Disagree' was assigned a weight of 1, 'Disagree' a weight of 2, 'Neutral' a weight of 3, 'Agree' a weight of 4 and 'Strongly Agree' a weight of 5. For negative items, the scoring was reversed. After administering the scale to secondary school students, an item analysis was performed which involved determining the discrimination value for each item.

4.1.4. Item Discrimination

The raw scores were arranged in ascending order, with the top and bottom 27% selected for item analysis and discrimination. Each item's significance was tested using a t-test. Items significant at the 0.05 confidence level were retained for the final

scale, while non-significant items were removed. After the process, the final scale thus consisted of 30 items out of which 21 were positively worded and 9 statements were worded negatively.

4.1.5. Reliability

After the removal of items, the test-retest method was used to assess the scale's external reliability where the tests were administered two weeks apart. Initially, 130 students participated in the test; however, only 123 of these students were available for the second test. Consequently, only the tests from the 123 students who completed both sessions were analysed. The test-retest reliability was calculated using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, yielding a coefficient of 0.76, which is considered an acceptable level of reliability.

The internal reliability was assessed using Split-half method wherein the items in the test were divided into two halves, consisting of even and odd items. Here the coefficient correlation obtained was 0.58.

4.1.6. Establishment of Norms for Interpretation

To establish norms for the Washback Effect Perception Scale, the test was administered to 859 secondary school students across Mizoram. Their responses were scored following the previously outlined procedure. The raw scores were then converted into z-scores for result interpretation, as displayed in Table 4.

Table 4

Raw Score with the Corresponding Z-score

Raw Scores	Z - Score	Raw Scores	Z - Score	Raw Scores	Z -Score	Raw Scores	Z -Score
70	-3.59933	86	-1.81544	102	-0.03154	118	1.752352
71	-3.48784	87	-1.70394	103	0.079952	119	1.863846
72	-3.37634	88	-1.59245	104	0.191445	120	1.975339

73	-3.26485	89	-1.48096	105	0.302939	121	2.086833
74	-3.15336	90	-1.36946	106	0.414432	122	2.198326
75	-3.04186	91	-1.25797	107	0.525925	123	2.309819
76	-2.93037	92	-1.14648	108	0.637419	124	2.421313
77	-2.81888	93	-1.03498	109	0.748912	125	2.532806
78	-2.70738	94	-0.92349	110	0.860406	126	2.644299
79	-2.59589	95	-0.812	111	0.971899	127	2.755793
80	-2.4844	96	-0.7005	112	1.083392	128	2.867286
81	-2.3729	97	-0.58901	113	1.194886	129	2.97878
82	-2.26141	98	-0.47751	114	1.306379	130	3.090273
83	-2.14992	99	-0.36602	115	1.417872	131	3.201766
84	-2.03842	100	-0.25453	116	1.529366	132	3.31326
85	-1.92693	101	-0.14303	117	1.640859		

Using the z-score range provided below, washback effect levels perception was categorized into five levels: Highly Positive, Moderately Positive, Neutral, Moderately Negative and Highly Negative. The details are shown in Table 5.

Table 5
Norms for interpretation of the levels of Washback Effect based on z-score

Sl. No.	Raw Score	Range of Z-Score	Categories
1	Above 118	Above +1.8	Highly Positive
2	109 to 118	+0.6 to +1.8	Moderately Positive
3	97 to 108	-0.6 to +0.6	Neutral
4	86 to 96	-1.8 to -0.6	Moderately Negative
5	Below 86	Below -1.8	Highly Negative

4.1.7 Dimension- Wise Establishment of Norms for Interpretation

After converting the raw scores of the students to z-scores, norms were further established for the four dimensions in the scale, which are displayed in tables.

4.1.7.1: Dimension 1 - Impact on LSRW Skills

The transformation of raw scores into z-scores, along with the established norms for “Impact on LSRW Skills” is presented in Tables 6 and 7.

Table 6

Raw Score with the Corresponding z-score for Impact on LSRW skills.

Raw Scores	Z - Score	Raw Scores	Z -Score	Raw Scores	Z -Score	Raw Scores	Z -Score
13	-3.79026	26	-1.1331	39	1.52405	52	4.181203
14	-3.58586	27	-0.92871	40	1.728447	53	4.3856
15	-3.38146	28	-0.72431	41	1.932843	54	4.589996
16	-3.17707	29	-0.51991	42	2.137239	55	4.794393
17	-2.97267	30	-0.31552	43	2.341636	56	4.998789
18	-2.76827	31	-0.11112	44	2.546032	57	5.203186
19	-2.56388	32	0.093275	45	2.750429	58	5.407582
20	-2.35948	33	0.297672	46	2.954825	59	5.611978
21	-2.15509	34	0.502068	47	3.159221	60	5.816375
22	-1.95069	35	0.706464	48	3.363618		
23	-1.74629	36	0.910861	49	3.568014		
24	-1.5419	37	1.115257	50	3.772411		
25	-1.3375	38	1.319654	51	3.976807		

Table 7

Norms for Interpretation on Impact on LSRW Skills based on z-score

Category	z-score	Raw Scores
Highly Positive	Above +1.8	Above 40
Moderately Positive	+0.6 to + 1.8	35 to 40
Neutral	-0.6 to +0.6	29 to 34
Moderately Negative	-1.8 to -0.6	22 to 28
Highly Negative	Below -1.8	Below 22

4.1.7.2: Dimension 2 - Views on HSLC/HSSLC Examinations

The transformation of raw scores into z-scores, along with the established norms for “Views on HSLC/HSSLC Examinations” is presented in Tables 8 and 9.

Table 8

Raw score with the Corresponding z-score for Views on HSLC/HSSLC Examinations

Raw Scores	Z -Score	Raw Scores	Z -Score	Raw Scores	Z -Score	Raw Scores	Z -Score
6	-3.14476	15	1.164374	24	5.473506	33	9.782639
7	-2.66597	16	1.643167	25	5.952299	34	10.26143
8	-2.18717	17	2.121959	26	6.431091	35	10.74022
9	-1.70838	18	2.600752	27	6.909884	36	11.21902
10	-1.22959	19	3.079544	28	7.388676	37	11.69781
11	-0.7508	20	3.558337	29	7.867469	38	12.1766
12	-0.272	21	4.037129	30	8.346261	39	12.65539
13	0.206789	22	4.515921	31	8.825054	40	13.13419
14	0.685582	23	4.994714	32	9.303846	41	13.61298

Table 9

Norms for Interpretation on Views on HSLC/HSSLC Examinations based on z-score

Category	z-score	Raw Scores
Highly Positive	Above +1.8	Above 16
Moderately Positive	+0.6 to + +1.8	14 to 16
Neutral	-0.6 to +0.6	12 to 13
Moderately Negative	-1.8 to -0.6	9 to 11
Highly Negative	Below -1.8	Below 9

4.1.7.3: Dimension 3 - Views on Teacher's Teaching Strategies

The transformation of raw scores into z-scores, along with the established norms for “Views on Teacher's Teaching Strategies” is presented in Tables 10 and 11.

Table 10

Raw Score with the Corresponding z-score for Views on Teacher's Teaching Strategies

Raw Scores	Z - Score	Raw Scores	Z -Score	Raw Scores	Z -Score	Raw Scores	Z -Score
16	-3.68612	23	-1.47849	30	0.729147	36	2.621406
17	-3.37075	24	-1.16311	31	1.044524	37	2.936782
18	-3.05537	25	-0.84773	32	1.3599	38	3.252158
19	-2.73999	26	-0.53236	33	1.675276	39	3.567535
20	-2.42462	27	-0.21698	34	1.990653	40	3.882911
21	-2.10924	28	0.098394	35	2.306029		
22	-1.79386	29	0.413771	36	2.621406		

Table 11

Norms for interpretation of Views on Teacher's Teaching Strategies based on z-score

Category	z-score	Raw Scores
Highly Positive	Above +1.8	Above 33
Moderately Positive	+0.6 to +1.8	30 to 33
Neutral	-0.6 to +0.6	26 to 29
Moderately Negative	-1.8 to -0.6	22 to 25
Highly Negative	Below -1.8	Below 22

4.1.7.4: Dimension 4 - Views on Personal Learning

The transformation of raw scores into z-scores, along with the established norms for “Views on Personal Learning” is presented in Tables 12 and 13.

Table 12

Raw score with the Corresponding z-score for Views on Personal Learning

Raw Scores	Z - Score	Raw Scores	Z - Score	Raw Scores	Z - Score	Raw Scores	Z - Score
20	-2.71492	26	-1.16104	32	0.392841	38	1.94672
21	-2.45594	27	-0.90206	33	0.651821	39	2.2057
22	-2.19696	28	-0.64308	34	0.910801	40	2.464679
23	-1.93798	29	-0.3841	35	1.169781	41	2.723659
24	-1.679	30	-0.12512	36	1.42876		
25	-1.42002	31	0.133861	37	1.68774		

Table 13

Norms for Interpretation of Views Personal Learning based on z-score

Category	z-score	Raw Scores
Highly Positive	Above +1.8	Above 38
Moderately Positive	+0.6 to +1.8	33 to 38
Neutral	-0.6 to +0.6	29 to 32
Moderately Negative	-1.8 to -0.6	24 to 28
Highly Negative	Below -1.8	Below 24

4.2. PERCEPTION OF STUDENTS ON THE WASHBACK EFFECT OF THE SCHOOL LEAVING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS ON THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF ENGLISH”

To achieve the objective - “To assess the perception of students on the washback effect of the School Leaving Certificate Examinations on the Teaching and Learning of English” the overall perception level of students with the four dimensions i.e. Impact on LSRW Skills, Views on HSLC/HSSLC Examinations, Views on Teacher’s Teaching Strategies and Views on Personal Learning were analysed. The analysis and interpretation of the study are provided in Table 14 and Figure 1.

Table 14

Overall Perception of Students on the Washback Effect

Category	Number	Percentage
Highly Positive	31	3.61
Moderately Positive	168	19.56
Neutral	443	51.57
Moderately Negative	192	22.35
Highly Negative	25	2.91
Total	859	100%

Fig. 1

Overall Perception of Students on the Washback Effect

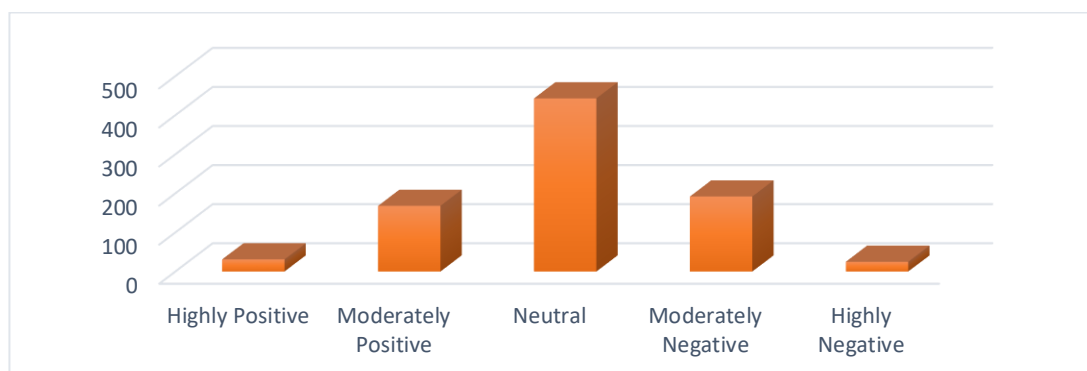


Table 14 shows that out of the total 859 respondents, 31 students (3.61%) have a Highly Positive level, 168 students (19.56%) have a moderately positive level, the

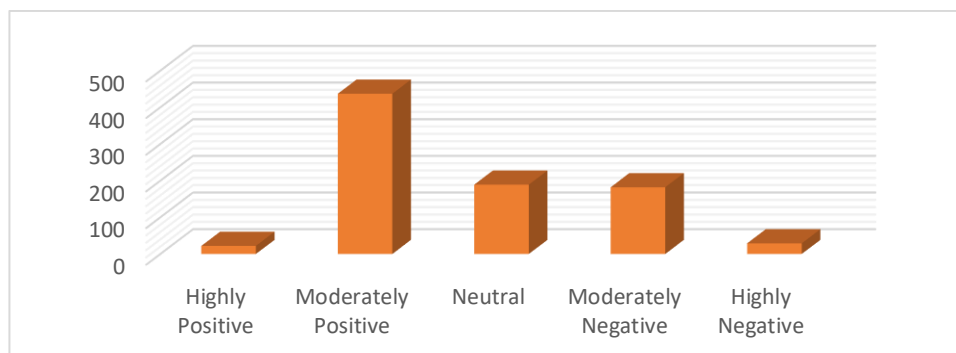
majority of the students, 443 students (51.57%), are neutral in their perception, 192 students (22.35%) have a moderately positive level and 25 students (2.91%) have a highly negative level.

4.2.1. DIMENSION 1: IMPACT ON LSRW SKILLS

Table 15
Impact on LSRW Skills

Category	Number	Percentage
Highly Positive	22	2.56
Moderately Positive	437	50.87
Neutral	189	22
Moderately Negative	182	21.19
Highly Negative	29	3.38

Fig. 2
Perception of Impact on LSRW Skills



Based on the first dimension - Impact on LSRW Skills, Table 15 and Fig. 2 shows that 2.56% of the respondents show a highly positive level of washback effect perception. The majority, 50.87%, are moderately positive in their perception, 22% fall in the Neutral category, 21.19% have a moderately negative perception and 3.38% are highly negative.

Focus Group Discussion

The participants were asked to share their thoughts on how the examinations they have taken or are currently preparing for (HSLC and HSSLC) have affected their development of LSRW (Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing) skills. The opinions expressed by the participants were as follows:

“...Our improvement in the language is evident when we compare our English skill from class 1 with the present. Our grammar improved and vocabulary increased...”

“...Exams really help us in our English comprehension skills, it is most evident in writings as our improved vocabulary can be seen. Understanding contents in English has also become much easier...”

Participants noted improvements in their English skills and also felt examinations helped enhance their comprehension and writing skills, making English content easier to understand. However, other participants also express difference of opinions as such -

“It depends on the person.”

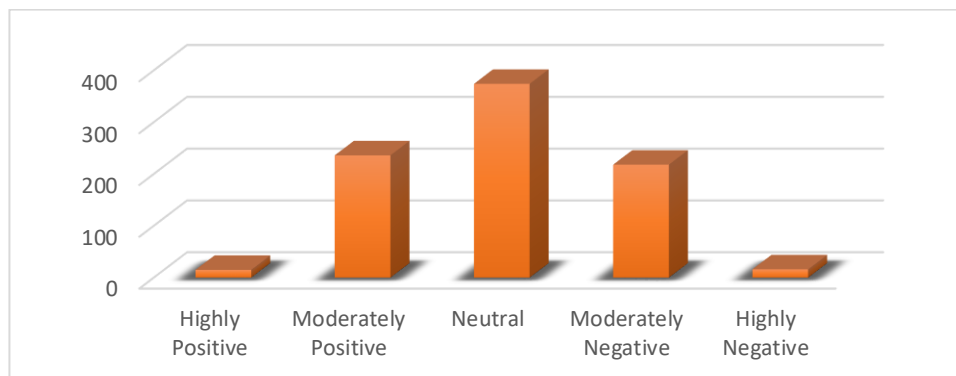
“Listening and speaking skills do not really improve except from classroom lectures. Fluency in English comes from reading more books it seems”.

4.2.2. DIMENSION 2: VIEWS ON HSLC/HSSLC EXAMINATIONS

Table 16

Views on HSLC/HSSLC Examinations

Category	Number	Percentage
Highly Positive	15	1.75
Moderately Positive	236	27.47
Neutral	374	43.54
Moderately Negative	218	25.38
Highly Negative	16	1.86

Fig. 3***Views on HSLC/HSSLC Examinations***

Regarding Views on HSLC/HSSLC Examinations, the data provided in Table 16 shows that 1.75% of the respondents have a highly positive view, 27.47% have moderately positive view, 43.54 have a neutral perception and the rest have a negative perception with 25.38% being moderately negative and 1.86% highly negative.

Focus Group Discussion

When asked about how the HSLC and HSSLC examinations have impacted their overall knowledge and helped improve their learning of English, some of the participants feel the examinations motivate them to work harder, study more and broaden their knowledge, while also providing direction for their future.

However, there was a slightly negative comment on examinations impact. One participant shared:

“...Students study more because of the more intense competition however our knowledge seems to be confined within the syllabus and commercial notes..”

4.2.3. DIMENSION 3: VIEWS ON TEACHER'S TEACHING STRATEGIES

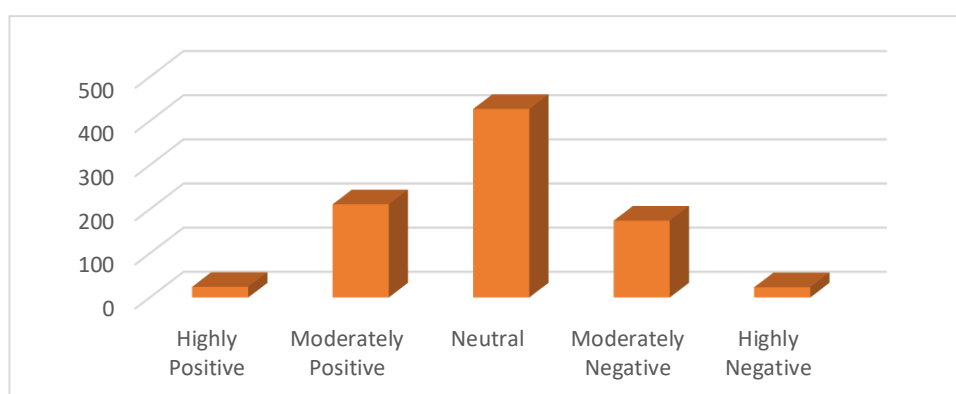
Table 17

Views on Teacher's Teaching Strategies

Category	Number	Percentage
Highly Positive	24	2.79
Moderately Positive	211	24.56
Neutral	427	49.71
Moderately Negative	174	20.26
Highly Negative	23	2.68

Fig. 4

Views on Teacher's Teaching Strategies



In Views on Teacher's Teaching Strategies, 2.79% of the respondents are found to have highly positive view of Washback effect, while 24.56% of the respondents have a moderately positive perception. 49.79% are found to be neutral in their perception. The respondents that are found to be having negative views are 20.26% with moderately negative perception and the remaining 2.68% with highly negative perception.

Focus Group Discussion

Discussion about teacher's teaching practices in the classroom was met with perspectives such as -

"...I think the teachers are prepared well before class..."

"The teachers are very responsive in our enquiries regarding our doubts."

“Our teachers help us understand our confusions in ways that is simpler, if we still have doubts, they find others ways to help us understand. Sometimes using examples or other methods.”

When asked if their teachers provide suggestions and filter questions for them and if they would like that, the participants shared the following opinions:

“I prefer it when they do not provide us with suggestions since it makes us read more resources. It for our own good as we reach higher studies.”

“Learning outside of the syllabus is better because it enriches our gk knowledge and it may also turn out useful in our later studies. So we admire these teachers more.” “...Teachers who tells us to learn the whole syllabus are better since even if it won’t come in our exams it still is good for our knowledge and preparation for future studies.”

Participants valued teachers who encouraged independent learning and provided opportunities for exploring beyond the syllabus, seeing it as beneficial for their future studies.

4.2.4. DIMENSION 4: VIEWS ON PERSONAL LEARNING

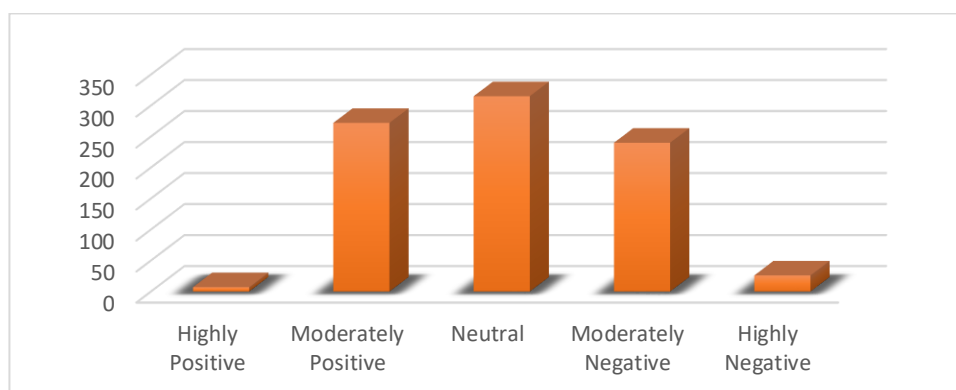
Table 18

Views on Personal Learning

Category	Number	Percentage
Highly Positive	7	0.81
Moderately Positive	272	31.66
Neutral	315	36.67
Moderately Negative	240	27.94
Highly Negative	26	3.03

Fig. 5

Views on Personal Learning



Regarding Views on Personal Learning, it can be seen from Table 18 that only 0.81% of the respondents have a highly positive perception of washback effect. 31.66% fall in the moderately positive category with 35.67% being neutral in their perception. 27.94% have moderately negative perception and the remaining 3.03% have a highly negative perception of washback effect.

Focus Group Discussion

While discussing about how preparing for HSLC/HSSLC changed attitude towards English subject and their learning habits, one participant shared,

“Since most of the resources in higher studies are in English, I would still learn the subject even without board exams.”

Another participant confessed,

“Personally, I am not interested in the subject. So, without boards I would not study the language since some of us are not good at the subject and other options exist. I am aware of its importance but I would not choose it as a main subject I would rather engage in my hobbies.”

It can be gathered that there is difference of opinion on the matter. While on the theme, the participants also discussed their methods of learning expressing their feelings about notes given to them –

“...bazaar notes are good enough for me because there are selected questions that are often repeated in exams...”

“... I do not feel the need to study other notes than what our teacher gives us. I memorize all of them and get good marks...”

4.3 ZONAL COMPARISON OF STUDENTS' PERCEPTION ON THE WASHBACK EFFECT OF THE SCHOOL LEAVING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS

To achieve the objective of comparing students from different zones of Mizoram regarding the washback effects of the School Leaving Certificate Examinations, the study analysed variations in students' overall perceptions across various zones. These perceptions were examined through different dimensions: Impact on LSRW skills, Views on HSLC/HSSLC Examinations, Views on Teacher's Teaching Strategies and Views on Personal Learning. The analysis and interpretation are presented below:

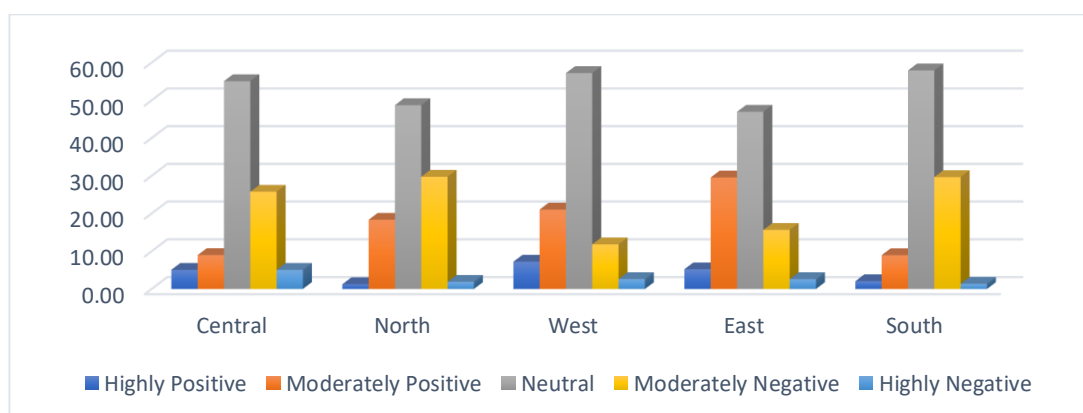
Table 19

Zone- Based Analysis of Washback Effect Perception

Category	Central		North		West		East		South	
Highly Positive	13	5.08	2	1.27	11	7.24	6	5.22	3	2.07
Moderately Positive	23	8.98	29	18.35	32	21.05	34	29.57	13	8.97
Neutral	141	55.08	77	48.73	87	57.24	54	46.96	84	57.93
Moderately Negative	66	25.78	47	29.75	18	11.84	18	15.65	43	29.66
Highly Negative	13	5.08	3	1.90	4	2.63	3	2.61	2	1.38

Fig. 6

Zone- Based Analysis of Washback Effect Perception



Analysis of data vide table no. 19 shows that in the Central zone, the majority of respondents (55.08%) have a neutral perception of the washback effect. Moderately negative responses account for 25.78%, which is higher than moderately positive perceptions at 8.98%. Highly positive and highly negative views are equal, both at 5.08%, indicating a balanced but somewhat negative leaning. The North zone also has a significant neutral response at 48.73%. Moderately negative perceptions are at 29.75%, moderately positive responses are at 18.35%. Highly positive responses are minimal at 1.27%, while highly negative perceptions remain low at 1.90%.

In the West zone, neutral perceptions are the highest among all regions at 57.24%. Moderately positive responses (21.05%) outnumber moderately negative ones (11.84%). Highly positive responses stand at 7.24%, while highly negative responses remain low at 2.63%.

The East zone has the highest proportion of moderately positive responses (29.57%), surpassing moderately negative views at 15.65%. Neutral perceptions make up 46.96%. Highly positive responses are 5.22%, while highly negative perceptions remain low at 2.61%.

In the South zone, neutral responses dominate at 57.93%, similar to the West. Moderately negative perceptions (29.66%) are significantly higher than moderately positive ones (8.97%). Highly positive responses are the lowest among all regions at 2.07%, while highly negative views are also minimal at 1.38%.

The differences between the perceptions of students of different zones are statistically tested for significance using ANOVA as shown below:

4.3.1. ZONAL COMPARISON OF STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF WASHBACK EFFECT

The tables below present a comparison of students' perceptions of the washback effect, analysed using ANOVA and t-tests.

Table 20

Zonal Comparison of Students' Perception of Washback Effect

Source of variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square Variance	F-ratio	F Values	Critical Values	Inference
Between Sets	2941.79	4	735.45	9.50	0.05	3	Significant at 0.01 level
Within Sets	66080.47	854	77.38		0.01	4.63	

Table 20 shows that the calculated value of f is 9.50 which is greater than the critical value of f i.e. 4.63. Therefore, we conclude that there is a significant difference in perception among the various zones of Mizoram.

Hence, null hypothesis no. 1 "There is no significant difference between the students from the different zones of Mizoram on the washback effect of the School Leaving Certificate Examinations on the Teaching and Learning of English" is rejected.

To further investigate, the hypothesis is tested using a t-test.

Table 21

Comparison of Students' Perception of Washback Effect between the Zones

Zone	Mean	SD	Df	Critical Value		Calculated t-value	Inference
Central	102.31	9.41	445	0.05	1.97	2.81	Significant at 0.01 level
North	99.87	8.22		0.01	2.59		
Central	102.31	9.41	443	0.05	1.97	2.35	Significant at 0.05 but not at 0.01 level
West	104.46	9.03		0.01	2.59		
Central	102.31	9.41	406	0.05	1.97	2.69	

						Significant at 0.01 level
East	104.97	8.85		0.01	2.59	
Central	102.31	9.41		0.05	1.97	Significant at
South	100.33	7.68	436	0.01	2.59	2.36 0.05 but not at 0.01 level
North	99.87	8.22		0.05	1.97	Significant at
West	104.46	9.03	299	0.01	2.59	4.61 0.01 level
North	99.87	8.22	262	0.05	1.97	4.79 Significant at 0.01 level
East	104.97	8.85		0.01	2.59	
North	99.87	8.22	292	0.05	1.97	0.05 Not significant
South	100.33	7.68		0.01	2.59	
West	104.46	9.03	265	0.05	1.97	0.46 Not significant
East	104.97	8.85		0.01	2.59	
West	104.46	9.03	295	0.05	1.97	0.49 Not significant
South	100.33	7.68		0.01	2.59	
East	104.97	8.85	258	0.05	1.97	0.55 Not significant
South	100.33	7.68		0.01	2.59	

The interpretation of the data presented in Table 21 is as follows:

1. Central vs. North

Table 21 shows that the calculated t-value was found to be 2.81, which is more than the critical value of t and is significant. The significant difference is in favour of students from the Central zone. Therefore, null hypothesis 1(a) “There is no significant difference between students from Central and North zones” is rejected.

2. Central vs. West

In the comparison table of students from the Central and West zone, it is shown that the calculated t value is 2.35 which is more than the critical value at 0.05 level but less than 0.01 level. Hence, the difference is significant at 0.05 level in favour of the students from the West zone. Therefore, the null hypothesis 1(b) “There is no significant difference between students from Central and West Zones” is rejected.

3. Central vs. East

Through perusal of data from Table 21, it can be seen that the calculated value of t is 2.69 which is greater than the critical value 2.59 at 0.01 level. So, it can be concluded that there is significant difference between students from Central and East zone and the difference is in favour of East zone. Hence, null hypothesis 1(c) “There is no significant difference between students from Central and East zones” is rejected.

4. Central vs. South

The data shows that the calculated t value is 2.36 while the critical value is 1.97 and 2.59 at 0.05 and 0.01 level respectively. This reveals that the difference between Central and South zone is significant at 0.05 level and the difference is in favour of the central zone as their mean score is higher. This means that null hypothesis no 1(d) “There is no significant difference between students from Central and South zones” is rejected.

5. North vs. West

The comparison table shows that the critical value is 2.59 at 0.01 level which is lower than the calculated t value i.e. 4.61. Hence, this proves that there is significant

difference between the North and West zone on their overall perception. This means that null hypothesis no 1(e) “There is no significant difference between students from North and West zones” is rejected.

6. North vs. East

A glance at the table 21 reveals that as the calculated t value is 4.79 which is greater than the critical value at the required level of significance, it can be concluded that the difference between the North and East zones. This means that null hypothesis no 1(f) “There is no significant difference between students from North and East zones” has been rejected.

7. North vs. South

Study of Table 21 reveals that the calculated t-value is 0.05, which is lower than the critical value at the required level of significance. Hence, it can be said that there is no significant difference between the North and South zones. This means that null hypothesis no 1(g) “There is no significant difference between students from North and South zones” has been rejected.

8. West vs. East

Comparison between the West and East zones in Table 21 reveals that the critical value is 1.97 and 2.59 at 0.05 and 0.01 levels respectively, which are both higher than 0.46, which is the calculated t value. It can hence be concluded that the difference between the two zones is not significant. This means that null hypothesis no 1(h) “There is no significant difference between students from West and East zones” has been rejected.

9. West vs. East

A cursory glance at the Table 21 reveals that the calculated t value is 0.49 which is lower than the required levels of significance. Therefore, the difference between West and East zones on their overall perception is considered to be insignificant. This means that null hypothesis no 1(i) “There is no significant difference between students from West and South zones” cannot be rejected.

10. East vs. South

From Table 21, it can be seen that the calculated t value is 0.55 which is lower than the critical value 1.97 and 2.59 at 0.05 and 0.01 levels respectively. It can thus be deduced that there is no significant difference between the East and South zones. Therefore, null hypothesis no 1(j) “There is no significant difference between students from East and South zones” has been rejected.

Overall Findings

The statistical analysis shows that the North zone has the most negative perception, as it has significant differences when compared to Central, West and South, all of which have more positive perceptions. The West zone performs significantly better than North and Central, confirming its strong position. The East zone shows moderately higher perception than Central, but its differences with other zones are not statistically significant. The South zone performs significantly better than North but does not differ meaningfully from West or East. Overall, the results indicate that North has the most negative perception, while West has the most positive, with Central and East falling in between.

4.3.2 Zonal Analysis of Various Dimensions of Students' Perception of Washback Effect

The different zones were further compared based on the four dimensions, the analysis of which are as follows:

4.3.2.1. Dimension 1- Impact on LSRW skills.

Table 22

Zonal Analysis of Students' Perception on Impact on LSRW Skills using ANOVA

Source of variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square Variance	F ratio	Critical Values		Inference
Between Sets	1069.40	4	267.35	11.71	0.05	3	Significant at 0.01 level
Within Sets	19491.72	854	22.82		0.01	4.63	

A study of Table 22 shows that the f ratio is 11.71 which is greater than the critical value i.e. 4.63. This indicates that there is a significant difference between the different zones in their impact on LSRW skills.

To analyse further, the data is tested using t -test.

Table 23

Comparison of Impact on LSRW Skills between the Zones

Zone	Mean	SD	Df	Critical Value		Calculated t-value	Inference
Central	30.92	4.93	445	0.05	1.97	0.37	Not significant
North	29.81	4.74		0.01	2.59		
Central	30.92	4.93	443	0.05	1.97	1.04	Not significant
West	32.82	4.34		0.01	2.59		
Central	30.92	4.93	406	0.05	1.97	0.99	

East	32.74	4.74		0.01	2.59		Not significant
Central	30.92	4.93	436	0.05	1.97	0.77	Not significant
South	32.34	4.95		0.01	2.59		
North	29.81	4.74	299	0.05	1.97	5.75	Significant at 0.01 level
West	32.82	4.34		0.01	2.59		
North	29.81	4.74	262	0.05	1.97	4.99	Significant at 0.01 level
East	32.74	4.74		0.01	2.59		
North	29.81	4.74	292	0.05	1.97		Significant at 0.01 level
South	32.34	4.95		0.01	2.59	4.48	
West	32.82	4.34	265	0.05	1.97	0.14	Not significant
East	32.74	4.74		0.01	2.59		
West	32.82	4.34	295	0.05	1.97	0.88	Not significant
South	32.34	4.95		0.01	2.59		
East	32.74	4.74	258	0.05	1.97	0.66	Not significant
South	32.34	4.95		0.01	2.59		

The data in Table 23 has been interpreted as follows:

1. Central vs. North

The data shows that the calculated t-value is 0.37, which is smaller than the critical value of 2.59. This indicates that there is no significant difference between Central and North zones.

2. Central vs. West

The calculated t-value is 1.04, which is smaller than the critical value of 2.59 at the 0.01 level. Hence, the difference is not significant between Central and West zones.

3. Central vs. East

The calculated t-value is 0.99, which is smaller than the critical value at the 0.01 level. Hence, the difference between Central and East zones regarding the impact on LSRW skills is not significant.

4. Central vs. South

The calculated t-value is 0.77, whereas the critical values at the 0.01 and 0.05 levels are 2.59 and 1.97, respectively. Therefore, there is no significant difference between the Central and South zones in the impact on LSRW skills.

5. North vs. West

The critical values are 1.97 and 2.95 at the 0.05 and 0.01 levels, respectively. The calculated t-value stands at 5.75, which is greater than the critical values at both required levels. Therefore, it can be concluded that North and West zones are significantly different in their perception of LSRW skills.

6. North vs. East

The calculated t-value is 4.99, which is greater than the critical value of 2.59. This proves that there is a significant difference between the North and East zones.

7. South vs. North

The calculated t-value is 4.48, which is more than the critical value at the required level of significance. Hence, it is evident that the difference is significant and the difference is in favour of the South zone, as the mean score is higher than in the North zone.

8. West vs. East

The calculated t-value of 0.14 is smaller than the critical values at both the 0.05 and 0.01 levels. Thus, the difference between West and East zones is not significant.

9. West vs. South

The calculated t-value of 0.88 falls below the critical values at both the 0.05 and 0.01 levels, suggesting that the difference between the West and South zones is not significant.

10. East vs. South

The calculated t-value of 0.66 is below the critical values at both the 0.05 and 0.01 levels, indicating that the difference between the East and South zones is not significant.

4.3.2.2. Dimension 2- Views on HSLC/HSSLC Examinations

Table 24

Zonal Comparison of Students' Perception on Views on HSLC/HSSLC Examinations using ANOVA

Source of variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square Variance	F ratio	Critical Values		Inference
Between Sets	65.66	4	16.42	3.81	0.05	3	Significant
Within Sets	3677.11	854	4.31		0.01	4.63	at 0.01 level

Table 24 shows an f-ratio of 11.71, which exceeds the critical value of 4.63, indicating a significant difference in views on HSLC/HSSLC examinations across the different zones.

To examine this further, the data is tested using a t-test.

Table 25

Comparison between the Zones their Views on HSLC/HSSLC Examinations

Zone	Mean	SD	Df	Critical Value	Calculated t-value	Inference
Central	12.60	2.59	445	0.05	1.97	Not significant
North	12.26	1.91		0.01	2.59	

Central	12.60	2.59	443	0.05	1.97	0.19	Not significant
West	12.74	1.74		0.01	2.59		
Central	12.60	2.59	406	0.05	1.97	0.64	Not significant
East	13.08	1.63		0.01	2.59		
Central	12.60	2.59	436	0.05	1.97	0.49	Not significant
South	12.23	1.65		0.01	2.59		
North	12.26	1.91	299	0.05	1.97	0.48	Not significant
West	12.74	1.74		0.01	2.59		
North	29.81	12.26	292	0.05	1.97		Not significant
East	13.08	1.63		0.01	2.59	0.81	
North	12.26	1.91	292	0.05	1.97		Not significant
South	12.23	1.65		0.01	2.59	0.02	
West	12.74	1.74	265	0.05	1.97		Not significant
East	13.08	1.63		0.01	2.59	1.61	
West	12.74	1.74	295	0.05	1.97		Significant at 0.01 level
South	12.23	1.65		0.01	2.59	2.59	
East	13.08	1.63	258	0.05	1.97		Significant at 0.01 level
South	12.23	1.65		0.01	2.59	4.12	

The analysis of data presented in Table 25 has led to the following interpretations:

1. Central vs. North

The data indicates that the calculated t-value of 0.28 is lower than the critical value of 2.59. This suggests that there is no significant difference between Central and North zones.

2. Central vs. West

The analysis shows that the calculated t-value is 0.19, which is less than the critical value at the required level of significance. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is no significant difference between Central and West zones.

3. Central vs. East

A closer examination reveals that the calculated t-value of 0.64 is lower than the critical value of 2.59, indicating that there is no significant difference between Central and East zones.

4. Central vs. South

The calculated t-value of 0.49 is lower than the critical values of 1.97 and 2.59 at both the 0.05 and 0.01 levels, respectively. This suggests that the difference between Central and South zones is not significant.

5. North vs. West

The data analysis shows that the calculated t-value of 0.48 is lower than the critical values at the required level of significance. This indicates that North and West zones do not differ significantly in their perceptions of HSLC/HSSLC examinations.

6. North vs. East

A review of the findings shows that the calculated t-value of 0.81 is lower than the critical values at the required level of significance. This confirms that the difference between North and East zones is not significant.

7. North vs. South

A comparison between North and South zones reveals that the calculated t-value is 0.02, which falls below the critical values of 1.97 and 2.59 at the 0.05 and 0.01 levels, respectively. This suggests that there is no significant difference between these two zones.

8. West vs. East

An examination of the results shows that the calculated t-value of 1.61 falls below the critical values at the required level of significance. This indicates that the difference between West and East zones is not significant.

9. West vs. South

The findings indicate that the calculated t-value is 2.59, which is equal to the critical value at the specified level of significance. This suggests a significant difference between West and South zones, with the West zone showing a more favourable outcome based on the higher mean score.

10. East vs. South

The calculated t-value of 4.12 is greater than the critical value of 2.59 at the 0.01 level. This confirms that the difference between East and South zones is significant, with the East zone demonstrating a more favourable outcome based on the higher mean score.

The majority of comparisons revealed no significant differences, indicating that the mean scores across zones are largely similar. However, significant differences were found in - West vs. South, where West demonstrated significantly more positive perception and East vs. South, where East was found to have more positive perceptions than the South.

These results suggest that while most zones exhibit similar perceptions, the South zone tends to have a lower mean score compared to both West and East.

4.3.2.3. Dimension 3 - Views on Teacher's Teaching Strategies

Table 26

Zonal Analysis of Students' Perception on Views on Teacher's Teaching Strategies using ANOVA

Source of variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square Variance	F ratio	Critical Values		Inference
Between Sets	231.54	4	57.88	5.90	0.05	3	Significant at 0.01 level
Within Sets	8394.85	854	9.83		0.01	4.63	

Table 26 shows that the calculated value of f is 5.90 which is greater than the table value of f i.e. 4.63. This indicates that there is significant difference.

The data set is further analysed using t test.

Table 27

Comparison between the Zones in their Views on Teacher's Teaching Strategies.

Zone	Mean	SD	Df	Critical Value		Calculated t-value	Inference
Central	28	3.69	445	0.05	1.97	0.48	Not significant
North	27.22	2.56		0.01	2.59		
Central	28	3.69	443	0.05	1.97	0.10	Not significant
West	28.16	3.07		0.01	2.59		
Central	28	3.69	406	0.05	1.97	0.02	Not significant
East	28.03	2.82		0.01	2.59		
Central	28	3.69	436	0.05	1.97	0.75	Not significant
South	26.77	2.71		0.01	2.59		

North	27.22	2.56	299	0.05	1.97	2.88	Significant at 0.01
West	28.16	3.07		0.01	2.59		level
North	27.22	2.56	262	0.05	1.97	2.39	Significant at 0.05 but
East	28.03	2.82		0.01	2.59		not at 0.01 level.
North	27.22	2.56	292	0.05	1.97	1.48	Not significant
South	26.77	2.71		0.01	2.59		
West	28.16	3.07	265	0.05	1.97	0.36	Not significant
East	28.03	2.82		0.01	2.59		
West	28.16	3.07	295	0.05	1.97	4.15	Significant at 0.01
South	26.77	2.71		0.01	2.59		level
East	28.03	2.82	258	0.05	1.97	3.64	Significant at 0.01
South	26.77	2.71		0.01	2.59		level

1. Central vs. North

The analysis indicates that the calculated t-value of 0.48 is lower than the critical values at both required levels of significance. Therefore, the difference between the Central and North zones is not significant.

2. Central vs. West

The calculated t-value of 0.10 is below the critical values of 1.97 and 2.59 at the 0.05 and 0.01 levels, respectively. This suggests that the difference between the Central and West zones is not significant.

3. Central vs. East

A comparison between the Central and East zones reveals that the critical values at the 0.05 and 0.01 levels (both 2.59) are greater than the calculated t-value of 0.02. Thus, the difference between these two zones is not significant.

4. Central vs. South

A review of the data shows that the calculated t-value of 0.75 falls below the critical values at both the 0.05 and 0.01 levels, indicating that there is no significant difference between the Central and South zones.

5. North vs. West

The analysis shows that the calculated t-value of 2.88 exceeds the critical value of 2.59 at the 0.01 level, indicating that the difference between the North and West zones is significant.

6. North vs. East

The findings reveal that the calculated t-value of 2.39 is higher than the critical value of 1.97 at the 0.05 level. This suggests that the difference between the North and East zones is significant at the 0.05 level.

7. North vs. South

The critical values at both the 0.05 and 0.01 levels are greater than the calculated t-value of 1.48, indicating that the difference between the North and South zones is not significant.

8. West vs. East

The data shows that the calculated t-value of 0.36 is lower than the critical values at the required level of significance. Hence, the difference between the West and East zones is not significant.

9. West vs. South

The data analysis reveals that the calculated t-value of 4.15 is greater than the critical value of 2.59 at the 0.01 level, confirming that the difference between the West and South zones is significant.

10. East vs. South

A comparison of the East and South zones regarding their views on teacher's teaching strategies shows that the calculated t-value of 3.64 exceeds the critical value at the 0.01 level, indicating a significant difference.

Most comparisons show no significant differences, suggesting that the mean scores are similar across most zones. However, significant differences were observed in the following cases -

Between North and West where the difference favoured the West

West and South where the difference favoured the West

East and South where the difference favoured the East.

These findings highlight that while most zones perform similarly, the South zone tends to have a lower mean score compared to West and East zones.

4.3.2.4. Dimension 4: Views on Personal Learning

Table 28

Zonal Analysis of Students' Perception on Views on Personal Learning using ANOVA

Source of variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square Variance	F ratio	Critical Values		Inference
Between Sets	407.85	4	101.96	7.03	0.05	3	Significant at 0.01 level
Within Sets	12384.66	854	14.50		0.01	4.63	

Table 28 presents an f-ratio of 7.03, which surpasses the critical value of 4.63, indicating a significant difference in views on HSLC/HSSLC examinations across the various zones.

To investigate this further, the data is analysed using a t-test.

Table 29
Comparison between the Zones on Views on Personal Learning

Zone	Mean	SD	Df	Critical Value		Calculated t-value	Inference
Central	30.80	4.04	445	0.05	1.97	0.55	Not significant
North	30.59	3.51		0.01	2.59		
Central	30.80	4.04	443	0.05	1.97	0.25	Not significant
West	30.70	3.98		0.01	2.59		
Central	30.80	4.04	406	0.05	1.97	0.82	Not significant
East	31.13	3.62		0.01	2.59		
Central	30.80	4.04	436	0.05	1.97	4.78	Significant at 0.01 level
South	28.99	3.55		0.01	2.59		
North	30.59	3.51	299	0.05	1.97	0.25	Not significant
West	30.70	3.98		0.01	2.59		
North	30.59	3.51	262	0.05	1.97	1.22	Not significant
East	31.13	3.62		0.01	2.59		
North	30.59	3.51	292	0.05	1.97	3.87	Significant at 0.01 level
South	28.99	3.55		0.01	2.59		
West	30.70	3.98	265	0.05	1.97	0.93	Not significant
East	31.13	3.62		0.01	2.59		
West	30.70	3.98	295	0.05	1.97	3.90	Significant at 0.01 level
South	28.99	3.55		0.01	2.59		
East	31.13	3.62	258	0.05	1.97	4.77	Significant at 0.01 level
South	28.99	3.55		0.01	2.59		

1. Central vs. North

The calculated t-value of 0.55 is greater than the critical value of 2.59 at the 0.01 level, indicating that the difference between the Central and North zones is not significant.

2. Central vs. West

A quick examination of the data reveals that the calculated t-value of 0.25 is below the critical values of 1.97 and 2.59 at the 0.05 and 0.01 levels, respectively. This suggests that the difference between the Central and West zones is not significant.

3. Central vs. East

The calculated t-value of 0.82 is lower than the critical value of 1.97 at the 0.05 level, indicating that the difference is not significant.

4. Central vs. South

The analysis shows that the calculated t-value of 4.78 exceeds the critical value, demonstrating a significant difference in favour of the Central zone, as the mean score is higher.

5. North vs. West

The calculated t-value of 0.25 is lower than the critical value at the 0.05 level, confirming that the difference is not significant.

6. North vs. East

The data indicates that the calculated t-value of 1.22 is less than the critical value of 1.97, suggesting no significant difference between the North and East zones.

7. North vs. South

A t-value of 3.87 exceeds the critical value at the required level of significance, confirming a significant difference in favour of the North zone, which has a higher mean score.

8. West vs. East

The calculated t-value of 0.93 is below the critical value of 1.97, indicating no significant difference between the West and East zones.

9. West vs. South

A t-value of 3.90 exceeds the critical value, indicating a significant difference in favour of students from the West zone.

10. East vs. South

The calculated t-value of 4.77 is higher than the critical value at the required levels of significance, confirming that the difference is significant.

The East zone shows the highest mean score (31.13), showing a statistically significant difference when compared to Central, North, West and South. In contrast, the South zone has the lowest mean score (28.99) and is significantly lower than East. However, comparisons between Central, North and West do not show significant differences in most cases. Overall, the East zone consistently has higher scores than other zones, while the South zone is the lowest with no significant difference among the Central, North and West zones.

4.4. STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF WASHBACK EFFECT WITH RESPECT TO GENDER

To explore students' perceptions of the washback effects of School Leaving Certificate Examinations based on gender, the study analysed differences between male and female students. The findings and interpretations of these variations are presented using tables and figures.

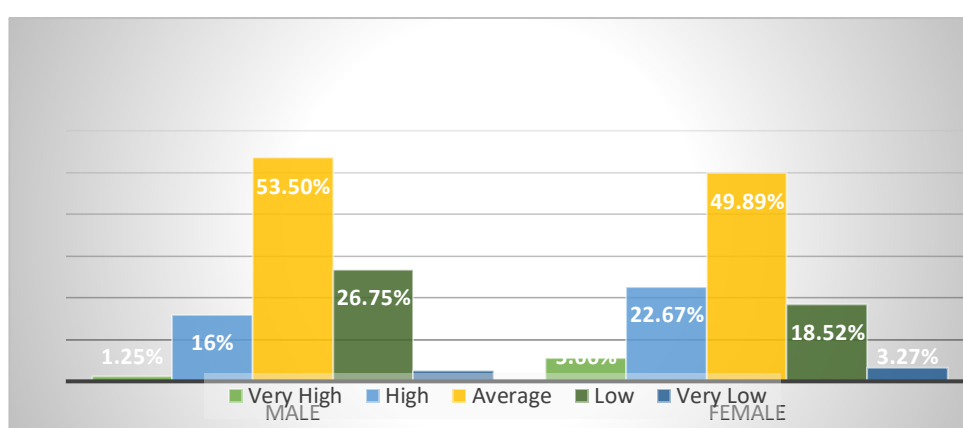
Table 30

Gender Based Analysis of Washback Effect Perception

Category	Male		Female	
Highly Positive	5	1.25%	26	5.66%
Moderately Positive	64	16%	104	22.66%
Neutral	214	53.5%	229	49.89%
Moderately Negative	107	26.75%	85	18.52%
Highly Negative	10	2.5%	15	3.27%
Total	400	100%	459	100%

Fig. 7

Gender-Based Analysis of Washback Effect Perception



Analysis of data vide Table 30 shows that 5 (1.25%) of the male students have highly positive level while 26 (5.66%) female students have highly positive level. 64 (16%) of the male and 104 (22.67%) of the female students have moderately positive perception. 214(53.50%) i.e. the majority of the male students and 229 (49.89%) of

the female are neutral in their perception. 107 (26.75%) of the male students have moderately negative perception while 85(49.89%) have moderately high perception. The remaining of the male students 10 (2.5%) and remaining female students 15 (3.27%) are found to have highly negative perception of washback effect.

The differences between male and female students were statistically tested for significance using t-test as shown below:

4.4.1. GENDER COMPARISON OF STUDENTS' PERCEPTION LEVEL OF WASHBACK EFFECT

Table 31

Overall Perception Level of Washback Effect Based on Gender

Gender	Mean	SD	Df	Critical Value		Calculated t-value	Inference
Male	100.94	8.35	857	0.05	1.96	4.2	Significant at
Female	103.46	9.33		0.01	2.58		0.01 level

A glance at Table 31 shows that the calculated t value is 4.2 which is higher than 2.58 which is the critical value of t. Therefore, the null hypothesis no.2 “There is no significant difference between the perception of male and female students on the washback effect of the School Leaving Certificate Examinations on the Teaching and Learning of English” has been rejected. It can be concluded that there is a significant difference between male and female students with female students scoring higher than their male counterparts.

4.4.2 GENDER COMPARISON OF IMPACT ON LSRW SKILLS

Table 32

Gender Comparison of Impact on LSRW Skills

Gender	Mean	SD	Df	Critical Value		Calculated t value	Inference
Male	30.87	5.07	857	0.05	1.96	3.82	Significant at
Female	32.13	4.66		0.01	2.58		0.01 level

Table 32 indicates that the calculated t-value is 3.82 which exceeds the critical t-value, making it statistically significant. Consequently, the null hypothesis 2 (a) which states, “There is no significant difference in impact on LSRW skills with respect to gender,” has been rejected. The difference is in favour of the female students.

4.4.3 GENDER COMPARISON OF VIEWS ON HSLC/HSSLC EXAMINATIONS

Table 33

Gender Comparison of Views on HSLC/HSSLC Examinations.

Gender	Mean	SD	Df	Critical Value	Calculated t value	Inference
Male	12.53	1.86	857	0.05 -1.96	0.36	Not Significant
Female	12.60	2.27		0.01-2.58		

Perusal of data vide Table 33 shows that the calculated value is 0.36, which falls below the critical value of t at the required level of significance thus making the difference insignificant. Therefore, the null hypothesis no. 2 (b) “There is no significant difference in views on HSLC/HSSLC examinations with respect to gender,” cannot be rejected.

4.4.4. GENDER COMPARISON OF VIEWS ON TEACHER’S TEACHING STRATEGIES

Table 34

Gender Comparison of Views on Teacher’s Teaching Strategies

Gender	Mean	SD	Df	Critical Value	Calculated t value	Inference
Male	27.36	3.18	857	0.05 1.96	2.82	Significant at 0.01 level
Female	27.98	3.13		0.01 2.58		

A review of Table 34 shows that the calculated t value is 2.82 which is more than the critical value. This leads to the conclusion that there is significant difference. Hence, the null hypothesis no. 2 (c) “There is no significant difference in views on Teacher’s teaching strategies with respect to gender” has been rejected.

4.4.5. GENDER COMPARISON OF VIEWS ON PERSONAL LEARNING

Table 35

Gender Comparison of Views on Personal Learning

Gender	Mean	SD	Df	Critical Value		Calculated t value	Inference
Male	30.19	3.92	857	0.05	1.96	2.15	Significant at 0.05 level but not at 0.01 level
Female	30.74	3.79		0.01	2.58		

Analysis of data vide Table 35 indicates that the calculated t-value is found to be 2.15, which is smaller than the critical value at 0.01 level but is significant at 0.05 level. Therefore, null hypothesis no.2 (d) “There is no significant difference on views on personal learning with respect to gender” cannot be rejected at 0.01 level but has been rejected 0.05 level which means that there is a significant difference between male and female students.

Focus Group Discussion

It can be seen that based on gender, in overall perception and in all the dimensions, there is a significant difference found between male and female with the difference favouring the females. Hence a discussion was held where students share their perception on the issue like:

“...girls seem to enjoy English more than boys and are generally better at it since they like to read even during holidays...”

“...English as a subject requires reading and writing, it being a tedious activity women/girls seem to take more interest in it and obviously they learn more...”

It can therefore be gathered that the participants believe female students to benefit more from learning English as they spend more time on the subject than their male counterparts.

4.5. LOCALE-BASED STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF WASHBACK EFFECT

To compare students' perceptions of the washback effects of School Leaving Certificate Examinations based on their locale, the study examined differences between urban and rural students. The analysis and conclusions drawn from these variations are presented using tables and figures.

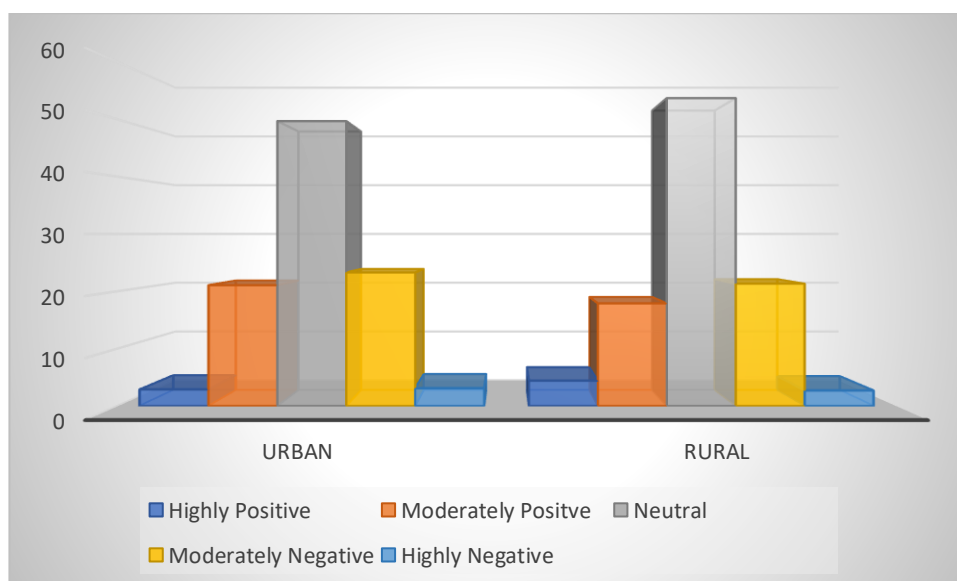
Table 36

Locale-Based Analysis of Washback Effect Perception

Categories	Urban		Rural	
Highly Positive	13	2.88%	18	4.41%
Moderately Positive	95	21.06%	73	17.89%
Neutral	224	49.67%	219	53.68%
Moderately Negative	105	23.28%	87	21.32%
Highly Negative	14	3.10%	11	2.7%
Total	451	100%	408	100%

Fig. 8

Locale-Based Analysis of Washback Effect Perception



Scrutiny of Table 36 shows that 13 (2.88%) of the male students have highly positive perception while 18 (4.41%) of the females have highly positive perception. 95 (21.06%) of the male students and 73 (17.89%) of the female students are found to have moderately positive perception. 224 (49.67%) of the male students are found to be neutral in their perception while 219 (53.68%) females are found to be in the category. 105 (23.28%) of the males and 87 (21.32%) of the female students are found to have moderately negative perception. 14 (21.32%) of the males have highly negative perception while 11 (2.7%) of the females have highly negative perception.

The differences between urban and rural students were statistically tested for significance using t-test as shown below:

4.5.1. LOCALE BASED COMPARISON OF STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF WASHBACK EFFECT

Table 37

Locale Based Comparison of Students' Perception of Washback Effect

LOCALE	Mean	SD	Df	Critical Value		Calculated t-value	Inference
Urban	102.17	8.94	857	0.05	1.96	0.40	Not
Rural	102.41	9.01		0.01	2.58		significant

Looking at Table 37, it can be seen that the calculated t value is 0.40 which is below the critical t value at the required level of significance. Hence, the difference between urban and rural students on their perception of washback effects is not significant.

Therefore, the null hypothesis no. 3, "There is no significant difference between the perception of urban and rural students on the washback effect of the School Leaving Certificate Examinations on the Teaching and Learning of English" cannot be rejected.

4.5.2. LOCALE BASED COMPARISON OF IMPACT ON LSRW SKILLS

Table 38

Locale-based Comparison of Impact on LSRW Skills.

LOCALE	Mean	SD	Df	Critical Value		Calculated t value	Inference
Urban	31.34	4.86	857	0.05	1.96	1.29	Not significant
Rural	31.77	4.93		0.01	2.58		

A brief study of Table 38 shows that 1.29 which is the calculated t value is lower than the critical t values at both 0.05 and 0.01 levels. Hence, it is not significant.

Therefore, the null hypothesis no. 3 (a), “There is no significant difference in impact on LSRW skills with respect to locale” cannot be rejected.

4.5.3. LOCALE BASED COMPARISON OF VIEWS ON HSLC/HSSLC EXAMINATIONS

Table 39

Locale-based Comparison of Views on HSLC/HSSLC Examinations

LOCALE	Mean	SD	Df	Critical Value		Calculated t value	Inference
Urban	12.54	2.30	857	0.05	1.96	0.47	Not Significant
Rural	12.60	1.83		0.01	2.58		

A thorough study of Table 39 reveals that the calculated value of t is 0.47, which falls below the critical t values at the required levels of significance and hence, considered as insignificant.

Therefore, the null hypothesis no. 3 (b), “There is no significant difference in views on HSLC/HSSLC examinations with respect to locale” cannot be rejected.

4.5.4. LOCALE-BASED COMPARISON OF VIEWS ON TEACHER’S TEACHING STRATEGIES

Table 40

Locale-based Comparison of Views on Teacher’s Teaching Strategies

LOCALE	Mean	SD	Df	Critical Value		Calculated t value	Inference
Urban	27.76	3.41	857	0.05	1.96	2.82	Significant at 0.01 level
Rural	27.61	2.89		0.01	2.58		

Table 40 shows that the calculated t value is 2.82, which is higher than 2.58 i.e. the critical value at 0.01 level. Hence this means that the difference is significant.

Therefore, the null hypothesis no. 3 (c), “There is no significant difference in views on Teacher’s teaching strategies with respect to locale” cannot be rejected.

4.5.5. COMPARISON OF VIEWS ON PERSONAL LEARNING WITH RESPECT TO LOCALE

Table 41

Locale-based Comparison of Views on Personal Learning

LOCALE	Mean	SD	Df	Critical Value		Calculated t value	Inference
Urban	30.53	3.94	857	0.05	1.96	0.36	Not significant
Rural	30.43	3.78		0.01	2.58		

A cursory glance at Table 41 reveals that the difference is not significant as the calculated t value 0.36 is lower than 1.96 which is the critical t value at 0.05 level.

Therefore, the null hypothesis no. 3 (d), “There is no significant difference in views on personal learning with respect to locale” cannot be rejected.

Focus Group Discussion

Regarding whether or not locale is a factor that affects learning of English while preparing for board examinations, participants assert their opinion on the matter

—

“...English is taught better in urban areas and they are more fluent. English is used more in classrooms compared to rural areas because some teachers tend to dwindle, because of that they are able to use it as a household language as compared to the ones in rural areas who generally cannot....”

“...Schools in urban areas have better textbooks and the teachers are stricter and more structured, whereas the teachers in rural areas can be careless...”

The participants expressed the view that a student’s locale can influence their ability to learn English. They believe that students in urban areas have greater opportunities to enhance their learning, especially while preparing for board examinations.

4.6. STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF WASHBACK EFFECT WITH RESPECT TO HOME LANGUAGE

To compare students' perceptions of the washback effects of School Leaving Certificate Examinations based on their home language, the study examined differences between students whose home language is Mizo and those with other home languages. The analysis and conclusions drawn from these variations are presented using tables and figures.

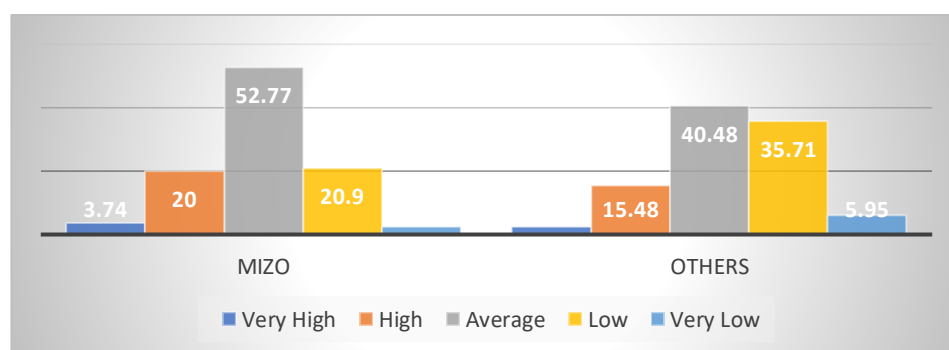
Table 42

Home Language-Based Analysis of Washback Effect Perception

Category	Mizo		Others	
Highly Positive	29	3.74%	2	2.38%
Moderately Positive	155	20%	13	15.48%
Neutral	409	52.77%	34	40.48%
Moderately Negative	162	20.9%	30	35.71%
Highly Negative	20	2.58%	5	5.95%
Total	775	100%	84	100%

Fig. 9

Home Language-Based Analysis of Washback Effect Perception



Analysis of data vide Table 42 shows that 29 (3.74%) of the students with Mizo as a home language have a highly positive level of perception while 2 (2.38%) of the students with home languages other than Mizo have highly positive level. 155 (20%) students with Mizo as a home language have moderately positive level, while

13 (15.48%) of other language users have moderately positive level. 409 (52.77%) of the students with Mizo as their home language and 34 (40.48%) who speak languages other than Mizo are found to have highly negative perceptions. The differences between students with Mizo and Others as home languages were statistically tested for significance using a t-test as shown below:

4.6.1. HOME LANGUAGE-BASED COMPARISON OF STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF WASHBACK EFFECT

Table 43

Home Language-based Students' Perception of Washback Effect

Home Language	Mean	SD	Df	Critical Value		Calculated t-value	Inference
Mizo	102.62	8.76	857	0.05	1.96	2.93	Significant
Others	99.21	10.23		0.01	2.58		at 0.01 level

Table 43 provides the data that the calculated t value 2.93 is higher than 2.58 which is the critical t value at 0.01. This thus shows that the difference is significant. Judging from the mean score, the difference is in favour of the students with Mizo as their home language.

Hence, the null hypothesis no. 4 “There is no significant difference between the perception of students whose home language is Mizo and others on the washback effect of the School Leaving Certificate Examinations on the Teaching and Learning of English” has been rejected.

4.6.2. HOME LANGUAGE BASED COMPARISON OF IMPACT ON LSRW SKILLS

Table 44

Home Language-based Comparison of the Impact on LSRW Skills.

Home Language	Mean	SD	Df	Critical Value		Calculated t-value	Inference
Mizo	31.59	4.88	857	0.05	1.96	0.86	Not significant
Others	31.10	5.08		0.01	2.58		

A careful study of Table 44 reveals that the calculated t value 0.86 is not higher than the critical values of t at both 0.05 and 0.01 level. This means that the difference is not significant.

Thus, the null hypothesis no. 4 (a) “There is no significant difference in impact on LSRW skills with respect to home language” cannot be rejected.

4.6.3. HOME LANGUAGE-BASED COMPARISON OF VIEWS ON HSLC/HSSLC EXAMINATIONS

Table 45

Home Language-based Comparison of Views on HSLC/HSSLC Examinations

Home Language	Mean	SD	Df	Critical Value		Calculated t-value	Inference
Mizo	12.60	2.11	857	0.05	1.96	1.54	Not significant
Others	12.26	1.90		0.01	2.58		

Data vide Table 45 has shown that the calculated t value i.e. 1.54 is lower than the critical values of t at the required levels of significance. Hence, the difference between Mizo and other language speaking students on their views on HSLC/HSSLC examination is not significant.

Thus, the null hypothesis no. 4 (b) “There is no significant difference in views on HSLC/HSSLC examinations with respect to home language” cannot be rejected.

4.6.4. HOME LANGUAGE-BASED COMPARISON OF VIEWS ON TEACHER’S TEACHING STRATEGIES

Table 46

Home language-based comparison of Views on Teacher’s Teaching Strategies

Home Language	Mean	SD	Df	Critical Value		Calculated t-value	Inference
Mizo	27.77	3.11	857	0.05	1.96	2.13	Significant at 0.05 but not at 0.01 level
Others	26.90	3.59		0.01	2.58		

The calculated t value as shown in Table 46 is 2.13. This value is lower than 2.58 but higher than 1.96. Therefore, the difference is significant at 0.05 level with the difference in favour of students with Mizo as their home language. Thus, the null hypothesis no. 4 (c) “There is no significant difference in views on Teacher’s teaching strategies with respect to home language” has been rejected.

4.6.5. HOME LANGUAGE-BASED COMPARISON OF VIEWS ON PERSONAL LEARNING

Table 47

Home Language-based Comparison of Views on Personal Learning

Home Language	Mean	SD	Df	Critical Value		Calculated t-value	Inference
Mizo	30.65	3.82	857	0.05	1.96	3.71	Significant at 0.01 level
Others	28.96	3.96		0.01	2.58		

Data analysis in Table 47 shows that the calculated t value is 3.71 and this value is higher than the critical value 2.58 at 0.01 level. Hence, it is significant.

Therefore, the null hypothesis no. 4 (d) “There is no significant difference in views on personal learning with respect to home language” has been rejected.

Focus Group Discussion

The participants in the focus group discussions express their feelings in the following ways -

A Mizo- speaking student asserted

“I think our teachers try their best to help us. They explain concepts well and since I can understand English explanations better because I also speak Mizo, I don’t find learning too difficult. The exam pressure is there, but the way teachers guide us is helpful.”

A non- Mizo speaking student shared –

“Since my home language is different, I find it difficult to practice with my classmates. At home, my parents don’t speak Mizo or English fluently, so I don’t get much help. This makes studying more challenging for me.”

Another non-Mizo speaking student confessed –

“For me, sometimes I feel left out because most of my classmates speak Mizo and even teachers sometimes explain in Mizo before switching to English. I have to put in extra effort to understand and that makes learning a bit harder for me.”

Adding to the discussion, a participant suggested that

“...It would be helpful if teachers gave more individual attention to students who don’t speak Mizo. Maybe if there were extra support classes, it would make learning easier for us.”

4.7. STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF WASHBACK EFFECT WITH RESPECT TO LEVEL OF EDUCATION

To compare students' perceptions of the washback effects of School Leaving Certificate Examinations based on their level of education, the study examined differences between secondary and higher secondary students. The analysis and conclusions drawn from these variations are presented using tables and figures.

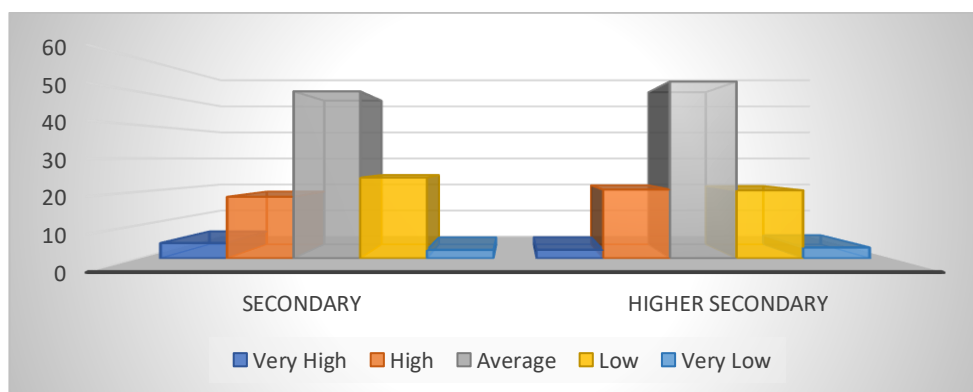
Table 48

Level of Education-Based Analysis of Washback Effect Perception

Category	Secondary		Higher Secondary	
Highly Positive	20	4.62%	11	2.58%
Moderately Positive	80	18.48%	88	20.65%
Neutral	217	50.12%	226	53.05%
Moderately Negative	105	24.25%	87	20.42%
Highly Negative	11	2.54%	14	3.29%
Total	433	100%	426	100%

Fig. 10

Level of Education-Based Analysis of Washback Effect Perception



From a careful observation of the Table 48 and Figure 10, it can be seen that there are 433 students from secondary school and 426 students from higher secondary

school. 20 (4.62%) and 11 (2.58%) of the students from secondary and higher secondary school respectively are found to have highly positive perception of washback effect. 80 (18.48%) from secondary and 88 (20.65%) students from higher secondary school are found to have moderately positive perception. The majority are found to have neutral perception i.e. 217 (50.12%) from secondary schools and 226 (53.05%) from higher secondary schools. Among those that have moderately negative perception, 105 (24.25%) are from secondary school and, 87 (20.42%) are from higher secondary school. The rest of the students i.e. 11 (2.54%) from secondary level and 14 (3.29%) from higher secondary level are found to have highly negative perception.

The differences between secondary and higher secondary students were statistically tested for significance using t-test as shown below:

4.7.1. COMPARISON OF STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF WASHBACK EFFECT WITH RESPECT TO LEVEL OF EDUCATION

Table 49

Overall perception level of Washback Effect based on Level of Education

Level of Education	Mean	SD	Df	Critical Value		Calculated t-value	Inference
Secondary School	102.06	9.13	857	0.05	1.96	0.74	Not Significant
Higher Secondary	102.51	8.81		0.01	2.58		

In Table 94, the calculated t value is shown to be 0.74 which is lower than the critical values 2.58 and 1.96 at 0.05 and 0.01 levels respectively. Hence, the difference in overall perception between secondary and higher secondary students is not significant.

Therefore, the null hypothesis no. 5 “There is no significant difference between the perception of secondary and higher secondary students on the washback effect of

the School Leaving Certificate Examinations on the Teaching and Learning of English” cannot be rejected.

4.7.2. COMPARISON OF IMPACT ON LSRW SKILLS WITH RESPECT TO LEVEL OF EDUCATION

Table 50

Level of Education-based comparison of impact on LSRW skills.

Level of Education	Mean	SD	Df	Critical Value		Calculated t-value	Inference
Secondary	31.79	4.95	857	0.05	1.96	1.48	Not significant
Higher Secondary	31.30	4.83		0.01	2.58		

As can be observed from Table 50, the calculated t-value is shown as 1.48, which is lower than the critical values at the required levels of significance. Hence, the difference is not significant.

Therefore, the null hypothesis no. 5 (a) “There is no significant difference in impact on LSRW skills with respect to level of education” cannot be rejected.

4.7.3. COMPARISON OF VIEWS ON HSLC/HSSLC EXAMINATIONS WITH RESPECT TO LEVEL OF EDUCATION

Table 51

Level of Education-based Comparison of Views on HSLC/HSSLC Examinations

Level of Education	Mean	SD	Df	Critical Value		Calculated t-value	Inference
Secondary	12.55	1.87	857	0.05	1.96	0.29	Not significant
Higher Secondary	12.59	2.30		0.01	2.58		

Table 51 reveals that the calculated t value of 0.29 is lower than the critical values at both the 0.05 and 0.01 levels. Therefore, the difference is not significant.

Hence, the null hypothesis no. 5 (b) “There is no significant difference in views on HSLC/HSSLC examinations with respect to level of education” cannot be rejected.

4.7.4. COMPARISON OF VIEWS ON TEACHER’S TEACHING STRATEGIES WITH RESPECT TO LEVEL OF EDUCATION

Table 52

Level of Education-based Comparison of Views on Teacher’s Teaching Strategies

Level of Education	Mean	SD	Df	Critical Value		Calculated t-value	Inference
Secondary	27.89	3.01	857	0.05	1.96	1.86	Not significant
Higher Secondary	27.89	3.32		0.01	2.58		

A glance at Table 52 reveals that 1.86, which is the calculated t value, is lower than the critical values 1.96 and 2.58. Hence, the difference is not significant.

Therefore, the null hypothesis no. 5 (c) which states that “There is no significant difference in views on teacher’s teaching strategies with respect to level of education” cannot be rejected.

4.7.5. COMPARISON OF VIEWS ON PERSONAL LEARNING WITH RESPECT TO LEVEL OF EDUCATION

Table 53

Level of Education-based Comparison of Views on Personal Learning

Level of Education	Mean	SD	Df	Critical Value		Calculated t-value	Inference
Secondary	30.24	3.87	857	0.05	1.96	2.04	Significant at 0.05 but not at 0.01 level
Higher Secondary	30.73	3.84		0.01	2.58		

Analysis of data vide Table 53 shows the calculated t value to be 2.04, which is higher than 1.96 but lower than 2.58. It can thus be said that the difference is significant.

Hence the null hypothesis no 5 (d) that states “There is no significant difference in views on personal learning with respect to level of education” has been rejected.

Focus Group Discussion

One participant asserted-

"...secondary school students learn English better because in higher secondary school their streams are varied and their main focus is on their own subjects and not English. Whereas in secondary school we learn the subject better because of board exams..."

Another participant said-

"...The syllabus in higher secondary is broader hence they study the English language more so I think they know more than secondary students..."

Participants shared contrasting views on English learning at different educational levels. One believed secondary school students learn English better because they focus more on the subject due to board examinations, whereas in higher secondary, students prioritize their specialized subjects. Another participant, however, argued that higher secondary students have a broader syllabus, which allows them to study English more extensively and develop a stronger understanding of the language.

4.8. STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF WASHBACK EFFECT WITH RESPECT TO TYPE OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

To compare students' perceptions of the washback effects of School Leaving Certificate Examinations based on the type of school management, the study examined differences among students from Government, Private and Ad-hoc Aided Schools. The analysis and inferences made from these variations are presented using tables and figures.

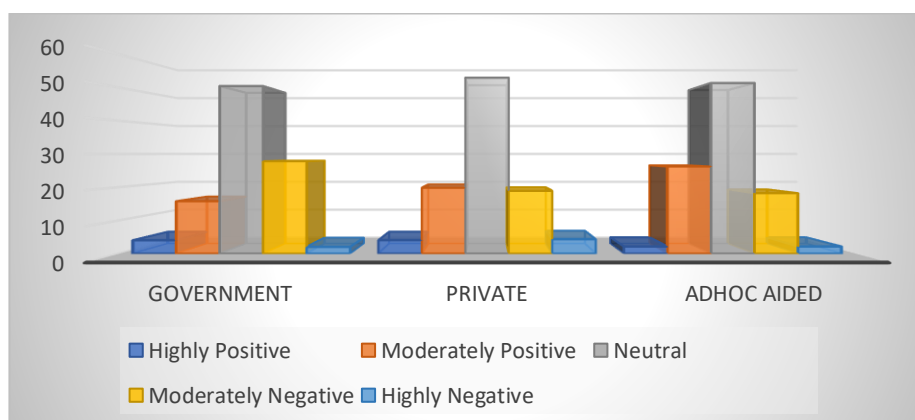
Table 54

Management -Based Analysis of Washback Effect Perception

Categories	Government		Private		Ad-hoc Aided	
Highly Positive	14	4.01%	13	4.02%	4	2.14%
Moderately Positive	55	15.76%	64	19.81%	49	26.20%
Neutral	176	50.43%	171	52.94%	96	51.34%
Moderately Negative	97	27.79%	61	18.89%	34	18.18%
Highly Negative	7	2.01%	14	4.33%	4	2.14%
TOTAL	349	100%	323	100%	187	100%

Fig. 11

Management-Based Analysis of Washback Effect Perception



The analysis of Table 54 and Figure 10 show that the majority of students held a neutral perception of the washback effect, with 50.43% from government schools, 52.94% from private schools and 51.34% from ad-hoc aided schools. A highly positive perception was observed among a small percentage of students (4.01% in government, 4.02% in private and 2.14% in ad-hoc aided schools), while moderately positive perceptions were more prevalent among ad-hoc aided students (26.20%), followed by private (19.81%) and government (15.76%) school students. Moderately negative perceptions were most common in government schools (27.79%), whereas private (18.89%) and ad-hoc aided (18.18%) schools had similar proportions. Lastly, highly negative perceptions were slightly more frequent in private schools (4.33%) compared to government (2.01%) and ad-hoc aided (2.14%) schools.

The differences between Government, Private and Ad-hoc Aided School students were statistically tested for significance using ANOVA as shown below:

4.8.1. MANAGEMENT BASED COMPARISON OF STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF WASHBACK EFFECT

Table 55

Management-based Comparison of Students' Perception of Washback Effect

Source of variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square Variance	F ratio	Critical Values		Inference
Between Sets	445.37	2	222.68	2.78	0.05	3	Not Significant
Within sets	68576.89	856	80.11		0.01	4.63	

From Table 55, it can be seen that the calculated f ratio is 2.78, which is lower than the critical values 3 and 4.63 at 0.05 and 0.01 levels respectively. Hence the difference is found to be insignificant.

Therefore, the null hypothesis no. 6 “There is no significant difference between the students based on type of school management on the washback effect of the School

Leaving Certificate Examinations on the Teaching and Learning of English” cannot be rejected.

4.8.2. MANAGEMENT BASED COMPARISON OF IMPACT ON LSRW SKILLS

Table 56

Management-based Comparison of Impact on LSRW Skills

Source of variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square Variance	F ratio	Critical Values		Inference
Between Sets	6.13	2	3.06	0.70	0.05	3	Not significant
Within sets	68576.89	856	80.11		0.01	4.63	

A brief observation of Table 56 shows that the calculated f ratio is 0.70, which falls below the critical values at the required levels of significance. Hence, the difference is not significant.

Therefore, the null hypothesis no. 6 (a) “There is no significant difference in impact on LSRW skills with respect to type of school management” cannot be rejected.

4.8.2. MANAGEMENT BASED COMPARISON OF VIEWS ON HSLC/HSSLC EXAMINATIONS

Table 57

Management-based Comparison of Views on HSLC/HSSLC Examinations

Source of variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square Variance	F ratio	Critical Values		Inference
Between Sets	6.13	2	3.06	0.70	0.05	3	Not Significant
Within sets	3736.64	856	4.37		0.01	4.63	

Examination of Table 57 shows that the f ratio is 0.70, which is lower than 3 at 0.05 level and 4.63 at 0.01 level. This means that the difference is not significant. Hence, the null hypothesis no. 6 (b) “There is no significant difference in views on HSLC/HSSLC examinations with respect to type of school management” cannot be rejected.

4.8.3. MANAGEMENT BASED COMPARISON OF VIEWS ON TEACHER’S TEACHING STRATEGIES

Table 58

Management Based Comparison of Views on Teacher’s Teaching Strategies

Source of variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square Variance	F ratio	Critical Values		Inference
Between Sets	400.40	2	200.20	20.83	0.05	3	Significant at 0.01 level
Within sets	8225.99	856	9.61		0.01	4.63	

Table 58 shows that the calculated value of f is 20.83, which is greater than the table value of f i.e. 4.63. Therefore, we agree that there is a significant difference among the students with different types of school management. Hence, the null hypothesis no. 6 (c) “There is no significant difference in views on Teacher’s teaching strategies with respect to the type of school management” has been rejected.

To further investigate, the hypothesis is tested using a t-test.

4.8.3.1 COMPARISON OF GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS BASED ON THEIR VIEWS ON TEACHER'S TEACHING STRATEGIES

Table 59

Comparison of Views on Teacher's Teaching Strategies between Government and Private Schools.

Type of Management	Mean	SD	Df	Critical Value		Calculated t-value	Inference
Government	27.92	2.94	670	0.05	1.96	4.30	Significant at 0.01 level
Private	26.88	3.28		0.01	2.58		

Looking at Table 59, the calculated t value is 4.30, which is higher than the critical value 2.58 at 0.01 level. Hence, the difference between Government and Private school students in their Views on Teacher's teaching strategies is significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis no 6 (c) i. that states "There is no significant difference in Teacher's teaching strategies between government and private school students" has been rejected.

4.8.3.2 COMPARISON OF GOVERNMENT AND ADHOC AIDED SCHOOLS BASED ON THEIR VIEWS ON TEACHER'S TEACHING STRATEGIES

Table 60

Comparison of Views on Teacher's Teaching Strategies between Government and Ad-hoc Aided Schools.

Type of Management	Mean	SD	Df	Critical Value		Calculated t-value	Inference
Government	27.92	2.94	534	0.05	1.96	2.65	Significant at 0.01 level
Ad-hoc Aided	28.65	3.07		0.01	2.59		

Perusal of data from Table 60 shows the calculated t-value to be 2.65. This value is found to be higher than the critical value at 0.01 level and hence, the difference is significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis no. 6 (c) ii that states "There is no

significant difference in teacher's teaching strategies between government and ad-hoc aided school students" has been rejected.

4.8.3.3 COMPARISON OF PRIVATE AND ADHOC AIDED SCHOOLS BASED ON THEIR VIEWS ON TEACHER'S TEACHING STRATEGIES

Table 61

Comparison of Views on Teacher's Teaching Strategies between Private and Ad-hoc Aided Schools.

Type of Management	Mean	SD	Df	Critical Value		Calculated t-value	Inference
Private	26.88	3.28	510	0.05	1.96	6.10	Significant at 0.01 level
Ad-hoc Aided	28.65	3.07		0.01	2.59		

A close look at the Table 61 provides the information that the calculated t value of 6.10 is higher than the critical values of 1.96 and 2.59 at 0.05 and 0.01 levels. Hence, this infers that the difference is found to be significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis no. 6 (c) iii that states "There is no significant difference in Teacher's teaching strategies between private and ad-hoc school students" has been rejected.

4.8.4 MANAGEMENT BASED COMPARISON OF VIEWS ON PERSONAL LEARNING

Table 62

Management Based Comparison of Views on Personal Learning

Source of variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square Variance	F ratio	Critical Values		Inference
Between Sets	454.51	2	227.26	15.77	0.05	3	Significant at 0.01 level
Within sets	12337.99	856	14.41		0.01	4.63	

Table 62 shows that the calculated value of f is 15.77 which is greater than the table value of f i.e. 4.63. Therefore, we agree that there is a significant difference between students on their views on personal learning based on types of school management. Therefore, the null hypothesis 6 (d) “There is no significant difference in views on personal learning with respect to type of school management” has been rejected.

To further investigate, the hypothesis is tested using a t -test.

4.8.4.1 COMPARISON OF GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS BASED ON THEIR VIEWS ON PERSONAL LEARNING

Table 63

Comparison of Views on Personal Learning between Government and Private Schools.

Type of Management	Mean	SD	Df	Critical Value		Calculated t-value	Inference
Government	29.72	3.83	638	0.05	1.96	3.12	Significant at 0.01 level
Private	30.65	3.90		0.01	2.59		

Studying Table 63, it can be seen that the calculated t value is 3.12 which is higher than the critical value 2.59 at 0.01 level. This infers that the difference is significant and also judging from the mean score, the difference is in favour of students from private schools. Thus, the null hypothesis no. 6 (d) i “There is no significant difference in views on personal learning between government and private school students” has been rejected.

4.8.4.2 COMPARISON OF GOVERNMENT AND ADHOC AIDED SCHOOLS BASED ON THEIR VIEWS ON PERSONAL LEARNING

Table 64

Comparison of Views on Personal Learning between Government and Ad-hoc aided Schools.

Type of Management	Mean	SD	Df	Critical Value		Calculated t-value	Inference
Government	29.72	3.83	319	0.05	1.96		Significant at
Ad-hoc Aided	31.62	3.54		0.01	2.59	5.76	0.01 level

A cursory glance at Table 64 shows that the calculated t value is 5.76. This value is above the critical values 1.96 and 2.59 at 0.05 and 0.01 levels. Hence, the difference is significant.

Therefore, the null hypothesis no. 6 (d) ii “There is no significant difference in views on personal learning between government and ad-hoc aided school students” has been rejected.

4.8.4.3 COMPARISON OF PRIVATE AND ADHOC AIDED SCHOOLS BASED ON THEIR VIEWS ON TEACHER’S TEACHING STRATEGIES

Table 65

Comparison of Views on Personal Learning between Private and Ad-hoc aided Schools

Type of Management	Mean	SD	Df	Critical Value		Calculate d t-value	Inference
Private	30.65	3.90	755	0.05	1.96		Significant at
Ad-hoc Aided	31.62	3.54		0.01	2.59	2.87	0.01 level

Examining Table 65, the calculated t value is shown to be 2.87 while the critical values are 1.96 at 0.05 level and 2.59 at 0.01 level. This leads to the inference that the difference between the two variables is significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis no.6 (d) iii that states “There is no significant difference in views on personal learning between private and ad-hoc school students” has been rejected.

Focus Group Discussion

On whether being Government, Private or Ad-hoc aided managed schools has any effect on the teaching and learning process of the English subject, the participants express their views. A participant from Government school asserted –

“I think our teachers try their best with the resources they have. They give us clear explanations and try to support us, even though our school may not have as many facilities as private schools.”

A participant from private school confessed -

“In private schools, the focus is often on finishing the syllabus quickly, so sometimes teachers don’t have enough time to explain things in detail. It feels like we are being rushed to complete the course rather than truly understanding the subject.” and proceeded to make a suggestion-

“...Private schools should focus more on understanding rather than just covering the syllabus quickly.”

Another participant from adhoc aided school added that -

“Our teachers take time to explain concepts and make sure we understand before moving on. They are supportive and encourage us to ask questions, which really helps in learning better.”

4.9 STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF WASHBACK EFFECT WITH RESPECT TO THEIR FATHER'S EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION

To compare students' perceptions of the washback effects of School Leaving Certificate Examinations based on their father's educational qualifications, the study examined differences among students whose fathers had educational levels of Below Matric, Matric to Graduate and Master's and above. The analysis and inferences made from these variations are presented using tables and figures.

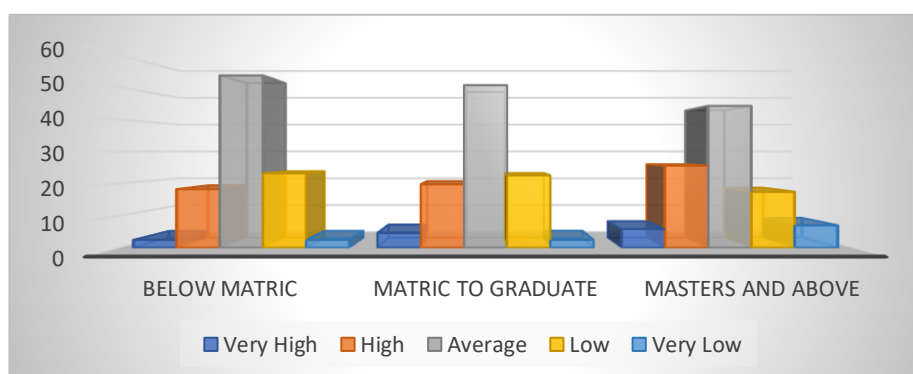
Table 66

Analysis of Washback Effect Perception based on Father's Educational Qualification

Category	Below Matric		Matric to Graduate		Masters and above	
Highly Positive	11	2.45	15	4.63	5	5.81
Moderately Positive	82	18.26	64	19.75	22	25.58
Neutral	241	53.67	164	50.62	38	44.19
Moderately Negative	104	23.16	73	22.53	15	17.44
Highly Negative	11	2.45	8	2.47	6	6.98
TOTAL	449	100%	324	100%	86	100%

Fig.12

Analysis of Washback Effect Perception based on Father's Educational Qualification



A close observation of the data in Table 66 and Figure 12 shows that out of 449 students have fathers whose educational qualification is below matric, 324 students whose fathers' qualification is matric to graduate and 86 students whose fathers have an educational degree of masters and above.

Among these students, 11 (2.45%) students whose fathers are non-matriculantes, 15 (4.63%) whose fathers are matric to graduates and 5 (5.81%) students whose fathers are masters and above are found to have highly positive perception of washback effect. Among those that are found to have moderately positive perception, 82 (18.26%) are of fathers who are non matriculantes, 64 (19.75%) students are of fathers who are matric to graduates and, 22 (25.58%) students are of fathers who are masters and above. Among those that are found to be neutral in their perception, 241 (53.67%) students are of non-matriculate fathers, 164 (50.62%) students are of fathers with matric to graduate and 38 (25.58%) students are of fathers with a degree of masters and above. 104 (23.16%) students whose fathers are non- matriculate, 73 (22.53%) students whose fathers are matric to graduates and 15 (17.44%) students whose father's educational qualifications are masters and above are found to have moderately negative perception.

And lastly, among those students that have a highly negative perception, 11 (2.45%) are those with fathers who are non-matriculantes, 8 (2.47%) have fathers who have matric to graduate qualification and 6 (6.98%) of them are with fathers whose qualifications are masters and above.

4.9.1 COMPARISON OF STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF WASHBACK EFFECT WITH RESPECT TO THEIR FATHER'S EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION

Table 67

Comparison of Students' Perception of Washback Effect - based on Father's Educational Qualification

Source of variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square Variance	F-ratio	F Critical Values		Inference
Between Sets	25.56	2	12.78	0.16	0.05	3	Not Significant
Within Sets	68996.69	856	80.60		0.01	4.63	

Analysis of data vide Table 67 shows that the f ratio i.e. 0.16 is lower in comparison to the critical values 3 and 4.63 at 0.05 and 0.01 level. Hence, the difference is not significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis no.7 that states "There is no significant difference between the students based on their father's educational qualification on the washback effect of the School Leaving Certificate Examinations on the Teaching and Learning of English" cannot be rejected.

4.9.2 COMPARISON OF STUDENTS' PERCEPTION ON IMPACT ON LSRW SKILLS WITH RESPECT TO FATHER'S EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION

Table 68

Comparison of Students' Perception on Impact on LSRW Skills based on Father's Educational Qualification

Source of variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square Variance	F ratio	F Critical Values		Inference
Between Sets	70.40	2	35.20	1.47	0.05	3	Not Significant
Within Sets	20490.71	856	23.94		0.01	4.63	

Scrutiny of Table 68 shows that the calculated f ratio is 1.47 while the critical f values are 3 and 4.63. Hence, the difference between the variables is found to be insignificant.

Thus, the null hypothesis no.7(a) that states “There is no significant difference in impact on LSRW skills with respect to their father’s educational qualification” cannot be rejected.

4.9.3 COMPARISON OF STUDENTS’ VIEWS ON HSLC/HSSLC EXAMINATIONS WITH RESPECT TO FATHER’S EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION

Table 69

Comparison of Students’ Views on HSLC/HSSLC Examinations based on Father’s Educational Qualification

Source of variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square Variance	F ratio	F Critical Values		Inference
Between Sets	6.70	2	3.35	0.77	0.05	3	Not Significant
Within Sets	3736.07	856	4.36		0.01	4.63	

The examination of Table 69 reveals that 0.77 is the calculated f value which is lower than the critical f values at 0.05 and 0.01 levels. Therefore, the difference is not significant.

Hence, the null hypothesis no 7 (b) that states “There is no significant difference in views on HSLC/HSSLC examinations with respect to their father’s educational qualification” cannot be rejected.

4.9.4 COMPARISON OF STUDENTS' VIEWS ON TEACHER'S TEACHING STRATEGIES WITH RESPECT TO FATHER'S EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION

Table 70

Comparison of Students' Views on Teacher's Teaching Strategies based on Father's Educational Qualification

Source of variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square Variance	F ratio	F Critical Values		Inference
Between Sets	36.36	2	18.18	1.81	0.05	3	Not Significant
Within Sets	8590.02	856	10.04		0.01	4.63	

Observation of the Table 70 shows the calculated f ratio to be 1.81, which in comparison to the critical values at the required level of significance proves to be lower. Therefore, the difference is not significant.

Thus, the null hypothesis 7 (c) that states "There is no significant difference in views on teacher's teaching strategies with respect to their father's educational qualification" has been rejected.

4.9.5 COMPARISON OF STUDENTS' VIEWS ON PERSONAL LEARNING WITH RESPECT TO FATHER'S EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION

Table 71

Comparison of Students' Views on Personal Learning based on Father's Educational Qualification

Source of variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square Variance	F ratio	F Values	Critical Values	Inference
Between Sets	82.15	2	41.07	2.75	0.05	3	Not Significant
Within Sets	12792.51	856	14.94		0.01	4.63	

Table 71 shows that the calculated f ratio to be 2.75 which is lower than the critical values at 0.05 and 0.01 level. Hence, the difference is not significant.

Thus, the null hypothesis 7 (d) that states “There is no significant difference in views on personal learning with respect to their father’s educational qualification” has been rejected.

Focus Group Discussion

When asked to discuss about the impact of father’s educational qualification on their child’s learning of English before board examinations, the participants expressed their opinions as such –

“...Fathers are usually bread earners so they are not at home most of the times so they do not take charge of their children’s learning so I do not think it matters...”

“I don’t think my father’s education makes a big difference in how I prepare. He always encourages me to study, but since he didn’t complete school, he can’t help much with my subjects.”

“My father helps me when I need guidance, but mostly I follow what teachers say and revise on my own.”

The participants suggested that –

“Extra classes for students who struggle with subjects would be helpful, especially for those who don’t get much support at home.”

4.10. STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF WASHBACK EFFECT WITH RESPECT TO THEIR MOTHER'S EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION

To compare students' perceptions of the washback effects of School Leaving Certificate Examinations based on their mother's educational qualifications, the study examined differences among students whose mothers had educational levels of Below Matric, Matric to Graduate and Master's and above. The analysis and conclusions drawn from these variations are presented using tables and figures:

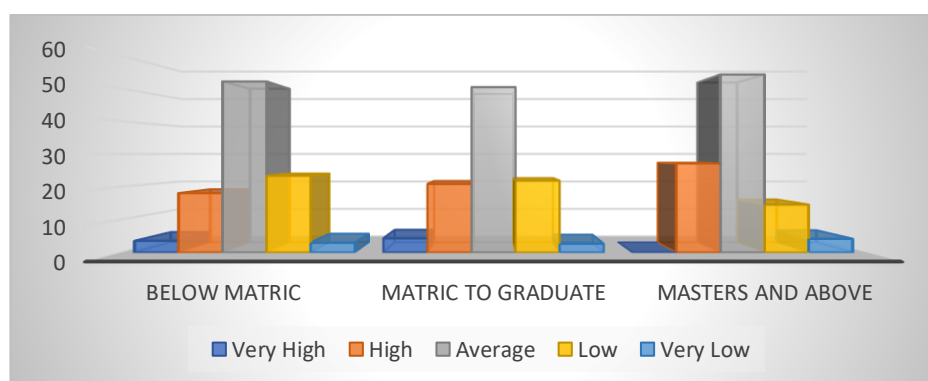
Table 72

Analysis of Students' Perception of Washback Effect - based on Mother's Educational Qualification

Categories	Below Matric		Matric to Graduate		Masters and above	
Highly Positive	18	3.54	13	4.3	0	0
Moderately Positive	92	18.07	63	20.86	13	27.08
Neutral	265	52.06	152	50.33	26	54.17
Moderately Negative	119	23.38	66	21.85	7	14.58
Highly Negative	15	2.95	8	2.65	2	4.17
TOTAL	509	100	302	100	48	100

Fig.13

Mother's Educational Qualification-Based Analysis of Washback Effect Perception



A close observation of the data in Table 72 and Figure 13 shows that out of 859 student-respondents, 509 students have mothers whose educational qualification is below matric, 302 students whose mothers' qualification is matric to graduate and 48 students whose mothers have an educational degree of masters and above.

Among these students, 13 (3.54%) students whose mothers are non-matriculates, 13 (4.3%) whose mothers are matric to graduates and none of the students whose mothers are masters and above are found to have highly positive perception of washback effect. Among those that are found to have moderately positive perception, 92 (18.07%) are of mothers who are non matriculates, 63 (20.86%) students are of mothers who are matric to graduates and, 13 (27.08%) students are of mothers who are masters and above. Among those that are found to be neutral in their perception, 265 (52.067%) students are of non-matriculate mothers, 152 (50.33%) students are of mothers with matric to graduate and 26 (54.17%) students are of mothers with a degree of masters and above. 119 (23.38%) students whose mothers are non- matriculate, 66 (21.85%) students whose mothers are matric to graduates and 7 (14.58%) students whose mother's educational qualifications are masters and above are found to have moderately negative perception. And lastly, among those students that have a highly negative perception, 15 (2.95%) are those with mothers who are non-matriculates, 8 (2.65%) have fathers who have matric to graduate qualification and 2 (4.17%) of them are with mothers whose qualifications are masters and above.

4.10.1. COMPARISON OF STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF WASHBACK EFFECT WITH RESPECT TO THEIR MOTHER'S EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION

This section explores how students' perceptions of the washback effect vary in relation to their mother's level of educational qualification.

Table 73
Comparison of Students' Perception of Washback Effect - based on Mother's Educational Qualification

Source of variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square Variance	F ratio	F Critical Values		Inference
Between Sets	177.93	2	88.97	0.87	0.05	3	Not Significant
Within Sets	87683.07	856	102.43		0.01	4.63	

Analysis of data vide Table 73 shows that the f ratio i.e. 0.87 is lower in comparison to the critical values 3 and 4.63 at 0.05 and 0.01 level. Hence, the difference is not significant.

Thus, null hypothesis no. 8 “There is no significant difference between the students based on their mother’s educational qualification on the washback effect of the School Leaving Certificate Examinations on the Teaching and Learning of English” cannot be rejected.

4.10.2 COMPARISON OF STUDENTS' PERCEPTION ON IMPACT ON LSRW SKILLS WITH RESPECT TO MOTHER'S EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION

Table 74
Comparison of Students' Perception on Impact on LSRW Skills based on Mother's Educational Qualification

Source of variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square Variance	F ratio	F Critical Values		Inference
Between Sets	2.30	2	1.15	0.05	0.05	3	Not Significant
Within Sets	20558.81	856	24.02		0.01	4.63	

Scrutiny of Table 74 shows that the calculated f ratio is 0.05 while the critical f values are 3 and 4.63. Hence, the difference between the variables is found to be insignificant.

Therefore, the null hypothesis no.8 (a) “There is no significant difference in impact on LSRW skills with respect to their mother’s educational qualification” cannot be rejected.

4.10.3 COMPARISON OF STUDENTS’ PERCEPTION ON VIEWS ON HSLC/HSSLC EXAMINATIONS WITH RESPECT TO MOTHER’S EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION

Table 75

Comparison of Students’ Perception on Views on HSLC/HSSLC Examinations based on Mother’s Educational Qualification

Source of variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square Variance	F ratio	F Critical Values		Inference
Between Sets	1.12	2	0.56	0.13	0.05	3	Not Significant
Within Sets	3741.65	856	4.37		0.01	4.63	

The examination of Table 75 reveals that 0.13 is the calculated f value which is lower than the critical f values at 0.05 and 0.01 levels. Therefore, the difference is insignificant. Hence, the null hypothesis no 8 (b) that states “There is no significant difference in views on HSLC/HSSLC examinations with respect to their mother’s educational qualification” cannot be rejected.

4.10.4 COMPARISON OF STUDENTS' PERCEPTION ON VIEWS ON TEACHER'S TEACHING STRATEGIES WITH RESPECT TO MOTHER'S EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION

Table 76

Comparison of Students' Perception on Views on Teacher's Teaching Strategies based on Mother's Educational Qualification

Source of variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square Variance	F ratio	F Critical Values		Inference
Between Sets	24.61	2	12.30	1.22	0.05	3	Not Significant
Within Sets	8601.78	856	10.05		0.01	4.63	

Observation of Table 76 shows the calculated f ratio to be 1.22, which in comparison to the critical values at the required level of significance proves to be lower. Therefore, the difference is not significant.

Hence, the null hypothesis no 8 (c) that states "There is no significant difference in views on teacher's teaching strategies with respect to their mother's educational qualification" cannot be rejected.

4.10.5 COMPARISON OF STUDENTS' PERCEPTION ON VIEWS ON PERSONAL LEARNING WITH RESPECT TO MOTHER'S EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION

Table 77

Comparison of Students' Perception on Views on Personal Learning based on Mother's Educational Qualification

Source of variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square Variance	F ratio	F Critical Values		Inference
Between Sets	242.64	2	121.32	8.27	0.05	3	Significant at 0.01 level
Within Sets	12549.87	856	14.66		0.01	4.63	

Table 77 shows that the calculated value of f is 8.27 which is greater than the table value of f i.e. 4.63. Therefore, we agree that there is a significant difference between students based on their mother's educational qualification.

Hence, the null hypothesis no 8 (d) that states "There is no significant difference in views on personal learning with respect to their mother's educational qualification" cannot be rejected.

To further investigate, the hypothesis is tested using a t -test.

4.10.5.1 COMPARISON OF STUDENTS WITH MOTHERS BELOW MATRIC AND GRADUATES BASED ON THEIR VIEWS ON PERSONAL LEARNING

Table 78

Comparison of Students whose Mothers are Below Matric and Matric to Graduate Based on their Views on Personal Learning.

Mother's educational qualification	Mean	SD	Df	Critical Value		Calculated t-value	Inference
Below matric	30.04	3.84	811	0.05	1.96	3.81	Significant at 0.01 level
Matric to graduate	31.10	3.81		0.01	2.58		

Table 78 shows the calculated t value to be 3.82 which is higher than the critical t values at the required level of significance. Hence, the difference is significant and the difference is in favour of students whose mother's educational qualification is matric to graduate.

Therefore, the null hypothesis no.8 (d) i "There is no significant difference in views on personal learning between students with mothers who are below matric and matric to graduates" has been rejected.

4.10.5.2 COMPARISON OF STUDENTS WITH MOTHERS BELOW MATRIC AND MASTERS AND ABOVE BASED ON THEIR VIEWS ON PERSONAL LEARNING

Table 79

Comparison of Students whose mothers are Below Matric and Masters and Above Based on their Views on Personal Learning.

Mother's educational qualification	Mean	SD	Df	Critical Value		Calculated t-value	Interpretation
Below matric	30.04	3.84	557	0.05	1.96	0.84	Not significant
Masters and above	31.25	3.78		0.01	2.59		

Keen observation of Table 79 shows that the calculated t value is 0.84, which falls below the critical values 1.96 and 2.59 at both 0.05 and 0.01 levels respectively. Hence, the difference is not significant.

Therefore, the null hypothesis no.8 (d) ii “There is no significant difference in views on personal learning between students with mothers who are below matric and masters and above” cannot be rejected.

4.10.5.3 COMPARISON OF STUDENTS WHOSE MOTHERS ARE MATRIC TO GRADUATE AND MASTERS AND ABOVE BASED ON THEIR VIEWS ON PERSONAL LEARNING

Table 80

Comparison of Students whose mothers are Below Matric to Graduate and Masters and Above Based on Their Views on Personal Learning.

Mother's Educational Qualification	Mean	SD	Df	Critical Value		Calculated t-value	Interpretation
Matric to graduate	31.10	3.81	350	0.05	1.97	0.25	Not significant
Masters and above	31.25	3.78		0.01	2.59		

Careful study of Table 80 reveals that the calculated value of t is 0.25, which is lower than 1.97 and 2.59 which are the critical t values at 0.05 and 0.01 level respectively. Hence, it can be said that the difference is not significant.

Therefore, the null hypothesis no.8 (d) iii “There is no significant difference in views on personal learning between students with mothers who are matric to graduates and masters and above” cannot be rejected.

Focus Group Discussion

When discussing the influence of a mother's educational qualification on a child's English learning before board examinations, participants shared varied perspectives-

“...Fathers are usually bread earners so they are not at home most of the times so they do not take charge of their children’s learning so I do not think it matters, but mother usually stay at home and help their kids in their studies so, that matters...”

“...as my mother has a Ph.D in English, it makes me want to get letter marks in English, so I think it’s clear that mother’s degree can have influence...”

“... at this level, we don’t receive much help from parents, mother or father, so no, it does not have any influence...”

Participants had mixed views on the impact of parents’ education on learning English. Some felt fathers are less involved, while mothers are more likely to help with studies. One participant said their mother’s Ph.D. in English inspired them to do well. However, others felt that by this stage, students are mostly independent and do not receive much help from their parents.

4.11 STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF WASHBACK EFFECT WITH RESPECT TO THEIR ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

To compare students' perceptions of the washback effects of School Leaving Certificate Examinations based on their academic achievement, the study examined differences among Low, Average and High Achievers. The analysis and conclusions drawn from these variations are presented using tables and figures.

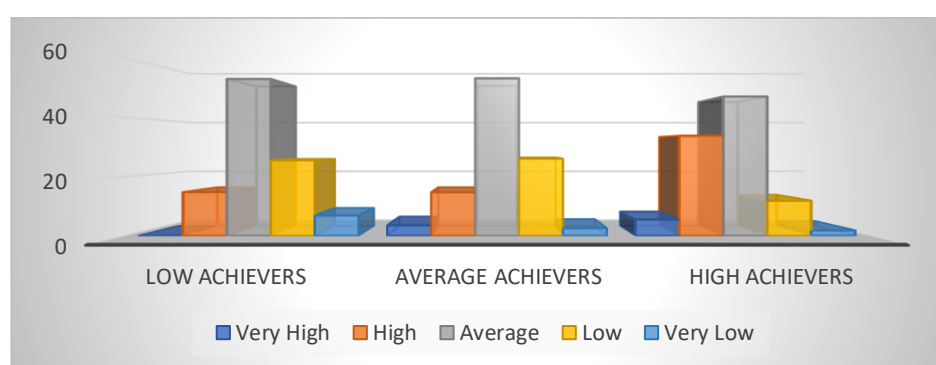
Table 81

Academic Achievement -Based Analysis of Washback Effect Perception

Categories	Low Achievers		Average Achievers		High Achievers	
Highly Positive	0	0	19	3.53	12	5.48
Moderately Positive	15	14.71	79	14.68	74	33.79
Neutral	54	52.94	286	53.16	103	47.03
Moderately Negative	26	25.49	140	26.02	26	11.87
Highly Negative	7	6.86	14	2.6	4	1.83
TOTAL	102	100%	538	100%	219	100%

Fig. 14

Academic Achievement-Based Analysis of Washback Effect Perception



A keen observation of Table 81 and Figure 14 has shown that out of the 859 respondents, 102 are low achievers, 538 are average achievers and 219 are high achievers.

Among those students that have a highly positive perception, 19 (3.53%) are average achievers, 12 (5.48%) are high achievers and none of the low achievers are

found to have a highly positive perception of washback effect. Among those students with a moderately positive perception, 15 (14.71%) are low achievers, 79 (14.68%) are average achievers and 74 (33.79%) are high achievers. Among the students who are found to be neutral in their perception, 54 (52.94%) are low achievers, 286 (53.16%) are average achievers and 103 (47.03%) are high achievers. From the students that are found to be moderately negative in their perception, 26 (25.49%) are low achievers, 140 (26.02%) are average achievers and 26 (11.87%) are high achievers. And in the last category i.e. highly negative perception, 7 (6.86%) are low achievers, 14 (2.6%) are average achievers and 4 (1.83%) are high achievers.

The differences between low achievers, average achievers and high achievers were statistically tested for significance using ANOVA as shown below:

4.11.1 COMPARISON OF STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF WASHBACK EFFECT WITH RESPECT TO THEIR ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Table 82

Comparison of Overall Perception of Washback Effect - based on Academic Achievement

Source of variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square Variance	F-ratio	F Critical Values		Inference
Between Sets	3290.56	2	1645.28	21.43	0.05	3	Significant at 0.01 level
Within Sets	65731.7	856	76.79		0.01	4.63	

From a close look Table 82, it can be seen that the calculated f ratio is 21.43, which is above the f critical values 3 and 4.63 at 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance. It can therefore be said that there is a significant difference on their overall perception between students based on their academic achievement. Hence, the null hypothesis no 9 that states that "There is no significant difference between the students based on their academic achievement on the washback effect of the School

Leaving Certificate Examinations on the Teaching and Learning of English” has been rejected.

To further investigate, the hypothesis is tested using a t-test.

4.11.1.1 COMPARISON OF LOW AND AVERAGE ACHIEVERS BASED ON THEIR PERCEPTION OF WASHBACK EFFECT

Table 83

Comparison of Perceptions of Low and Average Achievers

Achievement Level	Mean	SD	Df	Critical Value		Calculated t-value	Inference
Low Achiever	100.06	8.72	638	0.05	1.96	1.48	Not significant
Average Achiever	101.37	8.80		0.01	2.59		

As can be seen in Table 83, the calculated t value is 1.48 which is low in comparison to the critical values 1.96 at 0.05 level and 2.59 at 0.01 level. Hence, the difference is found to be insignificant. Therefore, the null hypothesis no. 9 (i) “There is no significant difference between low and average achievers based on their academic achievement” cannot be rejected.

4.11.1.2 COMPARISON OF LOW AND HIGH ACHIEVERS BASED ON THEIR PERCEPTION OF WASHBACK EFFECT

Table 84

Comparison of Perception of Low and High Achievers

Achievement Level	Mean	SD	Df	Critical Value		Calculated t-value	Interpretation
Low Achievers	100.06	8.72	319	0.05	1.96	5.28	Significant at 0.01 level
High Achievers	105.55	8.68		0.01	2.59		

Looking at the Table 84, it is seen that the calculated t value is 5.28, which is above the critical value of t 2.59 at 0.01 level. Hence it can be concluded that the difference here is significant and the difference is in favour of the High achievers as their mean score is higher. Thus, the null hypothesis no. 9 (ii) “There is no significant difference between low and high achievers based on their academic achievement”

4.11.1.3 COMPARISON OF AVERAGE AND HIGH ACHIEVERS BASED ON THEIR PERCEPTION OF WASHBACK EFFECT

Table 85

Comparison of Perception between Average and High Achievers

Achievement Level	Mean	SD	Df	Critical Value		Calculated t-value	Interpretation
Average Achievers	101.37	8.80	755	0.05	1.96	8.56	Significant at 0.01 level
High Achievers	105.55	8.68		0.01	2.59		

From a careful examination of Table 85, it can be seen that the calculated t value is 8.56, which is higher than 2.59 at 0.01 level. It is therefore conclusive that the difference is significant. The difference is in favour of the high achievers.

Thus, the null hypothesis no 9 (iii) “There is no significant difference between average and high achievers based on their academic achievement” has been rejected.

4.11.2 COMPARISON OF IMPACT OF LSRW SKILLS WITH RESPECT TO ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Table 86

Comparison of Impact of LSRW Skills based on Academic Achievement

Source of variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square Variance	F-ratio	F Critical Values		Inference
Between Sets	171.05	2	85.53	3.59	0.05	3	Significant at 0.05 level but not 0.01
Within Sets	20390.06	856	23.82		0.01	4.63	

From a close look at Table 86, it can be seen that the calculated f ratio is 3.59, which is above the f critical values 3 at 0.05 but below 4.63 at 0.01 levels of significance. It can therefore be said that there is a significant difference on impact of LSRW skills between students based on their academic achievement. Therefore, the null hypothesis no 9 (a) “There is no significant difference in impact on LSRW skills with respect to their academic achievement” has been rejected.

To further investigate, the hypothesis is tested using a t-test.

4.11.2.1 COMPARISON OF LOW AND AVERAGE ACHIEVERS ON IMPACT ON LSRW SKILLS

Table 87

Comparison between Low and Average Achievers on Impact on LSRW Skills

Achievement Level	Mean	SD	Df	Critical Value		Calculated t-value	Interpretation
Low Achiever	30.68	5.15	638	0.05	1.96	1.40	Not significant
Average Achiever	31.45	4.81		0.01	2.59		

A brief look at the Table 87 shows that the calculated t value 1.40 is below the critical values at both 0.05 and 0.01 levels. Thus, this infers that the difference between Low and Average achievers is not significant.

Therefore, the null hypothesis no 9 (a) i that states “There is no significant difference in impact on LSRW skills between low and average achievers” cannot be rejected.

4.11.2.2 COMPARISON OF LOW AND HIGH ACHIEVER ON LSRW SKILLS

Table 88

Comparison between Low and High Achievers on LSRW Skills

Achievement Level	Mean	SD	Df	Critical Value		Calculated t-value	Interpretation
Low Achiever	30.68	5.15	319	0.05	1.97	2.48	Significant at 0.05 level but not 0.01
High Achiever	32.18	4.91		0.01	2.59		

From a close observation of Table 88, it can be seen that the calculated t value i.e. 2.48 is higher than the critical value of t at 0.05 level i.e. 1.97. However, it is lower than the critical value at 0.01 i.e. 2.59. Hence, this infers that the difference between Low and High Achievers is significant.

Therefore, the null hypothesis no 9 (a) ii that states “There is no significant difference in impact on LSRW skills between low and high achievers” has been rejected.

4.11.2.3 COMPARISON OF AVERAGE AND HIGH ACHIEVERS ON LSRW SKILLS

Table 89

Comparison between Average and High Achievers on LSRW Skills

Achievement Level	Mean	SD	Df	Critical Value		Calculated t-value	Interpretation
Average Achiever	31.45	4.81	755	0.05	1.96	1.88	Not significant
High Achiever	32.18	4.91		0.01	2.58		

Table 89 shows that the calculated t value is 1.88, which is lower than the critical values at 0.05 and 0.01 levels. Hence, the difference between Average and High Achievers is not significant.

Therefore, the null hypothesis no 9 (a) iii that states “There is no significant difference in impact on LSRW skills between average and high achievers” cannot be rejected.

4.11.3 COMPARISON OF VIEWS ON HSLC/HSSLC EXAMINATIONS WITH RESPECT TO ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Table 90

Comparison of Views on HSLC/HSSLC Examinations based on Academic Achievement

Source of variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square Variance	F-ratio	F Critical Values		Inference
Between Sets	43.85	2	21.93	5.07	0.05	3	Significant at 0.01 level
Within Sets	3698.91	856	4.32		0.01	4.63	

From a close look at Table 90, it can be seen that the calculated f ratio is 5.07, which is above the f critical values 3 at 0.05 and 4.63 at 0.01 levels of significance. It can therefore be said that there is a significant difference on views on HSLC/HSSLC examinations between students based on their academic achievement. Hence, the null hypothesis no. 9 (b) “There is no significant difference in views on HSLC/HSSLC examinations with respect to their academic achievement” has been rejected.

To further investigate, the hypothesis is tested using a t-test.

4.11.3.1 COMPARISON OF LOW AND AVERAGE ACHIEVER BASED ON THEIR VIEWS ON HSLC/HSSLC EXAMINATIONS

Table 91

Comparison of Low and Average Achievers on their Views on HSLC/HSSLC Examinations

Achievement Level	Mean	SD	Df	Critical Value		Calculated t-value	Inference
Low Achievers	12.44	1.80	638	0.05	1.96	0.03	Not significant
Average Achievers	12.43	2.21		0.01	2.59		

A close examination of Table 91 shows that the calculated t-value of 0.03 is less than the critical t-value at the 0.05 level, which is 1.97 and 0.01 level, which is 2.59. This suggests that the difference between Low and Average Achievers is statistically not significant.

Hence, the null hypothesis no 9 (b) i “There is no significant difference in views on HSLC/HSSLC examinations between low and average achievers” cannot be rejected.

4.11.3.2 COMPARISON OF LOW AND HIGH ACHIEVER ON THEIR VIEWS OF HSLC/HSSLC EXAMINATIONS

Table 92

Comparison between Low and High Achievers on Views on HSLC/HSSLC Examinations

Achievement Level	Mean	SD	Df	Critical Value		Calculated t-value	Inference
Low Achievers	12.44	1.80	319	0.05	1.97	2.36	Significant at 0.05 level but not 0.01
High Achievers	12.95	1.85		0.01	2.59		

Examining Table 92 closely reveals that the calculated t-value of 2.36 exceeds the critical t-value at the 0.05 level (1.97) but falls short of the critical value at the 0.01 level (2.59). This indicates that the difference between Low and High Achievers is statistically significant. Thus, the null hypothesis no 9 (b) ii “There is no significant difference in views on HSLC/HSSLC examinations between low and high achievers” has been rejected.

4.11.3.3 COMPARISON OF AVERAGE AND HIGH ACHIEVER ON THEIR VIEWS OF HSLC/HSSLC EXAMINATIONS

Table 93

Comparison between Average and High Achievers on Views on HSLC/HSSLC Examinations

Achievement Level	Mean	SD	Df	Critical Value		Calculated t-value	Inference
Average Achievers	12.43	2.21	755	0.05	1.96	3.30	Significant at 0.01 level
High Achievers	12.95	1.85		0.01	2.58		

Reviewing Table 93, it is clear that the calculated t-value of 3.30 exceeds the critical t-value of 2.59 at the 0.01 level. This suggests a significant difference, favoring the High Achievers, who have a higher mean score.

Thus, the null hypothesis no 9 (b) iii “There is no significant difference in views on HSLC/HSSLC examinations between average and high achievers” has been rejected.

4.11.4 COMPARISON OF VIEWS ON TEACHER’S TEACHING STRATEGIES WITH RESPECT TO ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Table 94

Comparison of Views on Teacher’s Teaching Strategies based on Academic Achievement

Source of variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square Variance	F-ratio	F Critical Values		Inference
Between Sets	244.60	2	122.30	12.49	0.05	3	Significant at 0.01 level
Within Sets	8381.79	856	9.79		0.01	4.63	

A close examination of Table 94 reveals that the calculated f-ratio of 12.49 is higher than the critical F-values of 3 at the 0.05 level and 4.63 at the 0.01 level of

significance. This indicates a significant difference in students' views on teacher's teaching strategies based on their academic achievement. Thus, the null hypothesis no 9 (c) stating "There is no significant difference in views on teacher's teaching strategies with respect to their academic achievement" has been rejected.

To explore further, a t-test is conducted on the hypothesis.

4.11.4.1 COMPARISON OF LOW AND AVERAGE ACHIEVERS ON THEIR VIEWS ON TEACHER'S TEACHING STRATEGIES

Table 95

Comparison between Low and Average Achievers on Views on Teacher's Teaching Strategies

Achievement Level	Mean	SD	Df	Critical Value		Calculated t-value	Inference
Low Achievers	26.90	3.02	638	0.05	1.96	1.79	Not significant
Average Achievers	27.49	3.13		0.01	2.59		

A quick review of Table 95 indicates that the calculated t-value of 1.79 falls below the critical values at both the 0.05 and 0.01 significance levels. This suggests that the difference between Low and Average Achievers is not significant. Thus, the null hypothesis no 9 (c) i stating "There is no significant difference in views on teacher's teaching strategies between low and average achievers" cannot be rejected.

4.11.4.2 COMPARISON OF LOW AND HIGH ACHIEVER ON THEIR VIEWS ON TEACHER'S TEACHING STRATEGIES

Table 96

Comparison between Low and High Achievers on Views on Teacher's Teaching Strategies

Achievement Level	Mean	SD	Df	Critical Value		Calculated t-value	Inference
Low Achievers	26.90	3.02	319	0.05	1.97	4.47	Significant at 0.01 level
High Achievers	28.54	3.17		0.01	2.59		

A careful study of Table 96 shows that the calculated value of t is 4.47. This is higher than the critical values of t at the required levels of significance. It can therefore be concluded that the difference between Low and High Achievers on the views on teacher's teaching strategies is significant. Thus, the null hypothesis no 9 (c) ii stating "There is no significant difference in views on teacher's teaching strategies between low and high achievers" has been rejected.

4.11.4.3 COMPARISON OF AVERAGE AND HIGH ACHIEVER ON THEIR VIEWS ON TEACHER'S TEACHING STRATEGIES

Table 97

Comparison between Average and High Achievers on Views on Teacher's Teaching Strategies

Achievement Level	Mean	SD	Df	Critical Value		Calculated t-value	Inference
Average Achievers	27.49	3.13	755	0.05	1.96	4.16	Significant at 0.01 level
High Achievers	28.54	3.17		0.01	2.58		

A detailed examination of table 97 reveals that the calculated t-value of 4.16 exceeds the critical values at the specified levels of significance. This indicates a

significant difference between Average and High Achievers in their views on teacher's teaching strategies.

Thus, the null hypothesis no 9 (c) iii stating "There is no significant difference in views on teacher's teaching strategies between average and high achievers" has been rejected.

4.11.5 COMPARISON OF VIEWS ON PERSONAL LEARNING WITH RESPECT TO ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Table 98

Comparison of Views on Personal Learning based on Academic Achievement

Source of variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square Variance	F-ratio	F Critical Values		Inference
Between Sets	567.24	2	283.62	19.86	0.05	3	Significant at 0.01 level
Within Sets	12225.26	856	14.28		0.01	4.63	

A close analysis of Table 98 shows that the calculated F-ratio of 12.49 is greater than the critical F-values of 3 at the 0.05 level and 4.63 at the 0.01 level of significance. This suggests a significant difference in students' views on Personal Learning according to their academic achievement.

Thus, the null hypothesis 9 (d) stating "There is no significant difference in views on personal learning with respect to their academic achievement" has been rejected.

To explore further, a t-test is conducted on the hypothesis.

4.11.5.1 COMPARISON OF LOW AND AVERAGE ACHIEVERS ON THEIR VIEWS ON PERSONAL LEARNING

Table 99

Comparison between Low and Average Achievers on Views on Personal Learning

Achievement Level	Mean	SD	Df	Critical Value		Calculated t-value	Inference
Low Achievers	30.04	4.20	638	0.05	1.96	0.01	Not significant
Average Achievers	30.00	3.72		0.01	2.59		

A quick review of Table 99 indicates that the calculated t-value of 0.01 falls below the critical values at both the 0.05 and 0.01 significance levels. This suggests that the difference between Low and Average Achievers is not significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis 9 (d) i that states “There is no significant difference in views on personal learning between low and average achievers” cannot be rejected.

4.11.5.2 COMPARISON OF LOW AND HIGH ACHIEVERS BASED ON THEIR VIEWS ON PERSONAL LEARNING

Table 100

Comparison between Low and High Achievers on Views on Personal Learning

Achievement Level	Mean	SD	Df	Critical Value		Calculated t-value	Interpretation
Low Achievers	30.04	4.20	319	0.05	1.97	0.61	Not significant
High Achievers	31.87	3.71		0.01	2.59		

A brief review of Table 100 shows that the calculated t-value of 0.61 is below the critical values at both the 0.05 and 0.01 significance levels, indicating that the difference between Low and High Achievers is not significant. Hence, the null

hypothesis 9 (d) ii that states “There is no significant difference in views on personal learning between low and high achievers” cannot be rejected.

4.11.5.3 COMPARISON OF AVERAGE AND HIGH ACHIEVERS BASED ON THEIR VIEWS ON PERSONAL LEARNING

Table 101

Comparison between Average and High Achievers on Views on Personal Learning

Achievement Level	Mean	SD	Df	Critical Value		Calculated t-value	Inference
Average Achievers	30.00	3.72	755	0.05	1.96	6.28	Significant at 0.01 level
High Achievers	31.87	3.71		0.01	2.58		

A detailed examination of the Table 101 reveals that the calculated t-value of 46.28 exceeds the critical values at the specified levels of significance. This indicates a significant difference between Average and High Achievers in their views on teacher’s teaching strategies. Therefore, the null hypothesis 9 (d) iii that states “There is no significant difference in views on personal learning between average and high achievers” cannot be rejected.

Focus Group Discussion

When asked to share their thoughts on the connection between prior academic performance and learning English, the participants expressed the following views:

“... who are good at other subjects are also generally good in English. This is especially true in an English medium school where all the other textbooks are written in English and the language is used predominantly inside the school campus...”

“... depends on the individual and his special interests and abilities. Someone whose interested in Physics may not like English hence it solely depends on the personal interest...”

Participants shared that students who excel in other subjects often perform well in English, especially in English-medium schools where textbooks and the environment are in English. However, they also emphasized that individual interests and abilities play a key role, as a student passionate about Physics, for example, may not necessarily have an interest in English.

4.12 PERCEPTION OF ENGLISH TEACHERS ON THE WASHBACK EFFECT

The perceptions of English teachers on the washback effect of the School Leaving Certificate Examinations were assessed as stated in the objective, “To assess the perceptions of English teachers on the washback effect of the School Leaving Certificate Examinations on the Teaching and Learning of English”. A scale was developed to evaluate the perceptions of secondary English teachers regarding the washback effect of the HSLC and HSSLC examinations under the Mizoram Board of School Education. For this purpose, 24 statements were framed and responses from 104 English teachers were analysed. Since the scale was not standardized, each statement was examined separately using percentage analysis. The findings are presented in the following sections.

The perceptions of English Teachers on the Washback Effect are analyzed using percentages as follows:

Table 102

Overall Perception of English Teachers on Washback Effect

Sl. No.	Statements	Overall Perceptions (in percentages)				
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	I am aware of the aims and objectives outlined in English curriculum/syllabus prescribed by MBSE.	18	69	10	3	0
2	My classroom activities revolve around preparation for the examination	3	49	28	16	4
3	I adopt the past MBSE examination content and marking criteria for the internal tests.	13	50	20	16	1

4	The examination motivates students to study English.	11	55	17	16	1
5	My teaching methods change as the examinations approach.	9	52	21	16	2
6	My professional training and education have positive influence on my teaching.	28	66	6	0	0
7	The HSLC\HSSLC English examination questions test the reading skills.	5	48	17	29	1
8	I am familiar with the scheme of examination and question pattern by MBSE for English subject.	19	69	7	5	0
9	The curriculum/syllabus is useful as a guideline when I teach.	10	80	10	1	0
10	In a situation where examinations do not exist, I believe my students' attitude towards learning English would change.	14	60	15	8	3
11	Inculcating language skills to the students is my priority, as opposed to ensuring that my students pass in the board examinations	16	54	22	8	0
12	Students prefer to be taught solely for examination preparation.	8	50	15	27	0
13	My teaching experience has an influence on my current teaching.	27	68	5	0	0
14	I urge my students to adjust their learning techniques in accordance with the question patterns in the examinations.	7	60	20	12	2
15	The scheme of examination suggests that listening and speaking skills are not to be tested in the board final examination.	6	50	28	16	0
16	The present curriculum/syllabus is adequate for learning English.	5	42	23	30	0

17	In a situation where examinations do not exist, my teaching methods would be different.	13	57	17	11	3
18	HSLC/HSSLC examinations reflect the aims and objectives prescribed in the curriculum.	10	52	30	9	0
19	The English textbook currently in use is well suited to develop students LSRW skills.	9	34	24	33	1
20	The present English syllabus helps the students in building their language skills for their further academic studies.	2	58	26	14	0
21	Board examination motivates teachers to improve their teaching methodology.	3	48	25	21	3
22	The board examination forces me to teach to the test.	7	35	21	32	6
23	I feel pressured by society for the board examination result of my students.	14	32	18	35	1
24	I believe that the MBSE English examinations are positively influencing the learning of English in secondary and higher secondary schools.	2	64	22	12	0

A careful examination of the Table 102 reveals the following observations about the perception of teachers about the washback effect of secondary school teachers:

1. The majority of the English teachers i.e. 69% of the teachers have responded that they are aware of the aims and objectives outlined in the curriculum prescribed by MBSE for the English subject. 18% responded ‘strongly agree’ which means that they are indeed extremely confident of their awareness. 10% respond with ‘neutral’ saying they are unsure. However, 3% of the teachers

disagree with the statement, which showcases that they are unaware. None of the teachers, i.e. 0% strongly disagree.

2. 3% and 49% of the teachers have responded 'strongly agree' and 'agree' to the statement that the activities they conduct in the classroom are intended for examination preparation. 28% remain neutral in their response. Meanwhile, 16% and 4% of the teachers argued against the statement by responding 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree' respectively.
3. Half of the sampled teachers i.e. 50% agree to the statement that they adopted the past MBSE examination marking criteria while preparing their teacher-made tests. 13% have strongly agreed. 20% of the teacher remain neutral in their response while 16% and 1% contend that they disagree and strongly disagree with using the past examination's marking criteria.
4. To the statement that that the examinations are motivating factors for students to study their English subject more diligently, 11% have strongly agreed and 55% have agreed. However, 17% of the teachers are undecided on the matter and another 16% disagree and the remaining 1% have strongly disagreed.
5. The majority of the respondents i.e. 52% have admitted to having altered their teaching methods with the proximity of the examination by responding 'agree' and 9% responded that they strongly agree. 21% provide no opinion on the matter and 16% and 2% respond with 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree' to show that their teaching methods are not dependent on the proximity of examinations.
6. Regarding the effect and influence of professional education on their teaching, there is no disagreement with the statement. 28% agree that it is extremely influential, 66% agree that they are indeed influenced while the remaining 6% remain neutral.
7. The opinion is diverse on whether the examinations test the students' reading skills. 5% strongly agreed, 48% agreed and 17% remain undecided. 29% disagree and the rest 1% say that they strongly disagree.
8. 19% of the teachers claim to be extremely familiar with the scheme and pattern of the English subject. 69% claim to be familiar while 5% have contended to be unfamiliar and the rest 7% remain neutral in their perception.

9. A large majority of the teachers i.e. 80% agree that the curriculum is useful as a guideline for their teaching, with 10% strongly agreeing to the statement. 10% remain neutral and the remaining 1% disagree with the usefulness of the curriculum.
10. 14% of the teachers express their strong belief that the students' attitude towards the English subject is dependent on the subsequent examinations with 60% agreeing. 15% are neutral on their opinion. 8% and 3% have responded with 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree' which means that they believe the students' attitude would remain the same with or without the pressure of the examinations.
11. In the matter of inculcating language skills in the students as opposed to ensuring their passing the examinations, 16% strongly agree and 54% also agree. 22% remain neutral and the remaining 8% disagree with the matter.
12. 8% strongly felt that their students prefer to be solely taught for their examinations and half of the teachers also agree to it. 15% have no opinion regarding this. 27% argued that this is not the case.
13. There is no disagreement among the respondents that teaching experience influences their teaching. 27% strongly agree, the majority 68% agree and the remaining 5% express no opinion on the matter.
14. The majority of the respondents (60%) agree that they indeed urge their students to adjust their learning techniques to the examinations' question patterns with 7% strongly agreeing to it. 20% remain neutral in their perception while 12% disagree and the rest 2% express their strong disagreement.
15. Regarding the statement that says that the scheme of examinations has suggested that listening and speaking skills are not to be tested in the board examinations, 6% strongly agree and 50% agree. 28% remain neutral and the remaining 16% disagree.
16. 9% have expressed their strong agreement with the present English curriculum being adequate for learning English. 34% also agree to this. 24% have expressed no opinion on the matter and 33% and 1% have responded with 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree'.

17. 13% and 57% responded with 'strongly agree' and 'agree' that their teaching methods would be different if there were no examinations. 17% are neutral in their response and 11% and 3% respond that they 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree' with the statement.
18. 10% strongly agree that the board examinations reflect the aims and objectives outlined in the English curriculum, with 52% agreeing. 30% express no opinion on the matter and 9% of the respondents disagree.
19. Regarding the current English textbook being useful for developing students' LSRW skills, 9% strongly agree that it does with 34% also agreeing to it. Neutral opinion is expressed by 24%. However, 33% disagree and 1% strongly disagree with the statement.
20. 2% strongly agree along with the majority 58% who say that the English syllabus is well-suited to build their students' language skills for further academic pursuits. However, 14% respond with 'disagree' opining that the syllabus does not help. 26% of the respondents remain neutral.
21. 3% strongly agree that the board examination is a motivating factor for the improvement of teacher's teaching methodologies, with 48% agreeing. 25% are neutral in their response and the remaining 21% and 3% disagree and strongly disagree with the statement.
22. 7% strongly agree that the board examinations force them to teach to the test, with 35% of the respondents also agreeing. 21% choose to be neutral in the perception. 32% argue that they are not forced, with 6% strongly agreeing with them.
23. 14% strongly express the pressure they feel from the society for the examination result of their students. 32% also agree that they feel the said pressure. 18% are neutral in their perception. 35% of the respondents, however, claim to feel no pressure, with the remaining 1% strongly agreeing with them.
24. On whether the MBSE board examinations are a positive influence on English learning in secondary and higher secondary schools, 2% strongly feel that it does, with the majority of the respondents (64%) agreeing with them. 22% remain neutral regarding their opinion on the matter and the remaining 12% argue against the statement.

Focus Group Discussion

1. On the topic of being aware of the aims and objectives outlined in the curriculum prescribed by MBSE for the English subject, participants shared their knowledges. However, one of the participants shyly confessed –

“... although I can assume what they are, I haven’t actually read the document (MBSE Curriculum)...”

2. On the issue that the activities they conduct in the classroom are intended for examination preparation, participants expressed their views-

“...very little time to wander around so we have to stay focused...”

“... it is less of a choice and more of a responsibility to prepare our students for the exam...”

One participant asserted -

“...I make sure my students know the importance of what they are learning for their future, that is beyond the exam...”

These statements clearly show that teachers feel the pressure to focus on upcoming examinations. However, for some, the goal is not just to prepare students for the tests, but also to instil the value of learning English beyond simply passing the examinations.

3. On the criteria they used while preparing their teacher-made test, the participants admit that they just follow the MBSE question pattern, saying “...it makes sense...” as the students will be facing a similar pattern soon.

“...students have to be familiarized with the pattern so they can adjust their time management...” and *“...the marking criteria by MBSE is good enough, why change it...”*

4. On their views if they believe examinations motivate students or not, the participants had a consensus that students vary. A participant said “...many of our

students are vigilant in procuring learning materials and becoming more focused on learning...

One participant humorously asserted

“there are some students who are difficult and it is a Herculean task to find out what can motivate these bunch...”

5. The researcher, acting as a moderator, opened a discussion on the difference between their teaching methods at the beginning of the session and towards the end, the participants said –

“At the start of the session, I am more idealistic... planning to go through everything with them... but it gets panicky towards the end, with students being slow sometimes...”

“...the time constraint is real towards the end, sometimes we have to resort to picking out questions that are commonly asked every year...”

6. When a discussion was opened on the issue of being professionally educated, the participants asserted –

“Professional training has changed the way I teach. It has given me better strategies to engage students and make lessons more effective. Without training, I wouldn't be as confident in my teaching methods.”

“Training is definitely helpful, but I think experience also plays a big role. While training introduces new methods, real improvement comes from applying them in the classroom.”

“As a junior teacher, I rely a lot on the techniques I learned in training. But I also see how senior teachers handle students differently and I feel experience helps in dealing with practical challenges.”

“Sometimes, specialized teachers might approach exam preparation differently, but overall, the exam system affects all of us in the same way.”

7. Discussion was opened about the examinations testing the students' reading skills, the participants said it does, asserting -

"...reading comprehension is included..."

"...comprehension passage tests the reading skills of the students..."

Another assertion was-

"...although comprehension is included, I think it is insufficient for testing reading skills, it would be better to bring something new, maybe even a practical session..."

8. On familiarity with MBSE examination question pattern, the participants claimed to be familiar, asserting –

"..we have to know the weightage to every portion..."

Another participant humorously asserted –

"...the compilation of old questions is basically our Bible..."

9. On a discussion about MBSE curriculum, the participants expressed a consensus that they structure their teaching content and methods accordingly.

10. On the topic of students' attitude towards English being affected by their upcoming examinations, be it HSLC or HSSLC, the participants had the following perceptions-

"Many of our students, especially the girls like English, so I think the examination has an effect..."

A neutral perception is also expressed by one participant -

"They are indeed pressured by the weight of the examinations, so it is hard to know whether they like the subject or simply studying it because they have to..."

11. On the issue of the cruciality of inculcating language skills to students as opposed to their passing the examinations, all the participants agreed that it is

important to inculcate language skills to their students. However, they articulated their problems, stating –

“...time is very limited, so I cannot concentrate on the language skills only”

“It is also my responsibility to make sure they get through the exam, so it is equally important”

12. Regarding expectation of students from their teaching, the participants expressed that generally, students immediate aim is to pass the examinations and expected their teachers to teach them accordingly.

“...their objective is to be matric passed, or 12 passed...”

“... students dread the possibility of them failing the examinations, so I am expected to teach all the important points to them”

13. Regarding the influence of their teaching experience, a junior teacher expressed his opinion regarding the matter, saying that senior teachers are more well – versed with the syllabus and examination pattern -

“... they can plan their teaching from the beginning of the session and with their experience, they know which portion to concentrate on...”

The same participant continued-

“...they also know how to deal with slow students...” saying that they curate the portions which the students can learn in order to reduce their heavy workload.

However, difference in opinion was also observed. One participant said –

“... as long as teachers are diligent enough, they will figure out what approach is the best to teach, regardless of their experience...”

14. A discussion was opened on the topic of what advices do the teachers give the students before HSLC/HSSLC examinations, the participants said that they tell their students to -

“...concentrate more on the portions that carry more marks...”

“Study harder”

“...learn time management”

15. As the teachers all claimed to be aware of the marking criteria of the board examinations, discussion was opened where participants were asked to comment on the listening and speaking skills to which they asserted that –

“The scheme of examination states that these are not to be tested in the final examinations”.

They however, added that these skills should be tested in the internal assessments.

16. On the issue of the present English curriculum, the participants had the following opinions –

“...the textbooks could be revised to have more exercises for LSRW skills development”

“... curriculum itself is good, but it is not very practical in our current system”

“I think it is good enough for our demographic for now”

17. When the moderator raised the issue of examinations being a restriction on teaching methods, the participants asserted that–

“...sometimes the presence of examinations suffocates me because I cannot practice what I believe in”

“...is a problem since I cannot engage the students in classroom activities as much as I would have...”

“There are pros and cons, the cons are what other participants have said, but one of the pros would be it keeps us focused and it prevents idleness”

18. On raising the issue of the alignment between the English questions in the board examinations and the aims and objectives in the prescribed curriculum- One participant said -

“...the questions should also contain test for listening and speaking skills, otherwise it is incomplete”

Another participant said-

“...the questions will have to include more HOTS (higher order thinking skills) questions in order to truly reflect the aims and objectives, but at our current situation many of our students would suffer... ”

19. Regarding the appropriateness of the contents of the current English textbook for developing students' LSRW skills, the participants had contradicting opinions-

One participant asserted

“...there are enough exercises (in the textbook) but not enough time and effort can be given for those to be truly beneficial”

Another participant disagreed by saying

“...although there are a number of such exercises, they are outdated and not interesting for our students, even if we allot some time, they are not likely to gain much”

20. Discussion was opened on the topic of how the syllabus can help students in their future academic pursuits. One participant said-

“As long as we engage our students in every activity that the syllabus prescribes, we can presume that they will gain enough to get into higher studies”

Other participants agreed and one added –

“We have enough grammar lessons and activities that can assist students in their further learning”

21. On the issue of board examinations having an effect on their teaching methodologies, the participants had varying opinions. One participant said

“...is a problem since I cannot engage the students in classroom activities as much as I would have...”

Another participant said,

“There are pros and cons, the cons are what other participants have said, but one of the pros would be it keeps us focused and it prevents idleness”.

It can be gathered that while examinations can be a factor that curb creativity and thoroughness, it can also be a motivating factor as it prevents teachers from being idle.

22. HSLC/HSSLC being high-stake examinations, a discussion was opened where the participants talked about their loss of freedom in selecting their teaching strategies.

“...I have to resort to reducing the workload of slow students by selecting what is absolutely important for the exam”

One participant said she

“...enjoy engaging students in creative activities like writing poems and short plays, but it’s like everyone feel that is wasting time”

The statements suggest that teachers feel that they are compelled to teach to the test.

23. On the issue of pressure from society, the participants all shared the opinion that when students do well, students themselves are usually credited for their achievement. On the contrary, when students do not perform well in such important examinations, the teachers are often the scapegoats. This means that the teachers are indeed pressured by the society. One participant added, however, that

“...from experience, I have learnt to dismiss the criticisms most of the times”

24. Discussion was opened on the issue of board examinations being a positive influence on learning English in the secondary and higher secondary level of schooling. The participants were in consensus that examinations do exert a positive influence, with one participant asserting that

“Although there are still rooms for improvements and changes that need to be made, the examinations are still making our students learn so it is important”

4.13 COMPARISON OF PERCEPTION OF ENGLISH TEACHERS BASED ON TEACHING EXPERIENCE

As specified in the objective, a comparison of English teacher's perceptions based on their teaching experience is presented to examine differences between junior and senior teachers regarding the washback effect. Each statement was analysed separately using the chi-square test and the results are presented in the following tables.

4.13.1 Statement no 1: I am aware of the aims and objectives outlined in the English curriculum prescribed by MBSE.

Table 103

Perception on Awareness of Aims and Objectives of English Curriculum

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Junior	15	56	10	3	0
Senior	4	16	0	0	0
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
3.55	4	0.01	11.345	Not significant	
		0.05	9.488		

A scrutiny of Table 103 reveals that regarding the awareness of the aims and objectives of the English curriculum, the calculated value of χ^2 is observed to be 3.55 which is less than the critical values at 0.01 and 0.05 levels. Hence, it is concluded that there is no significant difference between junior and senior teachers.

4.13.2 Statement No. 2: My classroom activities revolve around preparation for the examination.

Table 104

Perception of Teacher's Classroom Activities

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Junior	3	42	23	13	3
Senior	1	9	6	4	0
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
1.12	4	0.01 0.05	11.345 9.488	Not significant	

From the examination of Table 104, it can be seen that the calculated value of χ^2 is 1.12 which is less than the critical values 9.488 and 11.345 at 0.05 and 0.01 levels respectively. It can therefore be concluded that there is no significant difference between junior and senior teachers in their perception of their classroom activities revolving around preparation for examination.

4.13.3 Statement No. 3: I adopt the past MBSE examination content and marking criteria for the internal tests.

Table 105

Perception of Adoption of Past MBSE Criteria for Internal Tests

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Junior	12	43	16	13	0
Senior	1	9	5	4	1
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
5.92	4	0.01 0.05	11.345 9.488	Not significant	

While assessing the teachers on their adoption of the past examination content and marking criteria for the internal tests, the calculated value of χ^2 was found to be

less than the critical values. Hence, there is no significant difference between the junior and senior teachers concerning this matter.

4.13.4 Statement No. 4: The examination motivates students to study English.

Table 106

Perception on Motivating Effect of Examination

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Junior	10	46	15	13	0
Senior	1	11	3	4	1
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
5.2	4	0.01 0.05	11.345 9.488	Not significant	

In the matter of examination being a motivating factor for the students to study the English subject, the perception of the teachers is compared. As seen from Table 106, the calculated value of χ^2 was 5.2 and this is found to be below the critical values of χ^2 at the required level of significance. This is conclusive that the difference is not significant.

4.13.5 Statement No. 5: My teaching methods change as the examinations approach.

Table 107

Perception on Change in Teaching Methods

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Junior	7	46	18	12	1
Senior	2	8	4	5	1
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
3.09	4	0.01 0.05	11.345 9.488	Not significant	

Regarding the change of their teaching methods with the proximity of the examinations, the value of χ^2 calculated was observed to be less than the critical values of χ^2 at 0.05 and 0.01 levels. Hence it is concluded that there is no significant difference between the junior and senior teachers concerning this matter.

4.13.6 Statement No. 6: My professional education has positive influence on my teaching.

Table 108

Perception of Influence of Professional Education on Teaching

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Junior	22	56	6	0	0
Senior	0	13	0	7	0
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
36.05	4	0.01	11.345	Significant at 0.01 level	
		0.05	9.488		

In order to ascertain whether or not the professional education have positive influence on their teaching, the calculated value of χ^2 was found to be 36.05, which is more than the critical value 11.345 at 0.01 level of significance. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a significant difference between junior and senior teachers in their perception.

4.13.7 Statement No. 7: The HSLC\HSSLC English examination questions test the reading skills.

Table 109

Perception on Test of Reading Skills

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Junior	3	41	11	28	1
Senior	2	9	7	2	0
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
9.2	4	0.01	11.345	Not significant	
		0.05	9.488		

On whether or not the examinations tested the reading skills, the calculated value of χ^2 was found to be 9.2, which is lesser than the critical value at 0.01 and 0.05 levels of significance. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is no significant difference between junior and senior teachers in their perception.

4.13.8 Statement No. 8: I am familiar with the scheme of examination and question pattern by MBSE for English subject.

Table 110

Perception on Familiarity with Scheme of Examination and Question Pattern

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Junior	3	41	11	28	1
Senior	2	9	7	2	0
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
5.82	4	0.01	11.345	Not significant	
		0.05	9.488		

On the matter of familiarity with the scheme and question pattern of English subject, the calculated value of χ^2 was found to be less than the critical values of χ^2 at the required levels of significance. It is therefore concluded that there is no significant difference in this matter.

4.13.9 Statement No. 9: The curriculum/syllabus is useful as a guideline when I teach.

Table 111

Perception on Usefulness of Curriculum/Syllabus as a Guide

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Junior	3	41	11	28	1
Senior	2	9	7	2	0
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
6.37	4	0.01	11.345	Not significant	
		0.05	9.488		

Regarding the usefulness of the curriculum/syllabus when teaching, the perceptions between the junior and senior teachers were compared. The calculated value of χ^2 was found to be 6.37, which falls below the critical values at the required level of significance. Hence, the difference is not significant.

4.13.10 Statement No. 10: In a situation where examinations do not exist, I believe my students' attitude towards learning English would change.

Table 112

Perception on Effect of Examination on Students' Attitude

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Junior	14	47	14	6	3
Senior	1	15	2	2	0
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
3.86	4	0.01	11.345	Not significant	
		0.05	9.488		

Comparing the perception of the teachers on whether or not their students' attitude towards learning English would change if examinations does not exist, the calculated value of χ^2 was found to be less than the critical values at both 0.01 and 0.05 levels. Hence, a conclusion can be made that there is no significant difference between the junior and senior teachers on the matter.

4.13.11 Statement No. 11: Inculcating language skills to the students is my priority, as opposed to ensuring that my students pass in the board examinations

Table 113

Perception on Prioritisation of Language Skill Inculcation

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Junior	13	47	19	5	0
Senior	4	9	4	3	0
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
2.33	4	0.01	11.345	Not significant	
		0.05	9.488		

From Table 112, it can be observed that the calculated value of χ^2 is found to be 2.33, which is less than the critical values of χ^2 at the required levels of significance. Hence, it is concluded that there is no significant difference between the junior and senior teachers regarding statement number 11.

4.13.12 Statement No. 12: Students prefer to be taught solely for examination preparation.

Table 114

Perception on Students' Preference of Teaching Goals

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Junior	7	42	12	23	0
Senior	1	10	4	5	0
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
0.61	4	0.01	11.345	Not significant	
		0.05	9.488		

Table 114 shows a χ^2 value of 0.61. This is lower than the critical χ^2 values at the given significance levels. Hence, there is no significant difference between junior and senior teachers on statement 12.

4.13.13 Statement No. 13: My teaching experience has an influence on my current teaching.

Table 115

Perception on Effect of Experience on Teaching

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Junior	22	57	5	0	0
Senior	6	14	0	0	0
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
1.29	4	0.01	11.345	Not significant	
		0.05	9.488		

Table 115 indicates that the calculated χ^2 value of 1.29 is below the critical χ^2 values at the required significance levels. As a result, it can be concluded that no significant difference exists between junior and senior teachers regarding statement number 13.

4.13.14 Statement No. 14: I urge my students to adjust their learning techniques in accordance with the question patterns in the examinations.

Table 116

Perception on Adjustment of Learning techniques

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Junior	5	52	16	10	1
Senior	2	10	5	2	1
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
2.33	4	0.01	11.345	Not significant	
		0.05	9.488		

According to Table 116, the calculated χ^2 value of 2.33 falls below the critical χ^2 values for the required significance levels. Thus, it is determined that there is no significant difference between junior and senior teachers in relation to statement number 14.

4.13.15 Statement No. 15: The scheme of examination suggests that listening and speaking skills are not to be tested in the board's final examination.

Table 117

Perception on Testing of Listening and Speaking Skills

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Junior	5	38	26	15	0
Senior	1	14	3	2	0
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
4.09	4	0.01	11.345	Not significant	
		0.05	9.488		

The data in Table 117 shows that the calculated χ^2 value is 4.09, which is lower than the critical χ^2 values at the specified significance levels. Therefore, it is concluded that there is no significant difference between junior and senior teachers concerning statement number 15.

4.13.16 Statement No. 16: The present curriculum/syllabus is adequate for learning English.

Table 118

Perception on Adequacy of Curriculum/Syllabus

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Junior	5	37	19	23	0
Senior	0	7	5	8	0
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
2.41	4	0.01	11.345	Not significant	
		0.05	9.488		

Examination of the Table 118 shows that the calculated value of χ^2 is 2.41, which is lower than the critical value of χ^2 at 0.05 level. Hence, it can be concluded that the junior and senior teachers do not differ significantly in their perception of the adequacy of the present curriculum for English learning.

4.13.17 Statement No. 17: In a situation where examinations do not exist, my teaching methods would be different.

Table 119

Perception on Effect of Examination on Teaching Methods

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Junior	13	46	14	8	3
Senior	0	13	4	3	0
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
4.67	4	0.01	11.345	Not significant	
		0.05	9.488		

Table 119 shows a χ^2 value of 4.67. This is less than the critical χ^2 value at the 0.05 level. Therefore, junior and senior teachers do not differ significantly in their views on the possibility of change in their teaching methods if examinations do not exist.

4.13.18 Statement No. 18: HSLC/HSSLC examinations reflect the aims and objectives prescribed in the curriculum.

Table 120

Perception on Reflection of Aims and Objectives

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Junior	9	43	23	9	9
Senior	0	11	1	8	0
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
16.31	4	0.01	11.345	Significant at 0.01 level	
		0.05	9.488		

Observation of Table 120 shows that the calculate value of is 16.31, which is more than the critical value 11.345 at 0.01 level. Hence, there is significant difference between the junior and senior teachers in their perception of whether or not the board examinations reflect the aims and objectives prescribed in the curriculum.

4.13.19 Statement No. 19: The current English textbook is well suited to develop students' LSRW skills.

Table 121

Perception on Suitability of Textbooks for Developing LSRW Skills

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Junior	8	34	21	24	0
Senior	1	4	4	10	1
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
8.87	4	0.01 0.05	11.345 9.488	Not significant	

From Table 121, it can be seen that the calculated χ^2 value is 8.87. This is below the critical value at 0.05 significance level. Thus, there is no significant difference between junior and senior teachers regarding their opinions on the suitability of the current English textbook for the development of students' LSRW skills.

4.13.20 Statement No. 20: The present English syllabus helps the students in building their language skills for their further academic studies.

Table 122

Perception on Efficacy of Syllabus in Building Language Skills

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Junior	2	51	19	12	0
Senior	0	9	8	3	0
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
3.05	4	0.01 0.05	11.345 9.488	Not significant	

The χ^2 value in Table 122 is observed to be 3.05. It is lower than the critical value at 0.05 level. Hence, junior and senior teachers have no significant difference in

their opinions on the present English curriculum being helpful for their students' further academic studies.

4.13.21 Statement No. 21: Board examination motivates teachers to improve their teaching methodology.

Table 123

Perception on Motivation for Teachers

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Junior	1	46	20	16	1
Senior	0	11	6	3	0
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
0.87	4	0.01	11.345	Not significant	
		0.05	9.488		

In Table 123, teacher's perceptions were compared on whether the board examination motivates them to improve their teaching methodology. The calculated value was less than the critical values at 0.01 and 0.05 levels. Thus, there is no significant difference between junior and senior teachers on this issue.

4.13.22 Statement No. 22: The board examination forces me to teach to the test.

Table 124

Perception on Effect of Examination on Teaching

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Junior	2	54	18	7	3
Senior	1	10	3	6	0
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
8.03	4	0.01	11.345	Not significant	
		0.05	9.488		

The comparison of teacher's views whether the board examination forced them to teach to the test showed a lower calculated χ^2 value than the critical values of χ^2 at 0.01 and 0.05 levels. Therefore, junior and senior teachers do not differ significantly on this topic.

4.13.23 Statement No. 23: I feel pressured by society for the board examination result of my students.

Table 125

Perception on Societal Pressure

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Junior	12	26	14	32	0
Senior	3	7	5	4	1
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
4	6.43	0.01	11.345	Not significant	
		0.05	9.488		

The calculated value of χ^2 was compared to the critical values at 0.01 and 0.05 levels and it was found to be lower. Hence, no significant difference exists between junior and senior teachers on their views regarding the pressure they feel from society for the results of their students.

4.13.24 Statement No. 24: I believe that the MBSE English examinations positively influence English learning in secondary and higher secondary schools.

Table 126

Perception on Positive Effect of Examination

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Junior	1	55	17	11	0
Senior	1	12	6	1	0
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
2.91	4	0.01	11.345	Not significant	
		0.05	9.488		

The analysis in Table 126 shows that the calculated value of χ^2 is 2.91, which is below the critical values at both 0.01 and 0.05 levels. This indicates no significant difference between junior and senior teachers on the given statement.

Focus Group Discussion

A junior teacher expressed his opinion regarding the matter, saying that senior teachers are more well – versed with the syllabus and examination pattern -

“... they can plan their teaching from the beginning of the session and with their experience, they know which portion to concentrate on...”

The same participant continued-

“...they also know how to deal with slow students...” saying that they curate the portions which the students can learn in order to reduce their heavy workload.

However, difference in opinion was also observed. One participant said –

“... as long as teachers are diligent enough, they will figure out what approach is the best to teach, regardless of their experience...”

4.14 COMPARISON OF PERCEPTION OF TEACHERS BASED ON PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

As specified in objective no. 6 (c), the perceptions of the English teachers based on their professional education are currently being compared to assess any difference between the trained and untrained teachers. The analysis is performed separately for each statement using the chi-square test, which is presented in the following tables.

4.14.1 Statement No 1: I am aware of the aims and objectives outlined in the English curriculum prescribed by MBSE.

Table 127

Perception on Awareness of Aims and Objectives of English Curriculum

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Trained	18	64	10	1	0
Untrained	1	8	0	2	0
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
11.75	4	0.01	11.345	Significant at 0.01 level	
		0.05	9.488		

Examination of the Table 127 shows that the calculated value of χ^2 is 11.75, which is more than the critical value 11.345 at 0.01 level of significance. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a significant difference between trained and untrained teachers in their perception.

4.14.2 Statement No. 2: My classroom activities revolve around preparation for the examination.

Table 128

Perception of Teacher's Classroom Activities

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Trained	2	47	26	16	2
Untrained	1	4	3	1	2
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
9.02	4	0.01	11.345	Not significant	
		0.05	9.488		

A close observation of Table 128 reveals that the calculated value of χ^2 is 9.02, which is less than the critical values of χ^2 at 0.05 and 0.01 levels. Hence, this indicates that the trained and untrained teachers differ significantly in their perception.

4.14.3 Statement No. 3: I adopt the past MBSE examination content and marking criteria for the internal tests.

Table 129

Perception of Adoption of Past MBSE Criteria for Internal Tests

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Trained	12	43	16	13	0
Untrained	1	9	5	4	1
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
1.71	4	0.01	11.345	Not significant	
		0.05	9.488		

Table 129 shows a calculated χ^2 value of 1.71, which is below the critical values at the 0.05 and 0.01 levels. This suggests that trained and untrained teachers differ significantly in their perceptions.

4.14.4 Statement No. 4: The examination motivates students to study English.

Table 130

Perception on Motivating Effect of Examination

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Trained	10	46	15	13	0
Untrained	1	11	3	4	1
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
2.46	4	0.01	11.345	Not significant	
		0.05	9.488		

According to Table 130, the calculated χ^2 value is shown to be 2.46, which is less than the critical values at both 0.05 and 0.01 significance levels. This indicates no significant difference in perception between trained and untrained teachers.

4.14.5 Statement No. 5: My teaching methods change as the examinations approach.

Table 131

Perception on Change in Teaching Methods

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Trained	8	49	21	13	2
Untrained	1	7	3	0	0
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
2.09	4	0.01	11.345	Not significant	
		0.05	9.488		

The calculated χ^2 value, as seen in Table 131, is 2.09. This value is lower than the critical values at the 0.05 and 0.01 levels. Thus, trained and untrained teachers show no significant difference in their perceptions

4.14.6 Statement No. 6: My professional training and education have a positive influence on my teaching.

Table 132

Perception of Influence of Professional Education on Teaching

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Trained	0	62	28	3	0
Untrained	2	4	5	0	0
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
19.42	4	0.01 0.05	11.345 9.488	Significant at 0.01 level	

As per Table 132, the calculated χ^2 value of 19.42 is higher than the critical value of 11.345 at the 0.01 significance level. Therefore, it can be concluded that trained and untrained teachers differ significantly in their perception.

4.14.7 Statement No. 7: The HSLC\HSSLC English examination questions test reading skills.

Table 133

Perception on Test of Reading Skills

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Trained	5	46	16	25	1
Untrained	2	7	2	0	0
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
5.86	4	0.01 0.05	11.345 9.488	Not significant	

Table 133 reveals that the calculated χ^2 value is 5.86, falling below the critical values at 0.05 and 0.01 levels. Therefore, trained and untrained teachers are significantly different in their perceptions.

4.14.8 Statement No. 8: I am familiar with the scheme of examination and question pattern by MBSE for English subject.

Table 134

Perception on Familiarity with Scheme of Examination and Question Pattern

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Trained	18	65	5	5	0
Untrained	0	11	0	0	0
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
4.53	4	0.01	11.345	Not significant	
		0.05	9.488		

From Table 135, the calculated χ^2 value of 4.53 is observed to be less than the critical values at both 0.05 and 0.01 levels. This confirms that there is no significant difference in the perceptions of trained and untrained teachers.

4.14.9 Statement No. 9: The curriculum/syllabus is useful as a guideline when I teach.

Table 135

Perception on Usefulness of Curriculum/Syllabus as a Guide

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Trained	10	72	10	1	0
Untrained	1	6	2	1	1
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
12.92	4	0.01	11.345	Significant at 0.01 level	
		0.05	9.488		

Table 135 reveals a calculated χ^2 value of 12.92, exceeding the critical value of 11.345 at the 0.01 significance level. Thus, it can be concluded that trained and untrained teachers differ significantly in their perceptions.

4.14.10 Statement No. 10: In a situation where examinations do not exist, I believe my students' attitude towards learning English would change.

Table 136

Perception on Effect of Examination on Students' Attitude

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Trained	14	56	14	7	2
Untrained	1	6	1	3	0
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
4.76	4	0.01	11.345	Not significant	
		0.05	9.488		

Perusal of data vide Table 136 shows that the calculated value of χ^2 to be 4.76, which is less than the critical values at the required level of significance. Therefore, this suggests that the trained and untrained teachers do not differ significantly in their perceptions.

4.14.11 Statement No. 11: Inculcating language skills to the students is my priority, as opposed to ensuring that my students pass in the board examinations

Table 137

Perception on Prioritisation of Language Skill Inculcation

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Trained	17	49	21	6	0
Untrained	0	8	2	1	0
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
2.92	4	0.01 0.05	11.345 9.488	Not significant	

Studying Table 137, it can be seen that the calculated value of χ^2 is 2.92, which is lesser than the critical values at the required levels of significance. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is no significant difference between trained and untrained teachers regarding their perception on prioritisation of inculcating language skills.

4.14.12 Statement No. 12: Students prefer to be taught solely for examination preparation.

Table 138

Perception on Students' Preference of Teaching Goals

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Trained	8	44	14	27	0
Untrained	0	8	2	1	0
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
3.73	4	0.01 0.05	11.345 9.488	Not significant	

As it can be seen on Table 138, the calculated value of is 3.73, which is lesser in comparison to the critical values 11.345 and 9.488 at 0.01 and 0.05 levels

respectively. This thus conclude that there is no significant difference between trained and untrained teachers in their perception of students' preference of teaching goals.

4.14.13 Statement No. 13: My teaching experience has an influence on my current teaching.

Table 139

Perception on Effect of Experience on Teaching

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Trained	25	64	4	0	0
Untrained	0	7	3	1	0
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
19.16	4	0.01 0.05	11.345 9.488	Significant at 0.01 level	

The calculated χ^2 value of 19.16, as shown in Table 139, exceeds the critical value of 11.345 at the 0.01 level of significance. Hence, there is a significant difference between the perceptions of trained and untrained teachers.

4.14.14 Statement No. 14: I urge my students to adjust their learning techniques in accordance with the question patterns in the examinations.

Table 140

Perception on Adjustment of Learning techniques

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Trained	6	57	18	10	2
Untrained	1	5	3	2	0
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
1.53	4	0.01 0.05	11.345 9.488	Not significant	

Table 140 indicates a calculated χ^2 value of 1.53, which is below the critical values at the required significance levels. This implies no significant difference in perception between trained and untrained teachers.

4.14.15 Statement No. 15: The scheme of examination suggests that listening and speaking skills are not to be tested in the board's final examination.

Table 141

Perception on Testing of Listening and Speaking Skills

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Trained	6	46	27	14	0
Untrained	0	6	2	3	0
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
2.07	4	0.01	11.345	Not significant	
		0.05	9.488		

According to the data in Table 141, the calculated χ^2 value is 2.07. This value is less than the critical values at the required significance levels. Thus, trained and untrained teachers do not differ significantly in their perceptions.

4.14.16 Statement No. 16: The present curriculum/syllabus is adequate for learning English.

Table 142

Perception on Adequacy of Curriculum/Syllabus

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Trained	4	39	22	28	0
Untrained	1	5	2	3	0
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
0.65	4	0.01	11.345	Not significant	
		0.05	9.488		

As seen in Table 142, the calculated χ^2 value of 0.65 is lower than the critical values at 0.05 and 0.01 levels. This suggests that there is no significant difference between the perceptions of trained and untrained teachers.

4.14.17 Statement No. 17: In a situation where examinations do not exist, my teaching methods would be different.

Table 143

Perception on Effect of Examination on Teaching Methods

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Trained	10	54	18	8	3
Untrained	3	5	0	3	0
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
8.15	4	0.01	11.345	Not significant	
		0.05	9.488		

The calculated χ^2 value of 8.15, shown in Table 143, is less than the critical values at 0.05 and 0.01 levels. Therefore, it can be concluded that trained and untrained teachers have no significantly different perceptions.

4.14.18 Statement No. 18: HSLC/HSSLC examinations reflect the aims and objectives prescribed in the curriculum.

Table 144

Perception on Reflection of Aims and Objectives

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Trained	8	49	28	8	0
Untrained	2	5	3	1	0
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
1.07	4	0.01	11.345	Not significant	
		0.05	9.488		

The data in table 144 reveals a calculated χ^2 value of 1.07, which is lower than the critical values at the required significance levels. Hence, trained and untrained teachers do not have significant difference in their perceptions.

4.14.19 Statement No. 19: The current English textbook is well suited to develop students' LSRW skills.

Table 145

Perception on Suitability of Textbooks for Developing LSRW Skills

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Trained	7	32	23	30	1
Untrained	2	3	2	4	0
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
1.78	4	0.01	11.345	Not significant	
		0.05	9.488		

As evident in Table 145, the calculated value of χ^2 is shown to be 1.78, which is lower in comparison to the critical value of χ^2 at 0.05 and 0.01 level. Hence, this

suggests that there is no significant difference between trained and untrained teachers in their perception.

4.14.20 Statement No. 20: The present English syllabus helps the students in building their language skills for their further academic studies.

Table 146

Perception on Efficacy of Syllabus in Building Language Skills

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Trained	1	54	25	13	0
Untrained	1	6	2	2	0
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
3.71	4	0.01	11.345	Not significant	
		0.05	9.488		

As is clearly shown in Table 146, the calculated χ^2 value is shown to be 3.7. This value is less than the critical values at 0.05 and 0.01 levels. Hence, the difference is not significant.

4.14.21 Statement No. 21: Board examination motivates teachers to improve their teaching methodology.

Table 147

Perception on Motivation for Teachers

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Trained	2	45	24	19	3
Untrained	1	5	2	3	0
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
2.46	4	0.01	11.345	Not significant	
		0.05	9.488		

A perusal of data from Table 147 reveals that the calculated value of χ^2 is 2.46, which is lower than the critical values at the required levels of significance. Hence, it can be concluded that the difference is not significant.

4.14.22 Statement No. 22: The board examination forces me to teach to the test.

Table 148

Perception on Effect of Examination on Teaching

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Trained	6	33	20	29	5
Untrained	1	3	2	4	1
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
0.66	4	0.01 0.05	11.345 9.488	Not significant	

Studying Table 148, it can be seen that the calculated value of χ^2 is shown to be 0.66, which is lower in comparison to the critical values of χ^2 at the required levels of significance. Thus, this suggests that there is no significant difference between the perception of trained and untrained teachers.

4.14.23 Statement No. 23: I feel pressured by society for the board examination result of my students.

Table 149

Perception on Societal Pressure

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Trained	14	30	17	31	1
Untrained	1	3	2	5	0
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
0.86	6.43	0.01 0.05	11.345 9.488	Not significant	

Analysis of data vide Table 149 reveals that the calculated value of χ^2 0.86 is lower than the critical value 9.488 at 0.05 level. This signifies that there is no significant difference in perception.

4.14.24 Statement No. 24: I believe that the MBSE English examinations positively influence English learning in secondary and higher secondary schools.

Table 150

Perception on Positive Effect of Examination

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Trained	2	59	21	11	0
Untrained	0	8	2	1	0
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
0.52	4	0.01	11.345	Not significant	
		0.05	9.488		

A close purview of Table 150 shows that the calculated value of χ^2 is 0.52. this value is less than the critical value of χ^2 9.488 at 0.05 level. This is conclusive that there is no significant difference between trained and untrained teachers in their perception.

Focus Group Discussion

With regards to professional education being a factor that influences teaching methods, untrained teacher expressed her opinion –

“...we tend to expect the teachers with B. Ed degrees to have better practices, but I have noticed that that is not always the case...they sometimes seem like they want shortcuts to everything...”

Another participant confessed –

“...I find it very hard to apply the approaches that I learned during B. Ed as the syllabus is heavy...”

She continued –

“...if I make my students learn the whole syllabus, I am afraid they will not have time to concentrate on the important portions...”

It can be gathered that the participants opinion on professional education is that, although good in theory, can hardly be put into practice in real life.

4.15 COMPARISON OF PERCEPTION OF TEACHERS BASED ON SUBJECT SPECIALIZATION.

As specified in objective no 6 (b), a comparison of the perceptions of the English teachers based on their subject specialisation is hereby presented to assess any difference between the teachers with English background and otherwise. The analysis is performed separately for each statement using chi square test, which are presented in the following tables.

4.15.1 Statement No 1: I am aware of the aims and objectives outlined in the English curriculum prescribed by MBSE.

Table 151

Perception on Awareness of Aims and Objectives of English Curriculum

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
English	8	32	7	2	0
Others	11	40	3	1	0
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
2.96	4	0.01	11.345	Not significant	
		0.05	9.488		

Table 151 shows that the calculated value of χ^2 is 2.96. This value is lower than the critical values at the 0.05 and 0.01 levels. Hence, it can be concluded that teachers do not differ significantly in their awareness of the aims and objectives of the English curriculum based on their subject specialization.

4.15.2 Statement No. 2: My classroom activities revolve around preparation for the examination.

Table 152

Perception on Teacher's Classroom Activities

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
English	3	28	10	5	3
Others	0	23	19	12	1
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
9.85	4	0.01 0.05	11.345 9.488	Significant at 0.05 but not at 0.01 level	

A close look at Table 152 shows that the calculated value of χ^2 is 9.85. this value is higher than 9.488 which is the critical value at 0.05 but lower than 11.345 at 0.01 level. Hence, it can be said that the difference is significant.

4.15.3 Statement No. 3: I adopt the past MBSE examination content and marking criteria for the internal tests.

Table 153

Perception on Adoption of Past MBSE Criteria for Internal Tests

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
English	7	26	6	9	1
Others	6	26	14	9	0
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
3.94	4	0.01 0.05	11.345 9.488	Not significant	

Examining Table 153 reveals that the calculated value of χ^2 is 3.94 which is lower than the critical value of χ^2 at 0.05 level. Hence, the teachers with English and other subjects as specialization do not have significant difference.

4.14.4 Statement No. 4: The examination motivates students to study English.

Table 154

Perception on Motivating Effect of Examination

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
English	6	31	4	8	0
Others	2	28	11	13	1
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
7.29	4	0.01 0.05	11.345 9.488	Not significant	

Data analysis vides Table 154 shows that the calculated value of χ^2 is lower than the critical values at 0.05 and 0.01 levels. Hence, the difference is not significant.

4.15.5 Statement No. 5: My teaching methods change as the examinations approach.

Table 155

Perception on Change in Teaching Methods

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
English	7	26	11	4	1
Others	16	36	3	0	0
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
14.41	4	0.01 0.05	11.345 9.488	Significant at 0.01 level	

Table 155 reveals a χ^2 value of 14.41, which exceeds the critical value of 11.345 at 0.01 level. Therefore, the difference is significant between teachers who specialize in English and other subjects.

4.15.6 Statement No. 6: My professional training and education have positive influence on my teaching.

Table 156

Perception on Influence of Professional Education on Teaching

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
English	13	33	3	0	0
Others	16	36	3	0	0
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
6.09	4	0.01	11.345	Not significant	
		0.05	9.488		

Examining Table 156 reveals that the calculated value of χ^2 is 6.09 which is lower than the critical value of χ^2 at 0.05 level. Hence, the teachers who specialize in English and other subjects do not have significant difference.

4.15.7 Statement No. 7: The HSLC\HSSLC English examination questions test the reading skills.

Table 157

Perception on Test of Reading Skills

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
English	4	23	5	17	0
Others	1	27	13	13	1
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
6.89	4	0.01	11.345	Not significant	
		0.05	9.488		

Analysis of data vide Table 157 shows the calculated value of χ^2 to be 6.89, which is less than the critical value of χ^2 at 0.05 level. Hence, the difference is not significant.

4.15.8 Statement No. 8: I am familiar with the scheme of examination and question pattern by MBSE for English subject.

Table 158

Perception on Familiarity with Scheme of Examination and Question Pattern

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
English	14	31	2	2	0
Others	6	41	5	3	0
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
5.75	4	0.01 0.05	11.345 9.488	Not significant	

Table 158 reveals that the calculated value is 5.75. This value is less than 9.488 which is the critical value at 0.05 level. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is no significant difference between the teachers who specialize in English and other subjects.

4.15.9 Statement No. 9: The curriculum/syllabus is useful as a guideline when I teach.

Table 159

Perception on Usefulness of Curriculum/Syllabus as a Guide

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
English	4	39	6	0	0
Others	6	44	4	1	0
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
1.76	4	0.01 0.05	11.345 9.488	Not significant	

According to Table 159, the calculated value is 1.75, falling short of the critical value of 9.488 at the 0.05 significance level. Therefore, no significant difference exists between teachers specializing in English and those in other subjects.

4.15.10 Statement No. 10: In a situation where examinations do not exist, I believe my students' attitude towards learning English would change.

Table 160

Perception on Effect of Examination on Students' Attitude

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
English	11	29	3	4	2
Others	4	33	13	4	1
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
9.79	4	0.01	11.345	Significant at 0.05 but not at 0.01 level	
		0.05	9.488		

Table 160 shows the calculated value of to be 9.79, which is lesser than the critical values 11.345 at 0.01 level but more than 9.488 at 0.05 level. It can therefore be concluded that the teachers with English as their subject specialization differ significantly when compared to teachers who specialize in other subjects.

4.15.11 Statement No. 11: Inculcating language skills to the students is my priority, as opposed to ensuring that my students pass in the board examinations

Table 161

Perception on Prioritisation of Language Skill Inculcation

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
English	9	26	11	3	0
Others	8	30	12	5	0
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
0.54	4	0.01	11.345	Not significant	
		0.05	9.488		

The calculated value, 0.54, is less than the critical value of 9.488 at the 0.05 level, as shown in Table 161. Hence, there is no significant difference between teachers who specialize in English and those in other subjects.

4.15.12 Statement No. 12: Students prefer to be taught solely for examination preparation.

Table 162

Perception on Students' Preference on Teaching Goals

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
English	5	21	5	18	0
Others	3	31	11	10	0
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
6.63	4	0.01	11.345	Not significant	
		0.05	9.488		

Table 162 shows a calculated value of 6.63, which is below the critical value of 9.488 at the 0.05 level. Thus, it can be concluded that there is no significant difference between teachers with English and other subjects as their specialization.

4.15.13 Statement No. 13: My teaching experience has an influence on my current teaching.

Table 163

Perception on Effect of Experience on Teaching

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
English	13	32	4	0	0
Others	15	39	1	0	0
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
2.29	4	0.01	11.345	Not significant	
		0.05	9.488		

As per Table 163, the value of 2.29 is below the critical value of 9.488 at the 0.05 level. This indicates no significant difference between teachers specializing in English and those specializing in other subjects.

4.15.14 Statement No. 14: I urge my students to adjust their learning techniques in accordance with the question patterns in the examinations.

Table 164

Perception on Adjustment of Learning techniques

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
English	3	33	7	5	1
Others	4	29	14	7	1
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
2.73	4	0.01	11.345	Not significant	
		0.05	9.488		

Table 164 indicates a calculated value of 2.73, which does not exceed the critical value of 9.488 at the 0.05 level. Consequently, there is no significant difference between teachers who specialize in English and other subjects.

4.15.15 Statement No. 15: The scheme of examination suggests that listening and speaking skills are not to be tested in the board's final examination.

Table 165

Perception on Testing of Listening and Speaking Skills

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
English	2	26	15	6	0
Others	4	26	14	11	0
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
1.83	4	0.01	11.345	Not significant	
		0.05	9.488		

Examining Table 165, it has been shown that the calculated value of χ^2 is 1.83, which is lesser in comparison to the critical values at 0.05 and 0.01 levels. Hence, the difference is not significant.

4.15.16 Statement No. 16: The present curriculum/syllabus is adequate for learning English.

Table 166

Perception on Adequacy of Curriculum/Syllabus

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
English	3	21	12	13	0
Others	2	23	12	18	0
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
0.75	4	0.01	11.345	Not significant	
		0.05	9.488		

In Table 166, the calculated value is found to be 0.75, which is less than the critical value of χ^2 at 0.05 level. Hence, there is no significant difference found.

4.15.17 Statement No. 17: In a situation where examinations do not exist, my teaching methods would be different.

Table 167

Perception on Effect of Examination on Teaching Methods

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
English	7	30	6	4	2
Others	6	29	12	7	1
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
2.91	4	0.01	11.345	Not significant	
		0.05	9.488		

A scrutiny of Table 167 reveals that the calculated value of χ^2 is observed to be 2.91 which is less than the critical values at 0.01 and 0.05 levels. Hence, it is concluded that there is no significant difference between teachers with English and others as their qualifications.

4.15.18 Statement No. 18: HSLC/HSSLC examinations reflect the aims and objectives prescribed in the curriculum.

Table 168

Perception on Reflection of Aims and Objectives

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
English	7	27	12	3	0
Others	3	27	19	6	0
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
3.85	4	0.01	11.345	Not significant	
		0.05	9.488		

Table 168 shows a calculated χ^2 value of 3.85, which is lower than the critical values at both 0.01 and 0.05 levels. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is no significant difference between teachers with English qualifications and those with other qualifications.

4.15.19 Statement No. 19: The current English textbook is well suited to develop students' LSRW skills.

Table 169

Perception on Suitability of Textbooks for Developing LSRW Skills

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
English	7	16	15	11	0
Others	2	19	10	23	1
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
8.95	4	0.01	11.345	Not significant	
		0.05	9.488		

According to Table 169, the χ^2 value is 8.95, falling below the critical values at 0.01 and 0.05 levels. Thus, there is no significant difference between teachers with English qualifications and those with different qualifications.

4.15.20 Statement No. 20: The present English syllabus helps the students in building their language skills for their further academic studies.

Table 170

Perception on Efficacy of Syllabus in Building Language Skills

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
English	1	29	12	7	0
Others	1	31	15	8	0
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
0.12	4	0.01	11.345	Not significant	
		0.05	9.488		

The calculated χ^2 value of 0.12, as shown in Table 170, is less than the critical values at both 0.01 and 0.05 significance levels. Hence, no significant difference exists between teachers with qualifications in English and those in other areas.

4.15.21 Statement No. 21: Board examination motivates teachers to improve their teaching methodology.

Table 171

Perception on Motivation for Teachers

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
English	2	20	11	14	2
Others	1	30	15	8	1
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
4.59	4	0.01	11.345	Not significant	
		0.05	9.488		

From Table 171, it is clear that the χ^2 value of 2.91 is below the critical value at the 0.01 and 0.05 levels. Therefore, it is concluded that teachers with English qualifications do not differ significantly from those with other qualifications.

4.15.22 Statement No. 22: The board examination forces me to teach to the test.

Table 172

Perception on Effect of Examination on Teaching

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
English	4	30	11	15	6
Others	3	23	11	18	0
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
9.04	4	0.01	11.345	Not significant	
		0.05	9.488		

Table 172 indicates a χ^2 value of 2.91, which is less than the critical values at 0.01 and 0.05 levels. This suggests no significant difference between teachers qualified in English and those qualified in other subjects.

4.14.23 Statement No. 23: I feel pressured by society for the board examination result of my students.

Table 173

Perception on Societal Pressure

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
English	9	11	7	22	0
Others	6	22	12	14	1
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
8.04	6.43	0.01	11.345	Not significant	
		0.05	9.488		

Table 173 reveals the calculated value of χ^2 to be 8.04, which is lower than the critical values of χ^2 9.488 and 11.345 at 0.05 and 0.01 level respectively. Hence, it can be concluded that the difference is not significant.

4.14.24 Statement No. 24: I believe that the MBSE English examinations positively influence English learning in secondary and higher secondary schools.

Table 174

Perception on Positive Effect of Examination

Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
English	2	34	6	7	0
Others	0	33	17	5	0
χ^2	df	Critical Values		Inference	
7.29	4	0.01	11.345	Not significant	
		0.05	9.488		

Observing Table 174, it can be seen that the calculated value is 7.29, which is less than 9.488, the critical value at 0.05 level. Hence, this indicates that there is no significant difference.

Focus Group Discussion

The participants opined that having an English degree is not so important to teach English at the secondary and higher secondary level –

“...as long as the teacher is good in English grammar and the language, it does not matter whether they have a background in English or not...”

“...textbooks and other guidebooks are enough to teach English, not their background degree...”

However, three of the participants expressed their disagreement –

“...it is vastly different to be actually educated in the subject...it is evident when it comes to some things like focusing on the objective of the lessons, question setting...”

Also, they talked about the student factor –

“...it takes a true language lover to be able to instil love for the subject and language in student and having a degree helps in that...”

“...English is not only for the board examinations so it is important that our students like what they are learning...”

These statements suggest that while the value of an English degree may seem less significant if the main goal is simply to pass examinations, it plays an important role in fostering a genuine passion for the subject and language. Having a degree relevant to the field can be beneficial in deepening the students’ understanding and appreciation of English.

4. 16 EXAMINATIONS OF THE ALIGNMENTS AND DISCREPANCIES BETWEEN THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OUTLINED IN THE PRESCRIBED ENGLISH CURRICULUM AND THE QUESTION DESIGN IN THE SUBSEQUENT SCHOOL LEAVING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS

As outlined in the objective, “To examine the alignments and discrepancies between the aims and objectives outlined in the English Curriculum prescribed by MBSE and the question design in the subsequent School Leaving Certificate Examinations,” the aims and objectives of the English curriculum for secondary and higher secondary schools are presented below. This is followed by a detailed analysis of the question designs prescribed by MBSE.

4.16.1 Analysis of HSLC Question design in relation to MBSE Curriculum.

Aims and Objectives of the English Curriculum for Secondary Schools

1. To build greater confidence and proficiency in oral and written communication
2. To develop the ability and knowledge required in order to exchange in independent reflection and inquiry
3. To use appropriate English to communicate in various social settings
4. To equip learners with essential language skills to question and to articulate their point of view
5. To build competence in the different registers of English
6. To develop sensitivity to and appreciation of, other varieties of English, Indian Englishes and the culture they reflect.
7. To enable the learner to access knowledge and information through reference skills (consulting a dictionary/thesaurus, library, internet etc)
8. To develop curiosity and creativity through extensive reading
9. To facilitate self-learning to enable them to become independent learners
10. To review, organize and edit their own work and work done by the peers

Question design for HSLC

The question design specifies that there shall be 4 (four) sections, namely, A, B, C and D. The marks distribution for the content areas is as follows: Reading carries

10 marks; Writing is allocated 15 marks and Grammar also carries 15 marks. The Course Book is given 26 marks, while Literature is assigned 14 marks.

Overall, the total marks for assessment add up to 80, ensuring a balanced evaluation of students' language skills.

Analysis of the different sections to find alignments with the aims and objectives

Section A: Reading

Section A (Reading) aligns with the curriculum objectives in the following ways:

- i. Unseen passage & comprehension questions foster independent inquiry (*Objective 2*).
- ii. Synonym & antonym identification enhance reference skills (*Objective 7*).
- iii. Literary & discursive passages promote curiosity and creativity (*Objective 8*).
- iv. Short answer questions & discursive texts develop reasoning and articulation of viewpoints (*Objective 4*).
- v. Exposure to different text types builds competence in various registers of English (*Objective 5*).

Each component strengthens critical thinking, vocabulary and comprehension, aligning with the broader aims of the curriculum.

Section B: Writing

Section B (Writing) aligns with the curriculum objectives in the following ways:

- i. Confidence in communication (*Objective 1*) – This objective is developed through structured writing tasks.
- ii. Social communication skills (*Objective 3*) – This objective is enhanced through the practice of writing letters, invitations and notices.
- iii. Articulating viewpoints (*Objective 4*) – This objective is fostered through the writing of essays, articles and diary entries.

iv. Competence in different registers (Objective 5) – This objective is strengthened through engagement in both formal and creative writing.

v. Reference skills (Objective 7) – This objective is improved through precis writing and summarization.

vi. Self-learning & independence (Objective 9) – This objective is encouraged through diary writing and essay composition.

Section C: Grammar

Section C (Grammar) aligns with the curriculum objectives in the following ways:

i. Confidence in communication (Objective 1) – This objective is strengthened through the practice of sentence structure, verb forms and punctuation.

ii. Social communication skills (Objective 3) – This objective is improved through the use of direct and indirect speech, as well as modal verbs.

iii. Competence in different registers (Objective 5) – This objective is developed through the application of active and passive voice, narration and nominalization.

iv. Reference skills (Objective 7) – This objective is enhanced by learning and applying synonyms, antonyms and proper word order.

v. Self-learning (Objective 9) – This objective is supported through structured grammar exercises that promote independent language development.

Section D: Literature Reader

Alignment Between Aims & Objectives and Section D:

- i. Enhancing Communication Skills – Extract-based and comprehension questions improve understanding and articulation (Objective 1).
- ii. Fostering Independent Thinking – Questions beyond the text encourage critical reflection (Objective 2).
- iii. Building Language Competence – Engages with different registers and cultural contexts (Objectives 3, 5, 6).

- iv. Developing Language Skills – Short and descriptive questions help students articulate their point of view (Objective 4).
- v. Encouraging Creativity & Curiosity – Stimulates creativity and exploration through extensive reading (Objective 8).
- vi. Supporting Self-Learning – Objective and short-answer questions promote independent study (Objective 9).
- vii. Refining Editing & Organization – Focuses on clarity and organization in written responses (Objective 10).

Discrepancies Between Aims & Objectives and Sections A, B, C and D

- i. Objective 1: Confidence in Oral & Written Communication
While the sections focus on written communication, oral communication is largely missing. The curriculum could benefit from incorporating activities like debates, presentations, or discussions to strengthen students' speaking skills.
- ii. Objective 2: Independent Reflection & Inquiry
Sections A and D encourage independent thinking, but there is not enough emphasis on structured reflection. Activities like research projects or reflective essays would help students dive deeper into their own thinking and foster independent inquiry beyond just answering questions.
- iii. Objective 3: Using English in Various Social Settings
While writing tasks in Sections B and C address both formal and informal language use, there is limited focus on using English in real-world scenarios. Including activities like role-plays, dialogues and real-life communication exercises could bring more social relevance to language learning.
- iv. Objective 4: Articulating Points of View
Sections A, B and D support articulation of ideas through writing, but there is a lack of debate or critical questioning activities where students can actively

challenge or refine their viewpoints. These activities would encourage a deeper level of thinking and engagement with the content.

v. Objective 5: Competence in Different Registers of English

While Sections B and C cover formal registers through tasks like report writing and passive voice, there is little exposure to diverse varieties of English (e.g., Indian English). Introducing texts from different cultural backgrounds would help students become more aware of linguistic diversity.

vi. Objective 6: Sensitivity to Varieties of English and Culture

The curriculum does not clearly integrate different varieties of English (e.g., Indian English, British English), especially in reading and writing. Section D (Literature Reader) could be an ideal place to showcase various cultural perspectives and Englishes, but this element seems underdeveloped.

vii. Objective 7: Accessing Knowledge through Reference Skills

Sections A and B incorporate tasks like synonym/antonym identification and précis writing, but Section C (Grammar) does not emphasize the use of reference tools (like a dictionary or thesaurus) enough. Including these tools in grammar exercises could help students refine their language accuracy.

viii. Objective 8: Curiosity and Creativity through Extensive Reading

While Sections A and D nurture creativity through reading, Section C (Grammar) does not encourage creativity in grammar exercises. Grammar tasks could include more context-based exercises, like creating sentences or using grammar in storytelling, to spark curiosity and imagination.

ix. Objective 9: Facilitating Self-Learning and Independence

While Sections B, C and D promote independent thinking, there is limited integration of self-learning across sections. Activities such as peer reviews or self-editing in writing tasks could encourage students to take ownership of their learning process.

x. **Objective 10: Reviewing, Organizing and Editing Work**

There is a noticeable lack of peer review and editing activities in all sections, particularly in writing and grammar. The focus on organization in Section D is helpful, but tasks that encourage peer feedback or self-editing could further enhance students' editing and organizational skills.

4.16.2 Analysis of HSSLC Question design in relation to MBSE Curriculum.

Aims and Objectives of English Curriculum for Higher Secondary School

1. to listen to and comprehend live as well as recorded oral presentations on a variety of topics,
2. to develop greater confidence and proficiency in the use of language skills necessary for social and academic purposes.
3. to participate in group discussions/interviews, making short oral presentations on given topics.
4. to perceive the overall meaning and organisation of the text (i.e., the relationships of the different “chunks” in the text to each other).
5. to identify the central/main point and supporting details, etc.,
6. to build communicative competence in various registers of English.
7. to promote advanced language skills with an aim to develop the skills of reasoning, drawing inferences, etc., through meaningful activities.
8. to translate texts from mother tongue (s) into English and vice versa.
 - a. to develop ability and knowledge required in order to engage in independent - reflection and enquiry.
9. to develop the capacity to appreciate literary use of English and also use English creatively and imaginatively. (Mizoram Board of School Education, 2024)

Alignment with the Aims and Objectives of the Higher Secondary English Curriculum:

Section A: Reading

Alignment with the Aims & Objectives of the Higher Secondary English Curriculum:

i. Objective 1: Listening and Comprehension

While Section A mainly focuses on reading comprehension, the tasks help improve your overall comprehension skills, which indirectly supports listening and understanding different types of content.

ii. Objective 2: Confidence and Proficiency in Language Skills

The variety of unseen passages (factual, discursive, literary) in Section A helps students sharpen their writing skills, building confidence and proficiency in both oral and written communication.

iii. Objective 3: Participation in Discussions and Presentations

Although Section A does not directly address oral communication, tasks like note-making and summarizing encourage students to extract and present key information, skills that are essential for discussions and presentations.

iv. Objective 4: Understanding Text Organization

The reading comprehension tasks in Section A focus on understanding the central idea and how the parts of a text relate to one another, helping students better grasp the overall meaning and structure of texts.

v. Objective 5: Identifying Central Points and Details

Tasks like note-making and summary writing ask students to identify the main points and supporting details in the texts, directly aligning with this objective.

vi. Objective 6: Building Competence in Different Registers of English

The exposure to different types of texts (e.g., factual, discursive and literary) helps students become familiar with various registers of English, enhancing their ability to use the language in different contexts.

vii. Objective 7: Developing Advanced Language Skills

The reading tasks in Section A require students to draw inferences and analyze the texts, which helps improve reasoning and advanced language skills.

viii. Objective 8: Translation Skills

Though Section A is not directly focused on translation, the skills learned through comprehension and analysis of texts can indirectly improve language comprehension, which supports translation skills.

ix. Objective 9: Independent Reflection and Inquiry

The discursive passages encourage students to think critically, reflect on the content and form their own opinions, promoting independent thinking and inquiry.

x. Objective 10: Literary Appreciation and Creativity

The literary passages (such as fiction, poetry and essays) in Section A encourage literary appreciation and expose students to creative uses of language, fostering their own creative expression in English.

Section A plays a crucial role in helping students develop a range of language skills, from comprehension to creative thinking, aligning closely with the curriculum's goals.

Section B: Writing

The alignment found between Section B and the Higher Secondary English Curriculum objectives are presented below:

- i. Objective 2: To develop greater confidence and proficiency in the use of language skills necessary for social and academic purposes

The writing tasks (such as notices, advertisements and letters) build proficiency in expressing ideas clearly, supporting confidence in both academic and social contexts.

- ii. Objective 3: To participate in group discussions/interviews, making short oral presentations on given topics

Writing tasks help students practice organizing thoughts and presenting them clearly, which supports participation in oral discussions and presentations.

- iii. Objective 4: To perceive the overall meaning and organization of the text

Tasks like writing notices, letters and posters develop students' ability to structure and organize their ideas, aligning with the goal of understanding text organization.

- iv. Objective 5: To identify the central/main point and supporting details

Writing assignments encourage students to focus on key details and communicate them effectively, strengthening their ability to identify and express main points and supporting details.

- v. Objective 6: To build communicative competence in various registers of English

Writing various types of texts, such as formal and informal letters, notices and advertisements, exposes students to different registers of English and enhances their versatility in communication.

- vi. Objective 7: To promote advanced language skills with an aim to develop the skills of reasoning, drawing inferences, etc.

Tasks like letter writing and composing descriptive essays foster reasoning skills and the ability to express logical arguments and conclusions.

- vii. Objective 8: To translate texts from mother tongue(s) into English and vice versa:

While not directly tested, the writing tasks, especially descriptive and formal writing, help students build clarity in expression, indirectly supporting translation skills.

- viii. Objective 9: To develop the ability and knowledge required in order to engage in independent reflection and enquiry

Writing letters to the editor and composing opinion-based compositions encourage students to reflect independently and articulate their thoughts critically.

- ix. Objective 10: To develop the capacity to appreciate literary use of English and also use English creatively and imaginatively.

Tasks like writing descriptive compositions or creating posters encourage creativity and the use of English in imaginative and artistic ways, aligning with the goal of literary and creative appreciation.

This alignment highlights how Section B: Writing supports the development of writing skills, critical thinking and creative expression as outlined in the curriculum objectives.

Section C: Literature (40 Marks)

The alignment observed between Section C and the Higher Secondary English Curriculum objectives are presented below:

- i. Objective 1: To listen to and comprehend live as well as recorded oral presentations on a variety of topics

The reading comprehension tasks in both the poetry and prose sections help develop students' ability to understand complex texts, which supports overall comprehension skills.

- ii. Objective 2: To develop greater confidence and proficiency in the use of language skills necessary for social and academic purposes

Through answering questions in the poetry and prose sections, students build confidence in reading and analysing texts. This enhances their ability to communicate effectively in academic and social settings.

- iii. Objective 3: To participate in group discussions/interviews, making short oral presentations on given topics

While not directly oral, the writing tasks and especially long answer questions, help students structure their ideas clearly which can be useful for discussions and presentations.

- iv. Objective 4: To perceive the overall meaning and organisation of the text

The questions in both the poetry and prose sections test students' ability to understand the structure and organization of the text by placing the focus on how different parts of the text relate to each other.

- v. Objective 5: To identify the central/main point and supporting details

Both sections require students to identify the central idea and supporting details either through short answer or comprehension questions. This helps them sharpen their focus on important information.

- vi. Objective 6: To build communicative competence in various registers of English

Exposure to various text types such as poetry and prose in different formats, including short answer and long answer questions helps the students build competence in understanding and using English in different contexts.

- vii. Objective 7: To promote advanced language skills with an aim to develop the skills of reasoning, drawing inferences, etc., through meaningful activities

Comprehension and inference-based questions in both poetry and prose sections require students to analyse and reason, thereby strengthening their ability to draw conclusions.

- viii. Objective 8: To translate texts from mother tongue(s) into English and vice versa

Although not directly tested, the skills gained through reading, comprehending and analysing literary texts contribute to improving the ability to translate and understand language nuances.

- ix. Objective 9: To develop the ability and knowledge required in order to engage in independent reflection and enquiry

The long answer questions and in-depth analysis in both sections encourage independent reflection, critical thinking and engagement with the text. This helps in promoting inquiry.

- x. Objective 10: To develop the capacity to appreciate literary use of English and also use English creatively and imaginatively

The poetry section in particular, focuses on literary appreciation and creative expression. This fosters an understanding of the creative use of language.

In short, the Literature section (Poetry and Prose) aligns well with the curriculum objectives, helping students improve their language skills, reasoning and creative expression.

Discrepancies Between Aims & Objectives and HSSLC Question Design

Upon reviewing the Aims and Objectives of the English Curriculum for Higher Secondary School and the sections of the question design (Reading, Writing and Literature), there seem to be no major discrepancies. However, there are some subtle areas where further clarification or improvement could be made to ensure a more direct connection. Below are the points for consideration:

Section A: Reading

- i. Objective 1 (Listening and Comprehension)

While reading comprehension improves overall comprehension, it is not a direct test of listening skills. Listening comprehension is not explicitly addressed in this section, even though reading indirectly supports comprehension.

- ii. Objective 8 (Translation Skills)

Section A's focus on comprehension and analysis of texts does not explicitly emphasize translation between languages (mother tongue and English).

Section B: Writing

i. Objective 3 (Participation in Discussions and Presentations)

Writing tasks support students in organizing their thoughts and presenting them clearly, but the section does not directly assess oral communication or participation in discussions.

ii. Objective 8 (Translation Skills)

Translation is not directly tested in the writing tasks, which focus mainly on written composition (notices, letters, posters, etc.).

Section C: Literature

i. Objective 1 (Listening and Comprehension)

As with Section A, the tasks in the Literature section do not focus on listening comprehension directly, but rather on reading comprehension.

ii. Objective 8 (Translation Skills)

The Literature section does not directly test or encourage translation between the mother tongue and English, which is a part of Objective 8.

While there is no substantial discrepancy between the aims and objectives of the curriculum and the sections themselves, small adjustments (like adding translation tasks or oral activities) could help ensure all objectives are more directly addressed.

CHAPTER 5

MAJOR FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION; RECOMMENDATIONS, SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTHER STUDIES AND CONCLUSION

This final chapter summarizes the study, presents the conclusions, and offers recommendations for future research. The three major parts that are included in this chapter are:

5.1 Major Findings and Discussions: The key points of the analysed data are presented in a simpler format. They are then discussed in in relation to current situations and context.

5.2 Recommendations: Based on the discussion of the data, the researcher presents recommendations on the various issues and aspects of washback effect on language studies. These aim to improve the teaching and learning of the English language as school subject in Mizoram.

5.3 Suggestions for Further Studies: Based on the study, suggestions are given for future studies on similar or different aspects of English teaching and learning and other related subjects as well.

5.4 Conclusion: The conclusion summarises the key findings of the study and reflects on their implications. It provides a final perspective on the research, highlighting its significance and potential impact.

5.1 MAJOR FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The major findings of the study and discussion of said findings are presented as follows:

5.1.1 Major Findings and Discussion on Students' Perception on the Washback Effect of the School Leaving Certificate Examinations on the Teaching and Learning of English.

This section presents students' overall perceptions of the washback effect of the School Leaving Certificate Examinations on English teaching and learning, highlighting its influence on classroom practices and learning experiences.

5.1.1.1 Findings on Overall Perception of Students on the Washback Effect:

Analysis revealed that out of the total 859 students, 3.61% have a highly positive level, 19.56% have a moderately positive level, the majority of the students, i.e. 51.57% are neutral in their perception, 22.35% have a moderately positive level and 2.91% have a highly negative level of washback effect perception.

In the focus group discussion, the participants shared that their English skills, especially in grammar, vocabulary, comprehension and writing, have improved over time due to their examinations. They found it easier to understand and express themselves in English. However, some had different views saying that examinations do not really help with listening and speaking skills, which mostly improve through classroom lectures and reading books. Others felt that language development depends on the individual.

Discussion

The study revealed a mixed impact of the School Leaving Certificate Examinations (HSLC/HSSLC) on students' English learning. While some students felt that examinations improved their grammar, vocabulary and writing skills, others believed they had little effect on speaking and listening. Findings align with Dawadi (2019) in Nepal and Zhao (2022) in China, where exam-focused learning limited broader language skills. Similarly, Nguyen (2020) in Vietnam found that students relied on memorization instead of real learning. Positive findings, such as improved grammar and reading skills, were similar to studies by Safa & Goodarzi (2014) and Khanshan (2018). However, Liu & Chen (2022) and Teng & Fu (2019) found that oral assessments enhanced speaking and listening skills, unlike the School Leaving

Certificate Examinations. Like Kutlu et al. (2020) in Turkey, Mizoram students focused on test materials rather than communication skills. This suggests that exam structure influences washback effects. To reduce negative washback, incorporating task-based evaluation, communicative activities and performance-based assessments, as seen in Oruganti (2017) and Salma & Prastikawati (2021), could promote better English learning beyond examinations.

5.1.1.2 Findings on Impact on LSRW Skills

Out of the total respondents, 2.56% show a highly positive level of washback effect perception. The majority, 50.87%, are moderately positive in their perception, 22% fall in the neutral category, 21.19% have a moderately negative perception and 3.38% are highly negative.

In the focus group discussion, participants shared that their HSLC and HSSLC examinations have helped improve their English skills, particularly in grammar, vocabulary, comprehension and writing. Many felt that their ability to understand and express themselves in English had improved over time. However, some participants had different views, stating that listening and speaking skills were not significantly impacted by examinations and were mainly developed through classroom lectures and reading books. Others believed that language improvement varied from person to person.

Discussion

This study found that the HSLC/HSSLC had a mixed impact on students' LSRW skills. While students improved in reading and writing, their listening and speaking skills were not significantly affected.

Reading and writing skills showed positive washback. Many students reported improvements in grammar, vocabulary and comprehension due to exam preparation. Similar findings were observed by Khanshan (2018) in Iran and Allen (2016) in Japan, where structured test preparation helped students develop better writing skills.

However, in Mizoram, students relied on memorization and exam-focused materials, limiting deeper learning.

Listening and speaking skills, however, were not significantly influenced because the HSLC/HSSLC does not assess them. Studies like Zhao (2022) in China and Kennedy J (2016) in India showed that when speaking and listening are excluded from examinations, students tend to neglect them. In contrast, Liu & Chen (2022) in China and Teng & Fu (2019) in Taiwan found that including oral assessments improved students' speaking abilities.

The study highlights how assessment design shapes language learning. Similar to Kutlu et al. (2020) in Turkey, Mizoram's exam-focused approach promotes reading and writing but limits speaking and listening. Countries that implemented task-based assessments, such as Munoz (2017), saw better skill development.

To ensure balanced language learning, the examinations should include speaking and listening tests. As a result, students will develop stronger communication skills and greater confidence in using English.

5.1.1.3 Findings on Views on HSLC/HSSLC Examinations

1.75% of the respondents have a highly positive view, 27.47% have moderately positive view, 43.54 have a neutral perception and the rest have a negative perception with 25.38% being moderately negative and 1.86% highly negative.

Focus group discussion revealed that some of participants felt that HSLC and HSSLC examinations encouraged them to work harder, study more and expand their knowledge while also guiding their future goals. However, one participant expressed concern that intense competition restricts learning to the syllabus and commercial notes, despite students' motivation to study.

Discussion

The perceptions were divided in the quantitative data. Likewise, some of the students in the focus group saw the HSLC and HSSLC examinations as strong motivators, pushing them to study harder and plan for their future. This reflects findings from Taiwan (Chou, 2015), where listening tests in entrance examinations prompted teachers to diversify their strategies and increased student motivation. However, a small number felt that intense competition limited learning to the syllabus and commercial notes. Similar concerns were found in Nepal (Dawadi, 2019) and China (Zhao, 2022), where students felt exam-driven teaching restricted their ability to use English in real life.

In Mizoram, many students rely on “bazaar notes” and rote memorization, often neglecting important skills like speaking and listening. This mirrors findings in India (Khongwir, 2018), where ESL teachers focused more on test scores than real language learning.

To create a better balance, assessments should go beyond written examinations. Research from Indonesia (Salma & Prastikawati, 2021) shows that performance-based assessments help students become more engaged and confident. A similar approach in Mizoram could help students develop both knowledge and practical communication skills.

5.1.1.4 Findings on Views on Teacher’s Teaching Strategies

A small percentage of the respondents, 2.79% are found to have highly positive view of washback effect, while 24.56% of the respondents have a moderately positive perception. 49.79% are found to be neutral in their perception. The respondents that are found to be having negative views are 20.26% with moderately negative perception and the remaining 2.68% with highly negative perception.

In the focus group discussion, participants shared positive views on their teachers’ teaching practices, appreciating their preparedness, responsiveness and efforts to simplify difficult concepts using different methods. Students expressed a preference for unfiltered questions and unrestricted suggestions, as they felt that

accessing resources beyond the syllabus enriched their knowledge and better equipped them for higher education.

Discussion

The findings indicate that students hold varied perceptions regarding their teachers' teaching strategies and the washback effect of examinations. While some students appreciate teachers' preparedness and adaptability, a significant number prefer independent learning over teacher-guided suggestions. This highlights the need for a balanced teaching approach that fosters both structured guidance and self-directed study.

Research on washback effects reveals both positive and negative influences of examinations on teaching and learning. Research has shown that exam-driven teaching restricts language acquisition, as it emphasizes rote memorization over the development of practical skills (Sukyadi & Mardiani, 2011; Rahman et al., 2021). This aligns with students' reliance on "bazaar notes" in Mizoram, where preparation for examinations often takes priority over comprehensive learning.

However, some studies like Liu & Chen (2022) indicate that well-designed assessments such as oral examinations can enhance learning outcomes. In Mizoram, adopting diverse assessment methods including communicative tasks and project-based evaluations may help balance test preparation with language proficiency development.

Overall, examinations have a big impact on how teachers teach, but using creative and student-focused methods can reduce negative effects and improve learning experiences.

5.1.1.5 Findings on Views on Personal Learning

Only 0.81% of the respondents have a highly positive perception of washback effect. 31.66% fall in the moderately positive category with 35.67% being neutral in their perception. 27.94% have moderately negative perception and the remaining 3.03% have a highly negative perception of washback effect.

The focus group discussion showed mixed views on English. Some valued it for higher studies, while others admitted they would avoid it if not required. Study habits also varied - some relied on “bazaar notes” for exam questions, while others memorised teacher-provided notes, reflecting an exam-focused approach.

Discussion

The findings reveal diverse student perspectives on personal learning and the washback effect of examinations. While a small percentage of students view washback as highly positive, the majority hold neutral or moderately positive perceptions. However, a significant portion sees it negatively which can be gathered from their concerns about exam-driven learning. The focus group discussion further supports this, as students expressed varied attitudes toward English - some valued its long-term benefits, while others saw it as merely an academic requirement.

The reliance on “bazaar notes” and memorization underscores an exam-focused learning culture, which aligns with global studies on washback. Research from Indonesia (Sukyadi & Mardiani, 2011) and Bangladesh (Rahman et al., 2021) shows similar trends, where examinations dictate teaching and learning methods, often at the expense of language proficiency. Negative washback is evident in many contexts, including Japan (Bailey, 2018) and India (Kennedy, 2016), where students prioritise test preparation over real-world language skills.

However, positive washback effects exist when assessments are designed to promote meaningful learning. Consistent with studies from Taiwan (Teng & Fu, 2019) and China (Liu & Chen, 2022), which show that listening and speaking assessments promote varied instructional strategies and enhance student engagement, the findings suggest that implementing similar assessment practices in Mizoram could foster more dynamic teaching and increase student motivation. These findings suggest that shifting from rote learning to communicative and task-based assessments can create a more balanced learning environment.

In Mizoram, where English plays a key role in education, adopting broader assessment strategies such as project-based learning and oral evaluations, could reduce reliance on exam-centric study habits. While examinations will always influence

learning, well-designed assessments can help bridge the gap between test preparation and language acquisition, fostering more effective learning outcomes.

5.1.2 Major Findings and Discussion on the Comparison of Students on Washback Effect Perception Based on Different Zones:

This section examines and compares students' overall perceptions of the washback effect across different zones, highlighting how regional variations may influence their experiences of teaching and learning English.

5.1.2.1 Findings on Overall Perception of Washback Effect:

- The data analysis reveals that across all zones, a majority of students hold a neutral perception of the washback effect, with percentages ranging from 46.96% to 57.93%. The Central and South zones show a stronger negative leaning, with moderately negative responses (25.78% and 29.66%) surpassing moderately positive ones (8.98% and 8.97%). In contrast, the East zone stands out with the highest proportion of moderately positive responses (29.57%), exceeding moderately negative views (15.65%). Highly positive and highly negative perceptions remain minimal across all regions, with the lowest highly positive responses in the South (2.07%) and the lowest highly negative in the East (2.61%).
- Significant differences were found between zones. Students from the Central zone scored higher than those in the North and South, while students from the West and East zones scored higher than those in the Central zone.
- The North zone had significantly lower scores compared to the West and East zones.
- No significant differences were found between the North and South zones, the West and East zones, the West and South zones, or the East and South zones.

5.1.2.2 Dimension-wise findings:

a) Impact on LSRW Skills:

- Significant differences were found, with students from the West, East and South zones scoring higher than those from the North zone.
- No significant differences were found between the Central zone and other zones, nor among the West, East and South zones.

b) Views on HSLC/HSSLC Examinations:

- Students from the West and East zones scored slightly higher than those from the South zone.
- No significant differences were observed between the Central zone and other zones, nor among the North, West and East zones.

c) Views on Teachers' Teaching Strategies:

- Students from the West and East zones had significantly higher scores compared to those from the North and South zones.
- No significant differences were observed between the Central zone and other zones, nor between the North and South and West and East zones.

d) Views on Personal Learning:

- Students from the Central, North, West and East zones scored higher than those from the South zone.
- No significant differences were found between the Central and other zones, nor among the North, West and East zones.

Overall, regional differences exist in student perceptions of the washback effect, with students from the West and East zones often scoring higher. The Central zone shows relatively strong perceptions, while the North and South zones generally score lower in different aspects of assessment impact.

Findings from the focus group discussion revealed that most participants felt that students in the central zone, especially in Aizawl, benefit more from learning English due to better teachers and opportunities. In other zones, only a few exceptional students excel due to limited resources. Despite slight variations in wording, all focus groups agreed on this perspective.

Discussion

The findings of this study highlight significant regional differences in students' perceptions of the washback effect, particularly in how assessments influence learning experiences across various zones. The West and East zones consistently scored higher, suggesting that students in these regions may benefit from more effective or innovative assessment practices. The Central zone houses Aizawl, which is considered to be the centre of education in Mizoram. This zone showed relatively strong perceptions, likely due to better academic facilities. In contrast, the North and South zones generally had lower scores, indicating that students in these areas may experience less positive assessment impact, possibly due to traditional teaching methods or limited resources.

These results align with previous research emphasizing the role of well-structured assessments in promoting positive washback. Cheng and Curtis (2004) found that assessments designed with clear learning objectives tend to enhance student engagement and motivation. Shohamy (2001) suggested that standardised assessments could lead to uniform perceptions across regions, which might explain why some zones, such as the North and South, did not show significant differences. In addition, Alderson and Wall (1993) argued that the washback effect is largely dependent on how assessments are integrated into the learning process. In regions where assessments are more aligned with skill development, students tend to view them positively, as seen in the West and East zones of this study. Conversely, in areas where examinations focus mainly on rote memorization, as might be the case in the North and South zones, students may perceive assessments as less beneficial.

In the context of Mizoram, these findings underscore the need for policymakers and educators to review assessment practices to ensure a more balanced and positive washback effect across all regions. Given that Aizawl serves as the academic centre of the state, efforts should be made to extend similar teaching and assessment quality to other districts.

5.1.3 Major Findings and Discussion on the Students' Perception of Washback Effect based on Gender

This section presents the major findings and discussion of the perceptions of students regarding the washback effect, analysed in terms of gender differences.

5.1.3.1 Findings on Overall Perception of Washback Effect based on Gender.

- The sample consists of 859 students out of which 400 are male and 459 are females.
- The study found that most male (53.50%) and nearly half of female students (49.89%) had a neutral perception of the washback effect. A small percentage showed highly positive perceptions (1.25% males, 5.66% females), while 16% of males and 22.67% of females had moderately positive views. Moderately negative perceptions were more common among males (26.75%), whereas 49.89% of females had moderately high perceptions. A small fraction of both male (2.5%) and female (3.27%) students had highly negative views.
- There was a significant difference found between the male and female students in their overall perception; the difference of which is in favour of the female students.

5.1.3.2 Dimension-wise findings based on gender.

- Impact on LSRW Skills – Female students showed a significantly stronger perception of the washback effect than males.
- Views on HSLC/HSSLC Examinations – No significant difference was found between male and female students.
- Views on Teaching Strategies – Female students had a more positive perception of their teachers' teaching methods than males.
- Views on Personal Learning – Female students scored higher in self-learning perceptions with 95% confidence.

In the focus group discussions, students shared their views on gender differences in learning English. Many felt that girls tend to enjoy English more than boys, as they often read even during holidays. Some participants pointed out that English requires a lot of reading and writing, which can feel tedious, but girls seem to take more interest in it and, as a result, learn more. Overall, the discussion reflected a common belief that

female students benefit more from learning English because they dedicate more time and effort to the subject compared to boys.

Discussion

The study reveals a significant gender difference in the perception of the washback effect, with female students showing a more positive outlook than male students. These findings align with previous studies that suggest female students tend to engage more positively with assessments. Cheng et al. (2004) found that females are often more involved in assessment-driven learning, which may explain their more favourable views of washback. Similarly, Raja and Selvi (2001) noted that male students generally struggle more with assessments. Furthermore, studies by Watanabe (2004) and Shohamy (2001) suggest that female students are more receptive to teaching strategies aligned with assessments which could account for their more positive perceptions.

However, no significant difference was found between male and female students regarding HSLC/HSSLC examinations which suggests that high-stakes assessments may have similar impacts across genders. This is consistent with findings by Bailey (1996) and Alderson & Wall (1993), who noted that standardised assessments create comparable levels of pressure for both genders. Hung and Huang (2019) also found that gender is not a differentiating factor in this aspect.

Overall, the study highlights gender's role in shaping students' perceptions of the washback effect, particularly in skill development and self-directed learning. With females generally having more positive perceptions, educators in Mizoram should work to understand the challenges faced by male students and ensure that assessment practices benefit all learners irrespective of genders.

5.1.4 Major Findings and Discussion on the Students' Perception of Washback Effect based on Locale

This section presents the major findings and discussion on the perceptions of students regarding the washback effect, highlighting how these perceptions vary according to their locale.

5.1.4.1 Findings on Overall Perception of Washback Effect based on Locale

- The sample consists of 859 students out of which 451 are from urban locale and 408 are from rural locale.
- The study found that most female (53.68%) and male (49.67%) students had a neutral perception of the washback effect. Highly positive perceptions were slightly higher among rural students (4.41%) than urban students (2.88%). Moderately positive views were reported by 21.06% of urban and 17.89% of rural students. Moderately negative perceptions were similar between urban (23.28%) and rural (21.32%) students. However, highly negative perceptions were more common among urban students (21.32%) compared to rural students (2.7%).
- It was also found that there was no significant difference between the students from urban and rural locale.

5.1.4.2 Dimension-wise findings based on locale.

- In Impact on LSRW skills, Views on HSLC/HSSLC examinations and Views on personal learning, there was no significant difference found in the perception of students from urban and rural areas.
- In Views on teacher's teaching strategies, the students from urban and rural areas differ significantly and the difference is in favour of the urban students.

Participants in the focus group discussion agreed that a student's locale influences their ability to learn English. They noted that urban schools provide better teaching, stricter teachers and greater exposure to English, both in classrooms and at home. In contrast, rural schools often lack these advantages, with some teachers being less

structured and students having fewer opportunities to practice English. As a result, urban students are perceived to have an advantage in preparing for board examinations.

Discussion:

The study found no major differences in how urban and rural students in Mizoram perceive the washback effect, with most students from both groups being neutral - 49.67% of urban and 53.68% of rural students. A slightly higher percentage of rural students (4.41%) reported a highly positive perception compared to urban students (2.88%). Similarly, moderately negative perceptions were similar in both groups. This suggests that, overall, students in both locales share similar views on the impact of assessments.

This aligns with Mizoram's educational landscape, where urban areas like Aizawl benefit from better resources, while rural areas face challenges with access to modern teaching methods. The lack of significant differences in areas like LSRW skills and views on examinations may reflect efforts to standardise assessments across the state, ensuring consistency.

However, a key difference emerged in students' views on teachers' teaching strategies, with urban students reporting more positive perceptions. This could be due to Aizawl's better access to professional development, teaching resources and innovative methods. Focus group discussions reinforced these findings, with participants emphasizing that English is more effectively taught in urban areas. Urban students are more likely to use English in classrooms and at home, whereas rural students, with fewer English-speaking environments, struggle with fluency, which is consistent with studies by Watanabe (2004) and Shohamy (2001), who found that disparities in teaching quality can affect students' perceptions of assessments. A study by Raja and Selvi (2011) also found that students from the rural areas perceived more problems than their urban counterparts.

5.1.5 Major Findings and Discussion on the Students' Perception of Washback Effect based on Home Language

This section presents the major findings and discussion on students' perceptions of the washback effect, focusing on variations based on their home language.

5.1.5.1 Findings on Overall Perception of Washback Effect based on Home Language

- The sample consists of 859 students out of which 775 are those that speak Mizo language at home and 84 are of households that speak languages other than Mizo.
- The study found that students with Mizo as their home language had a more varied perception of the washback effect compared to those who spoke other languages. A majority (52.77%) of Mizo-speaking students had highly negative perceptions, while only 0.48% of non-Mizo speakers shared this view. However, 3.74% of Mizo speakers had a highly positive perception, slightly higher than the 2.38% of non-Mizo speakers. Moderately positive perceptions were also more common among Mizo speakers (20%) than among non-Mizo speakers (15.48%).
- In their overall perception, Mizo-speaking students showed a significantly different perception from non-Mizo speakers, with the difference favouring the Mizo-speaking group.

5.1.5.2 Dimension-wise findings based on home language.

- It was found that in their perception of impact on LSRW skills and Views on HSLC/HSSLC examinations, there was no significant difference found between the students who speak Mizo at home and the students who speak languages other than Mizo at home.
- In views on teacher's teaching strategies and views on personal learning, significant difference was found between the speakers of Mizo and other

languages at home. In both cases, the students who speak Mizo at home are favoured as they scored higher.

The focus group discussion revealed mixed opinions on the role of home language in learning English. Some participants felt that home language does not significantly impact English learning, emphasizing that regular use and practice are more important. Others believed that families who use English more at home tend to be more fluent. A contrasting view suggested that non-Mizo speakers might develop better English skills since English serves as a common language for communication.

Discussion

This study found that students who speak Mizo at home have a more positive perception of the washback effect compared to those from non-Mizo-speaking households. While there were no major differences in perceptions of LSRW skills or HSLC/HSSLC examinations, Mizo-speaking students had a more positive view of their teachers' teaching methods and their own learning. This suggests that they may connect better with classroom instruction, making their learning experience smoother.

The focus group discussion showed mixed opinions on how home language affects English learning. Some students felt that home language does not have a big impact, saying that regular practice matters more. Others believed that students from English-speaking homes are more fluent. Another view was that non-Mizo speakers might develop stronger English skills because they rely on English as a common language. These different opinions show that language learning in Mizoram is influenced by multiple factors.

Mizoram's bilingual setting, where both Mizo and English are used, can be challenging for non-Mizo speakers. Studies suggest that students learn better when they are familiar with the language of instruction. Shohamy et al. (1996) found that students who spoke a different home language than their school language had more difficulty in examinations. Alderson and Hamp-Lyons (1996) found similar results in TOEFL test preparation. This suggests that non-Mizo-speaking students may face more struggles at first.

However, being bilingual also has benefits. Cummins (2000) says that bilingual students develop better thinking skills, which can help in learning a second language. In this case, while non-Mizo speakers in Mizoram may struggle initially due to the Mizo-dominated school environment, they might eventually become more skilled in English because they use it more often for communication.

5.1.6 Major Findings and Discussion on the Students' Perception of Washback Effect based on Level of Education

This section presents the major findings and discussion on students' perceptions of the washback effect by level of education.

5.1.6.1 Findings on Overall Perception based on Level of Education

- The sample consists of 859 students out of which 433 are secondary school students and 426 are students of higher secondary school.
- The findings show that most students have a neutral perception of the washback effect, with 50.12% from the secondary level and 53.05% from the higher secondary level falling into this category. Moderately positive perceptions were reported by 18.48% of secondary and 20.65% of higher secondary students, while moderately negative perceptions were observed in 24.25% of secondary and 20.42% of higher secondary students. Highly positive perceptions were relatively low, with 4.62% at the secondary level and 2.58% at the higher secondary level. Similarly, highly negative perceptions were reported by 2.54% of secondary and 3.29% of higher secondary students.
- In their overall perception, there was no significant difference found between the secondary and higher secondary students.

5.1.6.2 Dimension-wise findings on level of education:

- In Impact on LSRW Skills, Views on HSLC/HSSLC Examinations and Views on Teacher's Teaching Strategies, there was no significant difference found between the secondary and higher secondary school students.

- In Views on Personal Learning, higher secondary students showed a significantly more positive perception than secondary students.

The focus group discussion revealed differing opinions on English learning at different educational levels. Some participants felt that secondary school students learn English better because they focus on it more due to board examinations. In contrast, others believed that higher secondary students gain a deeper understanding of English since their syllabus is broader which allows for more extensive study of the language.

Discussion

The study found that secondary and higher secondary students in Mizoram had similar views on the washback effect, with most staying neutral. However, higher secondary students had a more positive outlook on their personal learning, suggesting they grow more confident and aware of how assessments shape their progress.

The focus group discussion reflected these findings, with students sharing different opinions on learning English at different stages. Some felt that secondary students learn English better because they focus on it more for board examinations. Others believed higher secondary students, with their broader syllabus, gain a deeper understanding of the language. This highlights how priorities shift - secondary students focus on examinations, while higher secondary students take a more analytical approach to English.

In Mizoram, where English is the language of instruction but Mizo is spoken more widely, students experience different levels of exposure to English outside school. This might explain why secondary students see English mainly as an examinations subject, while higher secondary students connect it more with academic growth. These findings align with research showing that students' perceptions of assessments change over time. Encouraging self-reflection and independent learning could help students at all levels develop stronger language skills beyond just preparation for tests.

5.1.6 Major Findings and Discussion on the Students' Perception of Washback Effect based on Type of School Management.

This section presents the major findings and discussion regarding how students' perceptions of the washback effect vary according to the type of school management.

5.1.7.1 Findings on Overall Perception based on Type of School Management

- The sample consists of 859 students out of which 349 are from government-managed schools, 323 students are from private schools and 187 students are from ad-hoc aided schools.
- A highly positive perception of the washback effect was observed in a small percentage of students, with 4.01% from government schools, 4.02% from private schools and 2.14% from ad-hoc aided schools.
- A moderately positive perception was more common among ad-hoc aided students (26.20%), followed by private school students (19.81%) and government school students (15.76%).
- The majority of students held a neutral perception, with 50.43% from government schools, 52.94% from private schools and 51.34% from ad-hoc aided schools.
- A moderately negative perception was most frequent in government schools (27.79%), while private (18.89%) and ad-hoc aided (18.18%) schools had similar proportions.
- A highly negative perception was slightly more common among private school students (4.33%) compared to government (2.01%) and ad-hoc aided (2.14%) school students.

5.1.7.2 Dimension-wise Findings on type of school management:

- No significant differences were found in how the students viewed the impact on LSRW skills and HSLC/HSSLC examinations.

- However, in Views on Teacher's Teaching Strategies, government school students had more favourable views than private school students, while ad-hoc aided school students had the most positive perceptions overall.
- In views on personal learning, private and ad-hoc aided school students had more positive views compared to government school students, with ad-hoc aided students showing the most favourable perception.

In the focus group discussion, participants pointed out that private schools place more emphasis on English compared to government schools. They believe this is because private schools create a better English-speaking environment, discourage memorization and focus more on using the language in real-life situations.

Discussion

The study found no major differences in how students from government-managed, private-managed and ad-hoc aided schools in Mizoram perceived the washback effect. This is likely due to the standardised curriculum and examination system, which ensures that all students, regardless of school type, follow the same assessment structure. Since HSLC and HSSLC examinations set uniform expectations for learning, the overall impact of the washback effect appears to be consistent across these schools.

However, differences emerged in specific areas such as teaching strategies and personal learning. The focus group discussion provided insights into why these differences might exist. Participants highlighted that private schools tend to emphasise English more than government schools, creating a stronger English-speaking environment. They noted that private schools discourage rote memorization and focus more on practical language use, which may contribute to students in these schools having more positive perceptions of their personal learning.

Government-managed schools, on the other hand, often have larger class sizes and fewer resources which may affect students' experiences with teaching strategies

and learning outcomes. This could explain why government school students had less favourable views compared to those in private and ad-hoc aided schools. Ad-hoc aided schools receive both public and private funding, which may provide a balance of structured teaching and better resources that leads to more positive perceptions in both teaching strategies and personal learning.

Socio-economic factors may also play a role in shaping students' perceptions. Private school students often come from more privileged backgrounds, potentially allowing them more exposure to English outside of school. In contrast, students in government or ad-hoc aided schools may face additional challenges, influencing their learning experiences and attitudes toward assessments.

While the standardised assessment system in Mizoram ensures a similar overall perception of the washback effect across school types, variations in teaching strategies and personal learning experiences are influenced by factors such as school resources, class size, instructional methods and socio-economic backgrounds.

5.1.7 Major Findings and Discussion on the Students' Perception of Washback Effect based on Father's Educational Qualification

This section presents the major findings and discussion on students' perceptions of the washback effect by father's educational qualification.

5.1.8.1 Findings on Overall Perception based on Father's Educational Qualification

The sample consists of 859 students out of which 449 students have fathers whose educational qualification is below matric, 324 students whose fathers' qualification is matric to graduate and 86 students whose fathers have an educational degree of masters and above. The findings showed that:

- A small percentage of students had a highly positive perception, increasing with their fathers' educational qualifications (2.45% for non-matriculates, 4.63% for matric to graduates and 5.81% for master's or higher).

- A moderately positive perception was reported by 18.26% of students with non-matriculate fathers, 19.75% of those with fathers who were matric to graduates and 25.58% of those whose fathers had a master's degree or higher.
- The majority of students had a neutral perception, with higher percentages among those whose fathers had lower educational qualifications (53.67% for non-matriculates, 50.62% for matric to graduates and 25.58% for master's or higher).
- A moderately negative perception was observed among 23.16% of students whose fathers were non-matriculates, 22.53% of those with fathers who were matric to graduates and 17.44% of students whose fathers had a master's degree or higher.
- Finally, a highly negative perception was reported by 2.45% of students whose fathers were non-matriculates, 2.47% of those with fathers who had matric to graduate qualifications and 6.98% of those whose fathers had a master's degree or higher.
- Overall, no significant difference was found in students' perceptions of the washback effect based on their fathers' educational qualifications.

5.1.8.2 Dimension-wise findings based on father's educational qualification

- It was found that in all the dimensions i.e. Impact on LSRW Skills, Views on HSLC/HSSLC Examinations, Views on Teacher's Teaching Strategies and Views on Personal Learning, there was no significant difference between the students with fathers whose educational qualifications are below matric, matric to graduate and masters and above.

In the focus group discussions, participants expressed that as fathers are often the primary earners, they are not heavily involved in their children's education. While some fathers encourage studying, their own educational background may limit direct academic support. Students primarily rely on teachers and self-revision. They also suggested that extra classes would benefit those who struggle, particularly those that lack support at home.

Discussion

The study found no major difference in students' perceptions of the washback effect based on their fathers' education levels: below matric, matric to graduate and master's or above. Most students had a neutral perception, with only a small percentage showing highly positive or negative views. This contrasts with studies by Shohamy et al. (1996) and Alderson and Hamp-Lyons (1996), which suggest that parental education affects students' views. However, in Mizoram, all students follow the same curriculum and standardised examinations (HSLC/HSSLC), which may reduce the impact of parental education.

The focus group discussions provided further insights. Some students felt that fathers, as the main earners, had little role in their learning, which may explain the lack of major differences. Although there was no significant difference in overall perception, students with more educated fathers were slightly more likely to have a moderately positive view. Mizoram's strong culture of parental support in education and socio-cultural values may help create similar learning experiences for students, regardless of their fathers' education levels.

5.1.8 Major Findings and Discussion on the Students' Perception of Washback Effect based on Mother's Educational Qualification

Following the previous sections, this part presents the main findings and discussion on students' perceptions of the washback effect, focusing on differences based on their mother's educational qualification.

5.1.9.1 Findings on Overall Perception based on Mother's Educational Qualification

- The sample consisted of 859 students, with 509 having mothers whose education was below matric, 302 with mothers who had completed matric to graduation and 48 with mothers holding a master's degree or higher.

- Highly Positive Perception was absent among students whose mothers had a master's degree or higher but was present in the other two groups.
- Moderately Positive Perception was more common among students with more educated mothers. It was reported by 27.08% of students whose mothers had a master's degree or higher, compared to 20.86% for those with matric to graduate mothers and 18.07% for those with non-matriculate mothers.
- Neutral Perception was the most common across all groups. It was reported by 54.17% of students with highly educated mothers, 52.07% of those with non-matriculate mothers and 50.33% of those with matric to graduate mothers.
- Moderately Negative Perception was more frequent among students with less educated mothers. It was highest among students whose mothers were non-matriculates (23.38%), followed by 21.85% for matric to graduate mothers and 14.58% for those with a master's degree or higher.
- Highly Negative Perception was slightly more common among students with highly educated mothers (4.17%) compared to 2.95% for matric to graduate mothers and 2.65% for non-matriculate mothers.
- There was no significant difference found in their overall perception.

5.1.9.2 Dimension-wise Findings

- The study found no significant differences in students' perceptions based on their mothers' education in areas like Impact on LSRW skills, Views on HSLC/HSSLC examinations and Views on teachers' teaching strategies.
- In Views on Personal Learning, a significant difference was observed between students with non-matriculate mothers and those with matric to graduate mothers, favouring the later. No significant differences were found between students with non-matriculate and master's degree mothers or between matric to graduate and master's degree mothers.

The findings from the focus group discussions reveal that participants had mixed views on how a mother's education affects a child's English learning before board

examinations. Some believed mothers play a bigger role in helping with studies since they are more present at home. One participant felt inspired to excel in English because their mother had a Ph.D. in the subject. However, others thought that at this stage, students are mostly independent and parental education has little influence.

Discussion

The study found that students' views on the washback effect were not strongly influenced by their mothers' education levels. Although some patterns appeared - like students with highly educated mothers showing slightly more positive views and those with less educated mothers having slightly more negative views - these differences were not significant enough to show a clear connection.

A key observation was that none of the students whose mothers had a master's degree or higher had a highly positive view of the washback effect. This suggests that while higher maternal education might lead to a slightly more positive perception, it does not guarantee a very favourable view. The fact that most students remained neutral across all groups indicates that factors like assessment methods and education policies have a greater influence on their perspectives than their mothers' education.

The significant difference found in Views on Personal Learning," where students with non-matriculate mothers had a more favourable view than those with more educated mothers. This could be attributed to a stronger sense of self-reliance among students with less-educated mothers.

The findings align with previous research emphasizing environmental and systemic factors in language learning (e.g., Cheng et al., 2011; Raja & Selvi, 2011). Similar patterns exist in Mizoram, where English is the primary medium of instruction, yet students seem to rely heavily on structured exam materials and rote memorization. This suggests that the washback effect in Mizoram is more influenced by systemic factors rather than maternal education.

5.1.9 Major Findings and Discussion on the Students' Perception of Washback Effect based on their Academic Achievement

This section presents the major findings and discussion on students' perceptions of the washback effect by academic achievement.

5.1.10.1 Findings on Overall Perception based on Academic Achievement

- Out of 859 students, 102 students are low achievers, 538 students are average achievers and 219 students are found to be high achievers.
- Students with a highly positive perception of the washback effect include 5.48% high achievers, 3.53% average achievers and none from the low achievers group.
- For a moderately positive perception, 33.79% are high achievers, while 14.71% are low achievers and 14.68% are average achievers.
- The majority of students hold a neutral perception, with 52.94% being low achievers, 53.16% average achievers and 47.03% high achievers.
- In the moderately negative perception category, 26.02% are average achievers, 25.49% are low achievers and 11.87% are high achievers.
- Finally, students with a highly negative perception consist of 6.86% low achievers, 2.6% average achievers and 1.83% high achievers.
- Overall, there was no significant difference in perception between low and average achievers. However, low achievers had a significantly more negative perception than high achievers, while high achievers had a significantly more positive perception than average achievers.

5.1.10.2 Dimension-wise Findings

- Impact on LSRW Skills: A significant difference was found between low and high achievers, favouring high achievers. No significant difference was observed between low and average achievers or between average and high achievers.

- Views on HSLC/HSSLC Examinations: High achievers had a significantly more favourable perception compared to both low and average achievers. No significant difference was found between low and average achievers.
- Views on Teacher's Teaching Strategies: High achievers had a more positive perception compared to both low and average achievers. No significant difference was found between low and average achievers.
- Views on Personal Learning: A significant difference was observed between average and high achievers, favouring high achievers. However, no significant difference was found between low and average achievers or between low and high achievers.

Participants shared mixed views on the link between academic performance and learning English. Some felt that students who do well in other subjects also tend to excel in English, especially in English-medium schools where the language is used daily. Others pointed out that it really depends on personal interests - someone who loves Physics, for example, might not have the same enthusiasm for English.

Discussion

The findings from Mizoram align with observations in other regions, showing that a student's academic achievement significantly influences their perception of the washback effect. High achievers typically have more positive views on examinations, teaching strategies and their personal learning experiences. During the focus group discussion, participants shared similar views, noting that students who perform well in other subjects often excel in English, especially in English-medium schools where textbooks and communication are in English. However, they also emphasised that individual interests and abilities play a role - some students, for example, may have a passion for Physics but lack interest in English. This suggests that while academic

performance generally influences language learning, personal motivation and subject preferences also matter.

Research by Shohamy et al. (1996) supports these findings, indicating that high achievers often see examinations as opportunities to excel, while low achievers tend to perceive them negatively. This pattern is evident in Mizoram, where high achievers have more positive perceptions, while low achievers report feelings of stress and anxiety. Similarly, Cheng (2005) found in Maharashtra that high achievers experience positive washback from examinations, while low achievers feel more pressure and negativity, a trend mirrored in Mizoram.

Wall (2005) also highlighted how teaching practices and examination pressure impact students' learning experiences. In Mizoram, this is reflected in how high achievers report more favourable views on examinations and teaching strategies, while low achievers express more negativity. Shohamy (2001) further discusses the psychological burden of high-stakes examinations on low achievers, a phenomenon also seen in Mizoram, where these students report higher stress levels and more negative perceptions.

5.1.10 Major Findings and Discussion on the perception of teachers on the different statements.

This section discusses the major findings and provides an analysis of teachers' perceptions regarding the various statements in the study

Statement no 1: I am aware of the aims and objectives outlined in the English curriculum prescribed by MBSE.

a) Findings from Questionnaire

The majority of English teachers (69%) reported being aware of the MBSE English curriculum, with 18% strongly agreeing. However, 10% remained neutral and 3% admitted to being unaware.

When comparing teachers based on experience, no significant difference was found between junior and senior teachers. However, a notable difference was observed

between trained and untrained teachers, with trained teachers demonstrating greater awareness of the curriculum. Subject specialization did not significantly impact awareness, as teachers with English degrees and those from other disciplines showed similar levels of familiarity.

b) Findings from Focus Group Discussion

During the discussion on awareness of the MBSE English curriculum, participants shared their understanding. However, one participant admitted they had not actually read the document but only assumed its objectives.

Discussion:

The findings show that most English teachers in Mizoram claim awareness of the MBSE English curriculum, but trained teachers demonstrate significantly higher awareness than untrained ones. This suggests that formal teacher education improves curriculum familiarity, while teaching experience and subject specialization do not necessarily deepen understanding.

Alderson and Wall (1993) found that teachers' curriculum knowledge shapes how examinations influence teaching. Without a clear understanding, teachers may focus too much on exam content. Similarly, Hazaea and Tayeb (2018) noted that poor curriculum awareness can lead to a narrow focus on examinations rather than broader learning. This concern surfaced in the focus group discussion, where some teachers admitted to assuming the curriculum objectives without reading the document.

Wang (2010) emphasised that aligning curriculum goals with exam content can create positive washback. In Mizoram, improving teachers' understanding of the curriculum could help them balance exam preparation with meaningful learning, rather than just teaching to the test.

Statement no 2: My classroom activities revolve around preparation for the examination.

a) Findings from Questionnaire

The findings show that teachers are divided on whether their classroom activities focus on exam preparation, with 49% agreeing, 28% neutral and the rest disagreeing. Teaching experience and professional education had no significant impact on this perception. However, a significant difference was observed based on subject specialization, with teachers holding English degrees differing in their views from those with degrees in other subjects.

b) Findings from Focus Group Discussion

The discussion revealed that teachers generally feel pressured to focus on exam preparation due to limited time and the responsibility to help students succeed. Some view this as an obligation, prioritizing exam-focused teaching. However, others believe in balancing exam preparation with broader learning, emphasizing the long-term value of English beyond just passing tests.

Discussion

The study reveals a divided stance among teachers regarding the curriculum, which suggests that while many teachers view the curriculum positively, a significant portion remains sceptical or indifferent. No significant difference in perceptions was found based on teaching experience or professional education, aligning with research by Kini and Podolsky (2016) and Aytaç (2023), which both found no strong link between these factors and perceptions of curriculum changes. However, teachers with English degrees showed significantly different perceptions compared to those with degrees in other subjects. This supports findings from Gökhan Baş and Cihad Şentürk (2023), who noted that English teachers often viewed the curriculum more positively.

In conclusion, while teaching experience and professional education do not significantly impact teachers' perceptions, subject specialization is crucial. Curriculum developers should consider the perspectives of teachers from different subject areas to create a more widely accepted curriculum.

Statement no 3: My classroom activities revolve around preparation for the examination.

a) Findings from Questionnaire

The findings indicate that 50% of teachers agree that their classroom activities revolve around exam preparation, with 13% strongly agreeing. Meanwhile, 20% remain neutral, while 16% disagree and 1% strongly disagree. Teaching experience and subject specialization had no significant impact on their perceptions. However, there was a significant difference between trained and untrained teachers in their views on this issue.

b) Findings from Focus Group Discussion

The discussion reveals that teachers primarily base their teacher-made tests on the MBSE question pattern, believing it prepares students for the actual exam. They argue that following the set pattern helps students manage time effectively and that MBSE's marking criteria are sufficient, making changes unnecessary.

Discussion

The study highlights the strong influence of exam-oriented teaching in Mizoram, reflecting global research on washback effects. With 63% of teachers prioritizing exam preparation, classroom instruction is shaped by high-stakes assessments (Alderson & Wall, 1993; Shohamy et al., 1996). Many teachers focus on test-related content rather than broader language skills.

Teaching experience does not significantly impact this approach, as both junior and senior teachers feel the pressure to align with examinations (Cheng & Sun, 2015). However, trained teachers balance exam prep with skill-building better than untrained teachers (Rahman et al., 2021; Qi, 2024). Surprisingly, no difference was found between teachers with English degrees and those from other disciplines, suggesting a system-wide challenge (Pitoyo et al., 2020).

Washback research presents mixed effects. Some studies highlight positive impacts, like increased motivation (Bac & Dan, 2022; Wang, 2010), while others warn that excessive focus on examinations limits key skills (Salehi & Yunus, 2012; Dawadi,

2018). Mizoram teachers experience both - some feel bound by examinations, while others try to encourage deeper learning.

Ali & Hamid (2023) emphasise teacher agency, showing that even in exam-driven contexts, educators can shape their methods. Teachers in Mizoram also face this challenge, showing the need to improve the curriculum to build skills while preparing for examinations.

Statement no 4: The examination motivates students to study English.

a) Findings from Questionnaire

The findings show that 66% of teachers agree to some extent that their classroom activities focus on exam preparation, while 17% remain undecided and 17% disagree. No significant differences were found based on teaching experience, professional education, or subject specialization, indicating that exam-focused teaching is a common practice across all teacher groups.

b) Findings from Focus Group Discussion

The participants agreed that examinations affect students differently. Some become more focused and actively gather study materials, while others are harder to motivate, making it difficult for teachers to keep them engaged.

Discussion

The findings suggest that most teachers believe examinations motivate students to study English, aligning with previous washback studies highlighting the role of assessments in influencing student behavior (Alderson & Wall, 1993; Shohamy, Donitsa-Schmidt, & Ferman, 1996). The 66% agreement (combined “agree” and “strongly agree”) indicates that examinations act as an external motivator. However, the 17% neutral and 17% disagreeing responses suggest that not all students respond positively to exam pressure, supporting research that highlights both positive and negative washback effects (Rahman, Seraj, Hasan, et al., 2021).

The absence of differences based on teaching experience aligns with studies such as Cheng and Sun (2015), which found that experience does not necessarily alter

teachers' perceptions of how examinations impact students. This suggests that both junior and senior teachers observe similar patterns in student motivation, possibly due to standardised assessment practices.

Similarly, the lack of differences based on professional education and subject specialization supports research by Pitoyo, Sumardi and Asib (2020), indicating that exam-driven motivation is a broader phenomenon rather than one shaped by teacher training or academic background. This reinforces the idea that external assessments influence students across various contexts, regardless of the teacher's qualifications.

Overall, the findings suggest that while examinations encourage many students to study English, they do not have a universally positive impact.

Statement no 5: My teaching methods change as the examinations approach.

a) Findings from questionnaire

The results show that 61% of teachers believe examinations influence their teaching, while 21% are neutral and 18% disagree. Teaching experience and professional training do not make a significant difference, as both junior and senior teachers, as well as trained and untrained teachers, have similar views. However, teachers' academic backgrounds do affect their opinions, suggesting that subject specialization influences how they perceive exam-driven teaching.

b) Findings from Focus Group Discussion

At the beginning of the session, teachers aim to cover all topics thoroughly. However, as examinations approach, time constraints and students' slow progress force them to focus more on commonly tested questions rather than the entire syllabus.

Discussion

This study shows that as examinations approach, most teachers change their teaching methods to focus more on test preparation. However, teaching experience and professional training do not seem to affect this change. This finding is similar to studies by Cheng and Sun (2015) and Rahman et al. (2021), which suggest that factors like

school policies and time pressure influence teaching decisions more than experience or training.

A key difference was found based on subject specialization. Teachers of different subjects adjust their teaching in different ways, which matches the findings of Pitoyo, Sumardi and Asib (2020).

Focus group discussions with teachers confirmed these findings. At the start of the school term, they plan to cover all topics in detail. But as examinations get closer, they focus more on commonly tested topics because of time limits and students' slow progress. This issue was also highlighted in Kutlu, Demiroglari and Demiroglari (2020), who found that examinations often lead to a narrower focus in teaching.

Overall, these results show the need for a better balance in curriculum planning. While preparing students for examinations is important, teaching should not be entirely focused on test-taking. This idea is also discussed by Alderson and Wall (1993), who studied how examinations influence teaching and learning.

Statement no 6: My professional training and education have positive influence on my teaching.

a) Findings from questionnaire

The findings show that all teachers agree examinations influence their teaching, with 28% saying the impact is extreme, 66% acknowledging influence and 6% remaining neutral. Teaching experience plays a role, as junior and senior teachers have different views. Similarly, professional training makes a difference, with trained and untrained teachers showing varying perspectives. However, teachers' subject specialization does not significantly affect their opinions on exam influence.

b) Findings from Focus Group Discussion

Participants noted that while teachers with B.Ed degrees are expected to have better practices, this is not always the case. Some seem to prefer shortcuts and others struggle to apply their training due to the demanding syllabus.

Discussion

The findings reveal that examinations significantly influence teaching methods, with all teachers acknowledging their impact. Differences were found based on teaching experience and professional education, but not subject specialization.

Experienced teachers may handle exam pressure differently than junior teachers, as supported by Cheng & Sun (2015). Similarly, trained teachers were expected to have better practices, but some struggled to apply their training due to curriculum constraints, aligning with Rahman et al. (2021).

Interestingly, subject specialization did not affect perceptions, contrasting with Pitoyo, Sumardi, & Asib (2020), who found that disciplines can shape assessment-related teaching decisions.

Overall, while teachers recognise the influence of examinations, real-world constraints like syllabus demands and time pressure often shape their instructional choices more than formal training. This highlights the need for ongoing professional support to balance exam preparation with broader learning goals.

Statement no 7: The HSLC\HSSLC English examination questions test the reading skills.

a) Findings from questionnaire

The findings reveal diverse opinions, with 5% strongly agreeing, 48% agreeing, 17% undecided, 29% disagreeing and 1% strongly disagreeing. There was no significant difference found between the teachers based on teaching experience, professional education and subject specialization.

b) Findings from Focus Group Discussion

The participants agreed that examinations assess students' reading skills through comprehension passages. However, some felt that the current approach is insufficient and suggested incorporating new methods, such as practical reading sessions, to better evaluate students' abilities.

Discussion

The findings show that teachers have mixed views on whether examinations effectively assess students' reading skills. While most agree that comprehension passages test reading ability, a significant portion believes they are not enough. The study found no major differences in perception based on teaching experience, professional training, or subject specialization.

In the focus group discussion, teachers acknowledged that reading comprehension is included in examinations but felt that it does not fully evaluate students' skills. Some suggested adding practical reading activities to improve assessment methods.

These results align with studies like Alderson (2000) and Weir et al. (2009), which argue that traditional reading tests may not be enough to measure real-world reading abilities. However, other research, such as Koda (2005), supports the idea that well-designed comprehension tests can effectively assess reading skills.

Overall, the study highlights the need for a more balanced approach to reading assessments. Combining comprehension exercises with practical reading tasks could provide a more accurate evaluation of students' abilities, as suggested by researchers like Grabe (2009).

Statement no 8: I am familiar with the scheme of examination and question pattern by MBSE for English subject.

a) Findings from questionnaire

The majority of teachers (69%) agreed with the statement, while 19% strongly agreed. A small portion (7%) remained neutral and 5% disagreed. No significant differences were found based on teaching experience, professional education, or subject specialization, indicating that perceptions remain consistent across these factors.

b) Findings from Focus Group Discussion

Participants expressed familiarity with the MBSE examination pattern, emphasizing the importance of understanding question weightage. One teacher humorously noted that past exam questions serve as their “Bible,” highlighting their reliance on previous patterns for preparation.

Discussion

The study found that most teachers are familiar with the MBSE exam format for English, with 88% agreeing or strongly agreeing. Experience, professional training and subject specialization did not significantly affect their familiarity, suggesting that all teachers adapt to the system regardless of their background.

During the focus group discussion, teachers stressed the importance of knowing question weightage to help students prepare effectively. One teacher humorously described past exam questions as their “Bible,” showing their strong reliance on previous tests. This reflects the washback effect (Alderson & Wall, 1993), where examinations influence teaching methods.

Research by Rahman et al. (2021) supports this, stating that familiarity with examinations helps structure lessons but may also lead to excessive focus on test preparation. Cheng (1997) found that teachers who understand exam formats tend to focus on predictable question types, which can limit broader learning. Xie and Andrews (2013) also suggest that while familiarity helps students perform well in tests, it may reduce opportunities for developing critical thinking skills.

Overall, the findings suggest that teachers’ strong knowledge of the MBSE exam system ensures structured instruction but may also encourage test-focused teaching.

Statement no 9: The curriculum/syllabus is useful as a guideline when I teach.

a) Findings from Questionnaire

The majority of teachers (80%) agreed with the statement, while 10% strongly agreed. A small portion (9%) remained neutral and only 1% disagreed. There was no

significant difference based on teaching experience or subject specialization. However, a significant difference was found between trained and untrained teachers in their perceptions.

b) Findings from Focus Group Discussion

On a discussion about MBSE curriculum, the participants expressed a consensus that they structure their teaching content and methods accordingly.

Discussion

The study found that most teachers (90%) view the MBSE curriculum as useful, with only a small percentage remaining neutral or disagreeing. Teachers reported structuring their teaching content and methods based on the curriculum framework.

There was no significant difference in perceptions based on teaching experience or subject specialization, suggesting that both junior and senior teachers, as well as English and non-English teachers, adapt similarly to the curriculum. However, trained and untrained teachers showed a significant difference in their views, supporting research by Rahman et al. (2021), which highlights the role of professional training in shaping curriculum interpretation.

The focus group discussion reinforced these findings, with teachers agreeing that their instruction aligns with the curriculum. This supports curriculum alignment theory (Posner, 2004) and the findings of Cheng (1997), who noted that standardised curricula influence classroom practices, especially when linked to assessments. However, Xie and Andrews (2013) warn that excessive reliance on a set curriculum may limit creative teaching and broader learning outcomes.

Overall, the study confirms that the MBSE curriculum strongly shapes teaching practices and professional training plays a crucial role in how teachers perceive its effectiveness.

Statement no 10: In a situation where examinations do not exist, I believe my students' attitude towards learning English would change.

a) Findings from Questionnaire

The findings show that most teachers i.e. 60% strongly agreed and 14% agreed with the statement, while 15% remained neutral and 11% disagreed to some extent. There was no significant difference between the teachers' views based on teaching experience and professional education. However, there was a notable difference in perception between teachers specializing in English and those from other subjects.

b) Findings from Focus Group Discussion

Participants shared mixed views on how examinations influence students' attitudes toward English. Some believed that many students, especially girls, enjoy the subject, suggesting that examinations have a positive impact. Others had a neutral stance, noting that the pressure of examinations makes it unclear whether students genuinely like English or study it out of necessity.

Discussion

The study found that most teachers believe examinations influence students' attitudes toward English. Teaching experience and professional education did not significantly impact teachers' views, but English specialists and teachers from other subjects had different perspectives.

In the focus group discussion, some teachers mentioned that many students, especially girls, enjoy English, suggesting that examinations help reinforce their interest. This supports Cheng's (1997) study, which found that assessments can motivate students when they have a positive attitude toward a subject. However, other teachers were unsure, saying that students might study English only because of exam pressure, not genuine interest. Xie and Andrews (2013) also noted that high-stakes testing often makes students focus on examinations rather than truly enjoying the subject.

Overall, the findings suggest that while examinations can encourage students to engage with English, they may also create stress that affects their attitude. As Posner (2004) points out, curriculum design is important in shaping students' learning experiences.

Statement no 11: Inculcating language skills to the students is my priority, as opposed to ensuring that my students pass in the board examinations

a) Findings from Questionnaire

The majority of teachers (54%) agreed with the statement, while 16% strongly agreed. About 22% remained neutral and 8% disagreed. No significant differences were found based on teaching experience, professional education, or subject specialization regarding the prioritization of inculcating language skills.

b) Findings from Focus Group discussion

All participants agreed that teaching language skills is important. However, they highlighted challenges such as limited time and the need to also focus on exam preparation. Some teachers mentioned that while they value language development, they must also ensure students pass their examinations, making both aspects equally important.

Discussion

The study reveals that while most teachers prioritise developing students' language skills, they also feel a strong obligation to help students pass their examinations. Approximately 70% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that language learning is important, whereas 22% remained neutral and 8% disagreed. This indicates that despite the emphasis on language education, exam requirements also shape their teaching approaches.

Interestingly, there were no significant differences in perceptions based on teaching experience, professional training, or subject specialization. This suggests that teachers across all backgrounds face similar challenges in balancing language teaching with exam preparation. According to Posner (2004), teachers often modify their teaching strategies to meet time constraints and school expectations.

The focus group discussions echoed these findings. Teachers acknowledged the importance of language skills but highlighted obstacles like limited time and the necessity to prioritise examinations. Alderson and Wall (1993) refer to this as the "washback effect". Similarly, Xie and Andrews (2013) observed that examinations can

restrict the teaching of broader language skills. These show that teachers must manage the delicate balance between preparing students for examinations and fostering their language development.

Statement no 12: Students prefer to be taught solely for examination preparation.

a) Findings from questionnaire

Half of the teachers (50%) agreed with the statement, while 8% strongly agreed. Meanwhile, 15% remained neutral and 27% disagreed. No significant differences were found based on teaching experience, professional education, or subject specialization regarding teachers' perceptions of students' preferred teaching goals.

b) Findings from Focus Group Discussion

Teachers shared that students are mainly focused on passing their examinations and expect lessons to be tailored toward that goal. Many students worry about failing, so they rely on their teachers to highlight the most important points for success.

Discussion

The findings suggest that many students in Mizoram focus on passing board examinations, shaping their expectations from teachers. Over half (58%) of teachers agreed that students prefer exam-focused teaching, while 27% disagreed, indicating mixed views. No major differences were found based on teaching experience, training, or subject specialization, suggesting a widespread exam-driven mindset.

In the discussions, teachers confirmed that students prioritise examinations, expecting lessons to focus on key points. This reflects the “washback effect,” where high-stakes examinations shape teaching and learning (Alderson & Wall, 1993). Studies in India and Asia show similar trends, where standardised examinations lead to rote learning over critical thinking (Cheng, 1997; Xie & Andrews, 2013). Rahman et al. (2021) found that exam pressure often limits creative teaching methods.

In Mizoram, where MBSE examinations are crucial, teachers rely on past papers and predictable patterns which reinforces test-focused learning (Posner, 2004). While this helps students pass, it may hinder deeper language development.

Statement no 13: My teaching experience has an influence on my current teaching.

a) Findings from Questionnaire

The findings show that all teachers agreed that experience influences their teaching. Most (68%) agreed, 27% strongly agreed and 5% were neutral. There was no major difference between junior and senior teachers. However, trained and untrained teachers had different opinions on the impact of experience. Subject specialization did not seem to affect their views.

b) Findings from Focus Group Discussion

A junior teacher shared that senior teachers, with their experience, have a better understanding of the syllabus and exam patterns. They can plan their lessons effectively and focus on key topics from the start. Moreover, they know how to support slower students by selecting manageable portions to reduce their workload.

There was also a differing opinion. Another participant argued that experience is not the only factor and that diligent teachers, regardless of their years in the profession, can figure out the best teaching approach through effort and dedication.

Discussion:

The findings highlight that most teachers recognise the influence of experience on their teaching. Interestingly, both junior and senior teachers acknowledged the importance of experience, but their views were not significantly different. However, trained and untrained teachers had different perceptions which suggest that formal education may shape how they view the role of experience. Subject specialization did not seem to make a difference in their opinions.

In the focus group discussion, some teachers pointed out that senior teachers, with their years of experience, tend to understand the syllabus and exam patterns better. They can plan lessons more effectively, prioritise key areas and help struggling students by adjusting the workload. This aligns with Posner's (2004) idea that experienced teachers develop structured teaching methods that help students grasp important concepts.

However, not everyone agreed. Some teachers argued that experience alone does not define good teaching - dedication and effort matter just as much. They believed that even junior teachers, if committed and adaptable, can find effective ways to teach. This reflects Farrell's (2016) perspective that continuous learning and self-reflection are just as crucial as years in the classroom. Similarly, Berliner (2004) suggests that becoming an expert teacher is not just about time spent teaching, but about actively improving one's skills.

In Mizoram, where board examinations shape much of the teaching approach, experienced teachers may have an advantage in preparing students. However, the findings suggest that dedication, adaptability and a willingness to keep learning are just as important in becoming an effective teacher, regardless of experience level.

Statement no 14: I urge my students to adjust their learning techniques in accordance with the question patterns in the examinations.

a) Findings from Questionnaire

The majority of respondents (60%) agreed with the statement, while 7% strongly agreed. Meanwhile, 20% remained neutral, 12% disagreed and 2% strongly disagreed. No significant differences were found based on teaching experience, professional education, or subject specialization.

b) Findings from Focus Group Discussion

The participants, who are teachers shared that they advised students to focus on high-mark sections, study harder and manage their time effectively before the HSLC/HSSLC examinations.

Discussion

The findings show that most teachers encourage students to adjust their study methods based on exam patterns. However, there were some teachers who remained neutral and some who disagreed. There were no major differences in responses based on teaching experience, professional education, or subject specialization, meaning that teachers generally share this approach.

In the focus group discussion, teachers mentioned that before HSLC and HSSLC examinations, they advise students to focus on high-mark sections, study harder and manage their time well. This reflects the “washback effect,” where exam formats shape teaching and learning methods (Alderson & Wall, 1993). Studies like Rahman et al. (2021) also show that in high-stakes exam systems, teachers tend to prepare students for tests rather than broader learning.

In Mizoram, where board examinations are highly important, this approach makes sense. However, researchers like Xie and Andrews (2013) warn that focusing too much on exam patterns may limit students’ overall skill development. Posner (2004) also highlights the need to balance test preparation with deeper learning. Overall, teachers guide students toward success within the current exam system, but finding a balance between exam preparation and real learning remains a challenge.

Statement no 15: The scheme of examination suggests that listening and speaking skills are not to be tested in the board final examination.

a) Findings from Questionnaire

The majority of respondents (50%) agreed with the statement, while 6% strongly agreed. Meanwhile, 28% remained neutral and 16% disagreed. No significant differences were found based on teaching experience, professional education, or subject specialization.

b) Findings from Focus Group Discussion

In the FGD, the teachers acknowledged their awareness of the board examination marking criteria and noted that listening and speaking skills are not assessed in the final examinations. However, they emphasised that these skills should be evaluated through internal assessments.

Discussion

The findings confirm that listening and speaking skills are not assessed in board final examinations. A majority of teachers (50%) agreed with this, with 6% strongly agreeing. However, 28% remained neutral and 16% disagreed, indicating some uncertainty about its impact. Focus group discussions revealed that teachers are aware of this limitation and advocate for internal assessments to address it.

This aligns with previous research on the washback effect, which shows that high-stakes examinations influence teaching by prioritizing tested skills over holistic language development (Alderson & Wall, 1993; Messick, 1996; Shih, 2010). Many studies highlight that such examinations lead to a narrow focus on reading and writing while neglecting speaking and listening (Sukyadi & Mardiani, 2011; Kennedy, 2016; Bailey, 2018; Rahman et al., 2021).

Research indicates that “teaching to the test” results in rote learning and limited skill development (Nahdia & Trisanti, 2018; Vennakkadan, 2016). Misalignment between curriculum goals and assessments further exacerbates this issue, placing stress on students and teachers (Zenuni, 2015; Abute, 2019).

In the context of Mizoram, similar trends are observed where board examinations primarily emphasise reading and writing, leaving little room for the development of listening and speaking skills. Teachers in Mizoram acknowledge this gap and express a need for internal assessments or alternative evaluation methods to ensure well-rounded language proficiency.

Statement no 16: The present curriculum/syllabus is adequate for learning English.

a) Findings from Questionnaire

The findings reveal mixed opinions on the adequacy of the English curriculum. While 43% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that it is sufficient, 34% disagreed and 24% remained neutral. There was no significant difference found based on teaching experience and professional training. However, based on subject specialization, teachers specializing in English had different views compared to those specializing in other subjects.

b) Findings from Focus Group Discussion

Similar to the findings from the questionnaire, teachers had mixed views on the English curriculum. Some felt that textbooks should include more exercises to develop listening, speaking, reading and writing (LSRW) skills. Others believed the curriculum is well-structured but not very practical in the current system. Some felt it is suitable for the present educational context in Mizoram.

Discussion:

Teachers have mixed opinions on whether the Mizoram Board of School Education (MBSE) English curriculum is adequate. Teaching experience and professional training do not seem to affect their views much, but English teachers tend to see the syllabus differently than teachers of other subjects. The concerns of the teachers raised in the discussions that the curriculum provides a solid foundation but lacks practical elements, especially in listening and speaking skills and suggestions to add more exercises to help students develop these skills, is supported by other studies. Posner (2004) points out that a good curriculum should balance theory with real-world skills. Xie and Andrews (2013) argue that exam-focused learning often ignores important aspects of language development. Studies in India and other Asian countries (Rahman et al., 2018) have also found that emphasizing examinations too much can limit students' ability to use language in real-life situations.

Since MBSE examinations mostly test reading and writing, teachers naturally focus on these areas in class, leaving little room for speaking and listening practice. Farrell (2016) suggests that adding more interactive lessons and skill-based assessments can help students gain practical language skills. If the curriculum in Mizoram included activities such as oral communications or discussion-based

activities, it could better prepare students for using English beyond just passing their tests.

Statement no 17: In a situation where examinations do not exist, my teaching methods would be different.

a) Findings from Questionnaire

The findings indicate that 70% of teachers (57% agreed, 13% strongly agreed) believe their teaching methods would change if examinations did not exist, while 17% remained neutral and 14% (11% disagreed, 3% strongly disagreed) did not support the statement. There were no significant differences in perspectives based on teaching experience, as both junior and senior teachers shared similar views. Likewise, professional education did not play a role, as trained and untrained teachers responded similarly. Subject specialization was also not a determining factor, with no major differences observed between teachers who have a degree in English and teachers with a degree in other subjects.

b) Findings from Focus Group Discussion

When the topic of examinations limiting teaching methods was raised during the discussion, participants shared their frustrations. One teacher mentioned that examinations “suffocate” their ability to teach in the way they believe is best, as they are unable to fully implement their preferred methods. Another teacher expressed that the focus on examinations prevents them from engaging students in classroom activities as much as they would like. However, some participants acknowledged that while examinations have drawbacks, they also have benefits such as helping both teachers and students stay focused and avoid idleness.

Discussion

The study aligns with research on how high-stakes examinations shape teaching. Most teachers believe their methods would change without examinations, reflecting the washback effect (Alderson & Wall, 1993). Exam-focused teaching often prioritises test-related content over interactive learning (Rahman et al., 2018).

Teachers expressed frustration over constraints posed by examinations which limit opportunities for student-centred approaches. Research shows that exam-driven systems emphasise rote learning over skill development (Hazaea & Tayeb, 2018). However, some teachers acknowledged that examinations help maintain structure and focus.

While standardised tests uphold academic standards, overemphasis can narrow curricula and restrict teaching flexibility. A balanced approach, integrating classroom activities with exam preparation enhances learning (Jonsson & Leden, 2019). Farrell (2016) stresses reflective teaching to blend creativity with assessments.

In Mizoram, where MBSE examinations strongly shape teaching, using flexible methods can enhance learning while keeping it rigorous. Mixing structured tests with interactive teaching creates a better learning environment.

Statement no 18: HSLC/HSSLC examinations reflect the aims and objectives prescribed in the curriculum.

a) Findings from Questionnaire

The findings showed that 52% of respondents agreed with the statement, 10% strongly agreed, 30% had no opinion and 9% disagreed. When looking at the comparison based on teaching experience, there was a clear difference between junior and senior teachers in how they viewed whether the board examinations match the aims and objectives of the curriculum. However, there was no significant difference between trained and untrained teachers and also between teachers who have degrees in English and those with degrees in other subjects.

b) Findings from Focus Group Discussion

The discussion on the alignment between English board examination questions and the curriculum highlighted two main concerns. One participant emphasised that in order to be complete, the examination should assess listening and speaking skills. Another participant suggested that incorporating more higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) questions would better reflect the aims and objectives of the curriculum.

However, they warned that many students might struggle with such questions due to the current education system.

Discussion

The findings of this study resonate with the concept of washback where examinations influence both teaching and learning practices. The concerns of teachers about the absence of listening and speaking skills in examinations align with the idea that assessments often fail to reflect the comprehensive goals of the curriculum, as discussed by Shohamy (2001). This aligns with Rahman et al. (2021), who found that standardised tests often fail to measure a broad range of skills, thus limiting the alignment between assessments and curricular aims.

In Mizoram, the MBSE HSLC and HSSLC examinations primarily assess reading and writing while neglecting listening and speaking skills which are essential for language education. This misalignment with the broader goals of the curriculum limits students' development of a well-rounded skill set, which reduces the effectiveness of the education system in preparing them for real-world challenges.

The call for higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) in the examination questions reflects findings from Spratt (2005), who emphasised the importance of incorporating more complex cognitive tasks in assessments. However, the concern that students may struggle with such questions is similar to Jonsson and Leden (2019), where teachers noted that students often lack the critical thinking skills needed to perform well in examinations requiring higher-level thinking.

In Mizoram, where the MBSE HSLC and HSSLC examinations drive teaching methods, there is a need for reforms to align assessments with the broader educational objectives of the curriculum. Incorporating HOTS, as well as listening and speaking skills would help create a more balanced and comprehensive approach to learning that prepares students for the future beyond just exam performance.

Statement no 19: The English textbook currently in use is well suited to develop students LSRW skills.

a) Findings from Questionnaire

The findings showed that the teachers are divided in their opinions as 34% of teachers agreed with the statement, 9% strongly agreed and 24% were neutral. However, 33% disagreed and 1% strongly disagreed. When comparing based on teaching experience, no significant difference was found between junior and senior teachers regarding their views on the suitability of the current English textbook for developing students' LSRW skills. Similarly, there was no significant difference between trained and untrained teachers, nor between teachers who specialised in English and those who specialised in other subjects.

b) Findings from Focus Group Discussion

The participants had conflicting views on the appropriateness of the current English textbook for developing students' LSRW skills. One participant felt that while there are enough exercises in the textbook, insufficient time and effort are dedicated to making them truly effective. On the other hand, another participant disagreed, stating that while there are many exercises, they are outdated and uninteresting for students. As a result, even if students have time, they are unlikely to benefit much from them.

Discussion

The study shows that teachers have mixed opinions about the current English textbook's ability to develop students' LSRW skills. No significant difference in opinions was found between junior and senior teachers or between trained and untrained teachers, which indicates that teaching experience or professional training does not strongly impact perceptions. However, there was a difference based on subject specialization, meaning that teachers' academic background influences their views on the textbook.

During the focus group discussion, participants expressed differing views. One felt the textbook has enough exercises but that there is limited time or effort to make

them effective. Another thought the exercises were outdated and not engaging enough to help students, even if there were sufficient time. These opinions are similar to those in studies by Mudiraj (2022) and Pavithra (2023), who also stress the importance of the quality and relevance of exercises in teaching LSRW skills.

The effectiveness of the textbook depends on the quality and engagement level of the exercises. To improve the development of LSRW skills, textbooks should be updated and made more engaging for students.

Statement no 20: The present English syllabus helps the students in building their language skills for their further academic studies.

a) Findings from Questionnaire

The findings indicate that a majority of teachers (58%) agreed and 2% strongly agreed that the syllabus helps in building language skills, while 14% disagreed and 26% remained neutral. No significant difference was found in opinions based on teaching experience or professional education, suggesting that both junior and senior teachers, as well as trained and untrained teachers, share similar views. However, a significant difference was observed between teachers specializing in English and those from other subjects, indicating that subject specialization influences perceptions of the effectiveness of the syllabus.

b) Findings from Focus group Discussion

The discussion focused on how the syllabus can support students in their future academic pursuits. One participant expressed that if students are engaged in all the prescribed activities, they will likely gain enough knowledge to pursue higher studies. Other participants agreed, with one noting that the grammar lessons and activities in the syllabus are sufficient to help students in their further learning.

Discussion

The mixed perceptions among teachers about the effectiveness of the English syllabus suggest that while it has strengths, there are areas that need improvement.

The study found no significant difference in opinions based on teaching experience, which is consistent with Nasreen Sultana (2011), who suggests that syllabus effectiveness is more influenced by content and implementation than by teachers' experience levels. Similarly, no significant difference was observed between trained and untrained teachers, supporting Anthony Wotring and Honglin Chen (2021), who emphasise the alignment of the syllabus with teaching principles over the teacher's training background. However, a significant difference was noted between teachers specializing in English and those specializing in other subjects, suggesting that subject specialization affects perceptions.

The focus group discussion revealed contrasting views, with some teachers believing the syllabus supports students' future academic pursuits, while others feel the prescribed activities and grammar lessons are inadequate. This view mirrors findings by Nasreen Sultana (2011), who critiques syllabi that fail to fully meet students' needs and Anthony Wotring and Honglin Chen (2021), who argue that misalignments between syllabus content and teaching principles can hinder language learning.

In the context of Mizoram, this feedback is especially relevant as the education system is undergoing shifts to improve student preparedness for higher education. Addressing these concerns can make the syllabus more effective in supporting future academic pursuits. Aligning it with both national educational policies and the specific needs of students in Mizoram will further enhance its relevance.

Statement no 21: Board examination motivates teachers to improve their teaching methodology.

a) Findings from Questionnaire

The findings show that nearly half of the teachers (48%) agreed with the statement, with a small 3% strongly agreeing. A quarter of the respondents (25%) remained neutral, while 21% disagreed and 3% strongly disagreed. When looking at different groups of teachers, there were no major differences in opinion. Junior and

senior teachers shared similar views, as did trained and untrained teachers. Likewise, teachers from different subject backgrounds did not show significant differences in how they perceived the issue, suggesting a common perspective across the board.

b) Findings from Focus Group Discussion

Teachers had mixed opinions on how board examinations impact their teaching methods. Some felt that they limit their ability to engage students in interactive classroom activities. Others acknowledged both advantages and disadvantages, noting that while examinations may restrict creativity, they also help maintain focus and prevent idleness. Overall, the discussion highlighted the dual nature of board examinations - both as a challenge and as a source of motivation for teachers.

Discussion

The study found that teachers have mixed opinions about how board examinations affect their teaching methods. There was no significant difference between junior and senior teachers, meaning experience does not strongly influence their views. This supports Cheng (2008), who found that both new and experienced teachers struggle to adapt their teaching to examinations. Similarly, no major difference was seen between trained and untrained teachers, suggesting that professional education does not greatly impact their opinions. Qi (2005) explains that exam-driven teaching depends more on how well teaching aligns with assessment goals rather than a teacher's training.

The findings also showed that teachers across different subjects view the impact of examinations in a similar way. Wall (2000) states that exam pressure affects teaching methods across all subjects, making it a shared challenge for educators.

The focus group discussion supports Shohamy (2001), who describes examinations as both limiting creativity and keeping students and teachers focused. Green (2007) also talks about the “washback effect,” where examinations influence teaching in both positive and negative ways.

Overall, while teachers have different opinions on board examinations, the study highlights the need for a balanced approach. Examinations should motivate

students while also allowing teachers to use creative and effective teaching methods. A well-designed exam system can help improve learning and teaching experiences.

Statement no 22: The board examination forces me to teach to the test.

a) Findings from Questionnaire

The findings show that teachers have different opinions on whether board examinations force them to teach only for the test. While 42% agreed or strongly agreed (7% and 35% respectively), 38% disagreed and 21% remained neutral. There were no major differences in opinions based on teaching experience, professional education, or subject specialization, meaning teachers from all backgrounds shared similar views.

b) Findings from Focus Group Discussion

In the focus group discussion, teachers expressed feeling limited in their teaching methods due to the importance of HSLC/HSSLC examinations. Some said they focus only on important topics to help weaker students, while others felt disappointed that they could not include creative activities like poetry and playwriting, which are often seen as unimportant. These findings highlight the pressure teachers face to prepare students for examinations, sometimes at the cost of a more creative and engaging learning experience.

Discussion

Teachers in Mizoram have mixed opinions about how board examinations influence their teaching. About 42% feel pressured to teach to the test, while 38% disagree and 21% are neutral. This shows that while examinations shape teaching methods, not all teachers feel restricted by them.

The study found no major differences in views based on teaching experience, professional training, or subject specialization. This suggests that teachers across Mizoram, regardless of their background, share similar challenges when it comes to

exam-focused teaching. Research by Cheng (2008) and Wall (2000) also shows that exam pressure affects teachers worldwide, regardless of their expertise or training.

During focus group discussions, some teachers expressed frustration over losing the freedom to use creative teaching methods. They often have to focus only on important exam topics, leaving little room for activities like poetry or playwriting. This reflects what Shohamy (2001) calls the “washback effect,” where high-stakes examinations limit teaching flexibility. On the other hand, some teachers saw examinations as useful for keeping students disciplined and focused, a perspective also supported by Green (2007).

In Mizoram, where HSLC and HSSLC board examinations are crucial for the future of students, many teachers prioritise exam preparation over more interactive and engaging learning. While examinations help maintain structure, they can also limit creativity in the classroom. A better balance - where assessments encourage both academic success and creative learning could lead to a more effective education system in Mizoram.

Statement no 23: I feel pressured by society for the board examination result of my students.

a) Findings from Questionnaire

The study reveals mixed opinions among teachers regarding societal pressure over board exam results. While 46% of teachers feel pressured (32% agreeing and 14% strongly agreeing), 36% do not and 18% remain neutral.

The analysis showed no significant differences based on teaching experience, professional training, or subject specialization. This suggests that teachers, regardless of their background, share similar experiences when it comes to societal expectations regarding student performance.

b) Findings from Focus Group Discussion

Participants agreed that societal pressure on teachers is significant. When students perform well, they receive the credit, but when they fail, teachers are often blamed. This creates a sense of pressure on educators. However, one participant mentioned that with experience, they have learned to ignore most of the criticism.

Discussion

It is evident that many teachers in Mizoram feel societal pressure regarding board examination results. When students succeed, they get the credit, but when they fail, teachers are often blamed. Some teachers learn to ignore criticism over time, but the pressure still affects teaching methods.

The washback effect explains this trend, where high-stakes examinations push teachers toward test-focused instruction at the cost of creativity and deeper learning (Salehi & Yunus, 2012; Ahmad & Rao, 2012; Kılıçkaya, 2016). While examinations can initially motivate students, excessive focus on results can lead to disillusionment (Manjarrés, 2005; Sharon Grace, 2020). In contrast, Ali & Hamid (2023) found that teachers in rural Bangladesh actively negotiated between exam pressures and broader curriculum goals, demonstrating that teacher agency plays a role in mitigating negative washback.

In Mizoram, where board examinations largely shape the future of the students, this pressure is understandable. Bailey (1996) suggests designing assessments that develop diverse skills while supporting meaningful teaching. A holistic teacher evaluation system, rather than one based solely on student exam performance, could help reduce pressure and improve teaching quality.

Statement no 24: I believe that the MBSE English examinations are positively influencing the learning of English in secondary and higher secondary schools.

a) Findings from Questionnaire

Most teachers (64%) agreed that MBSE English examinations have a positive impact on students' learning, while a small percentage (2%) strongly agreed. About 22% remained neutral and 12% disagreed.

When comparing different teacher groups, no major differences were found. Junior and senior teachers shared similar views, as did trained and untrained teachers. Subject specialization also did not influence opinions significantly.

b) Findings from Focus Group Discussion

The discussion showed that participants agreed board examinations have a positive impact on learning English in secondary and higher secondary schools. While they recognised that improvements are needed, they believed examinations are important because they help students stay focused on learning.

Discussion

Most teachers in Mizoram believe that MBSE English examinations have a positive impact on students' learning, with 64% agreeing that they help students engage with the language. During the focus group discussion, participants acknowledged that while the examinations could be improved, they still play a vital role in encouraging students to learn English.

The washback effect helps explain this. Research shows that examinations can sometimes lead to negative washback, where teachers focus too much on test content, while neglecting skills like speaking and writing (Salehi & Yunus, 2012; Dawadi, 2018). However, examinations can also have positive washback especially when they encourage students to improve reading and listening skills, as seen in Wang (2010) in China and Shih (2010) in Taiwan. In Vietnam, Bac & Dan (2022) found that structured examinations boosted student enthusiasm.

While high-stakes examinations can sometimes limit creativity and narrow the curriculum (Manjarrés, 2005; Sharon Grace, 2020), teachers can counteract this by balancing test preparation with meaningful learning (Ali & Hamid, 2023). Studies from Japan and Bangladesh highlight both the motivation and limitations these examinations create (Bailey, 2018; Rahman et al., 2021).

Since board examinations in Mizoram are important for the future of the students, improving the MBSE English exam by adding skills like speaking and writing could help students to have a more comprehensive grasp of the language.

Focus Group Discussion:

a) On Teaching Experience

A junior teacher emphasised that senior teachers are more knowledgeable about the syllabus and exam patterns. Their experience allows them to plan lessons effectively and focus on key areas. They also understand how to support weaker students by selecting manageable portions to reduce their workload.

However, a differing opinion was also expressed. One participant argued that teaching effectiveness is not solely dependent on experience. Instead, they believed that any diligent teacher, regardless of experience, can determine the best teaching approach through effort and dedication.

b) On Professional Education

The discussion also touched on the role of professional education in teaching. One untrained teacher noted that while B.Ed. graduates are expected to have better teaching methods, this is not always the case. She observed that some trained teachers look for shortcuts rather than applying their learning.

Another participant admitted that implementing B.Ed. methodologies in real classrooms is difficult due to a heavy syllabus. She worried that covering the entire syllabus might leave students unable to focus on key topics. Overall, the participants agreed that while professional education provides useful theoretical knowledge, its practical application can be challenging.

c) On Subject Specialization

Most participants believed that having a degree in English is not essential for teaching the subject at the secondary and higher secondary levels. They argued that as long as a teacher has a good command of grammar and language, they can effectively teach using textbooks and guidebooks.

However, other participants disagreed, stating that subject specialization provides deeper insights into lesson objectives and question-setting. They also pointed out that

a teacher with a strong academic background in English is better equipped to inspire students to develop a love for the language, rather than just preparing for examinations.

In conclusion, while experience, professional training and subject specialization all play roles in effective teaching, the discussion revealed differing opinions on their necessity. Some teachers believe that dedication and adaptability matter more than formal qualifications, while others emphasise the advantages of expertise and training.

Discussion

The focus group discussion highlights key factors influencing teaching effectiveness - experience, professional education and subject specialization. These findings align with and contrast against existing research on assessment and washback effects in education. Mizoram's unique social and educational context also plays a crucial role in shaping these perspectives.

Teaching Experience and Washback Effects in Mizoram

The observation that senior teachers are more adept at handling syllabi and examinations is particularly relevant in Mizoram, where the Mizoram Board of School Education (MBSE) follows a structured but rigorous examination system. Research on positive washback suggests that experienced teachers, familiar with the syllabus and assessment patterns, can strategically focus on key areas (Alderson & Wall, 1993). This aligns with the focus group's views that experienced teachers plan lessons effectively and help weaker students by prioritizing essential portions.

However, the counterview that dedicated teachers, regardless of experience, can be effective is crucial in Mizoram's educational context. The state faces a shortage of trained and experienced teachers, particularly in rural areas. Many junior teachers enter the profession through contractual or private school appointments and their ability to adapt and innovate is often more valuable than formal experience (Zokaitluangi, 2018). This reflects broader research indicating that teacher motivation and continuous professional development are critical for effective teaching (Shulman, 1986).

Professional Education: Challenges in Implementation

Mizoram has a high literacy rate (91.58% as per Census 2011), but teacher training remains a challenge, especially in applying B.Ed. methodologies to real classrooms. The focus group findings, where teachers struggle to implement pedagogical theories due to a heavy syllabus, reflect the broader negative washback effect (Cheng, 2005).

Many Mizoram schools, particularly those following the MBSE, emphasise exam-oriented teaching due to the pressure of board examinations. This often limits the application of student-centred approaches promoted in B.Ed. training. A research in Mizoram suggests that teacher training institutions do not always align their curricula with classroom realities, leading to difficulties in practical implementation (Lalhmingthangi, 2020).

Moreover, the presence of private tuition culture in Mizoram affects classroom teaching. Since many students rely on tuition centres for exam preparation, school-teachers often resort to shortcuts to complete the syllabus rather than applying interactive pedagogical strategies. This supports the finding that some trained teachers focus more on covering content quickly than on applying best teaching practices.

Academic Degrees and English Teaching in Mizoram

The debate over the necessity of an English degree for teaching English is particularly relevant in Mizoram, where English is both a compulsory subject and the medium of instruction in many schools. Most participants in the focus group believed that subject specialization is not essential, aligning with research in applied linguistics that language proficiency and teaching skills matter more than formal degrees (Canale & Swain, 1980).

However, the importance of subject expertise is also evident in Mizoram's multilingual context. Mizo students, whose first language is Mizo (Lushai), often face difficulties in grasping English grammar and literary concepts. Teachers with a strong English background may be better equipped to explain complex linguistic structures and foster a genuine appreciation for the language (Lalthangliana, 2015).

The focus of Mizoram on English for career opportunities also means that effective English teaching is not just about passing examinations but also about enhancing communication skills for higher education and employment. Teachers with a degree in English may be more capable of incorporating interactive and immersive language learning techniques, which are essential for improving English proficiency in a non-native English-speaking region.

The findings from the focus group discussion align with broader educational research on teaching effectiveness, assessment washback and pedagogical challenges. In Mizoram, where exam pressure, syllabus constraints and teacher training limitations impact education, experience, professional training and subject specialization each play significant roles.

Experienced teachers benefit from their familiarity with the syllabus and exam patterns, but younger teachers can still be effective if they are diligent and adaptable. B.Ed. training provides useful theoretical knowledge, but its practical implementation is limited by a heavy syllabus and an exam-driven education system. Subject specialization in English is not always seen as essential, but it can enhance student engagement and long-term language development, particularly in a multilingual setting like Mizoram.

Eventually, a balanced approach where teachers continuously develop their skills through experience, training and subject expertise will lead to more effective teaching in Mizoram's educational landscape.

5.1.12 Major Findings and Discussion on Examination of the Alignments and Discrepancies between the Aims and Objectives Outlined in the Prescribed English Curriculum and the Question Design in the Subsequent School Leaving Certificate Examinations

a) Findings from Analysis of HSLC Question design

- i) Objective 1 (Listening and Comprehension): This objective is covered in Writing (Section B), Grammar (Section C) and Literature (Section D) but lacks focus on listening skills.

- ii) Objective 2 (Independent Inquiry & Thinking): This objective can be observed in Reading (Section A) and Literature (Section D) but could include more structured reflection.
- iii) Objective 3 (Social Communication & Skills): This objective is addressed in Writing (Section B), Grammar (Section C) and Literature (Section D) but lacks real-world applications like discussions or role-plays.
- iv) Objective 4 (Reasoning & Articulation): The objectives specified in this is strengthened through Reading (Section A), Writing (Section B) and Literature (Section D) by developing logical thinking and structured responses.
- v) Objective 5 (Competence in English Registers & Language Use): The competence mentioned is found in Reading (Section A), Writing (Section B), Grammar (Section C) and Literature (Section D), ensuring exposure to different forms of English.
- vi) Objective 6 (Cultural & Linguistic Competence): This is addressed in Literature (Section D) but could be expanded to other sections for a broader cultural perspective.
- vii) Objective 7 (Vocabulary & Reference Skills): The skills in this objectives are developed through Reading (Section A), Writing (Section B) and Grammar (Section C), though grammar could emphasise dictionary and thesaurus use more.
- viii) Objective 8 (Creativity & Expression): This is found to be encouraged in Reading (Section A) and Literature (Section D) but could be improved in grammar and writing exercises.
- ix) Objective 9 (Self-Learning & Independent Study): This objective is promoted in Writing (Section B) and Grammar (Section C) but lacks peer review and self-editing opportunities.
- x) Objective 10 (Organization & Editing Skills): The aimed- skills are strengthened through Literature (Section D) but could include more structured feedback activities.

The analysis of the HSLC question design shows several gaps between the objectives and the examination structure:

The HSLC question design has several gaps in meeting its objectives. Listening skills (Objective 1) are not directly tested. Independent thinking (Objective 2) lacks structured reflection. Social communication (Objective 3) misses real-world applications like discussions. Reasoning (Objective 4) could benefit from more feedback opportunities. Cultural competence (Objective 6) is limited to literature. Vocabulary skills (Objective 7) need more focus on dictionary use. Creativity (Objective 8) could be better integrated into writing and grammar. Self-learning (Objective 9) lacks peer review and self-editing. Organization skills (Objective 10) require structured feedback for improvement.

b) Findings from Analysis of HSSLC Question design

The Reading (Section A), Writing (Section B) and Literature (Section C) sections align with the aims and objectives in the curriculum by enhancing comprehension, confidence, organization, reasoning and creative expression.

- i) Objective 1 (Listening & Comprehension): Not included in the exam since there are no listening tasks.
- ii) Objective 2 (Confidence & Proficiency): Well covered in Reading, Writing and Literature sections.
- iii) Objective 3 (Oral Discussions & Presentations): Not tested because there are no speaking or discussion activities.
- iv) Objective 4 (Text Organization & Reasoning): Tested well in Reading, Writing and Literature.
- v) Objective 5 (Identifying Key Points & Language Skills): Included in Reading and Writing sections.
- vi) Objective 6 (Communicative Competence): Partially covered, focusing more on writing than speaking.

- vii) Objective 7 (Advanced Language & Reference Skills): Tested in Reading and Writing, but not emphasised in Grammar.
- viii) Objective 8 (Translation Skills & Creativity): Not tested directly and creative writing is limited.
- ix) Objective 9 (Independent Inquiry & Self-Learning): Partially included, but lacks reflective activities.
- x) Objective 10 (Literary Appreciation & Organization): Well covered in Literature and Writing sections.

Overall, the curriculum objectives are well covered, though listening comprehension (Objective 1), Objective 3 (Oral Discussions and Presentations) and translation skills (Objective 8) could be more explicitly incorporated.

Discussion

The HSLC and HSSLC English examinations under MBSE show both alignment and discrepancies in assessing the English skills of students. While they effectively test reading and writing, they neglect speaking, listening, creativity and real-world application. Similar issues are found in China (Luxia, 2005), Thailand (Jianrattanapong, 2011), Turkey (Paker, 2013) and Pakistan (Khattak et al., 2022; Javaid et al., 2023), where examinations focus on structured literacy and rote memorization and thereby limiting communication skills development.

Some studies such as Sumardi (2017) and Atmojo (2021), emphasise the need for authentic assessments like role-plays, discussions and real-world writing tasks, which MBSE examinations currently lack. These studies argue that traditional testing methods, such as multiple-choice and fill-in-the-blank exercises, fail to measure students' actual language proficiency in real-life situations. Instead, performance-based assessments allow students to demonstrate creativity, critical thinking and the ability to use English in social and professional contexts. The absence of such assessments in MBSE examinations means that students in Mizoram are less exposed to interactive language use, making it harder for them to develop fluency beyond textbook knowledge. In addition to that, studies have shown that assessment formats greatly influence teaching methods which means that as long as MBSE examinations

prioritise written responses over verbal communication, teachers will continue focusing on rote learning and written drills rather than encouraging open-ended discussions, debates and presentations.

To improve MBSE examinations, reforms should include speaking assessments, listening comprehension tests, real-world writing tasks and diverse cultural content. A more balanced approach would help students develop practical English skills needed for academic and professional success.

5.2 LIMITATIONS

This research faced several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, it was conducted only in Mizoram focusing on MBSE examinations, so the results may not be generalizable to other states or boards with different systems.

The sample, while sufficient for analysis, may not capture the full diversity of schools, particularly those in very remote or resource-limited areas. As a result, certain unique teaching practices, student experiences, or local challenges may not be fully represented in the study, which could influence the overall findings.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) could not be held face-to-face due to practical constraints and were conducted via Zoom, which reduced the richness of interaction, limited observation of non-verbal cues, and may have affected group dynamics.

Some respondents had difficulty fully understanding the questions in English, which may have influenced their answers. This could have led to misinterpretation of certain items or incomplete responses, affecting the accuracy of the data. Additionally, language barriers may have limited respondents' ability to express their true thoughts or experiences, especially for more detailed or nuanced questions, which could have impacted the depth and reliability of the findings.

Moreover, due to limited time and available resources, it was not possible to conduct extended classroom observations or to track the long-term effects of the washback. As a result, the study could only provide a snapshot of teaching practices

and student learning at a specific point in time without capturing how these practices or effects might change over a longer period.

Finally, teaching and learning practices continue to evolve with new policies and technological changes, so the findings reflect a specific time frame and may change in the future.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Rea-Dickins (1997) identified five key stakeholders: educators, students, parents, government and official bodies and the marketplace. In this context, the marketplace means the external environment including businesses, industries, employers and the job market. It also covers sectors that impact education like the demand for skills, job opportunities and how education meets workforce needs. The “marketplace” is considered one of the stakeholders because it affects and is affected by the skills and qualifications students gain through education.

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher has proposed several recommendations to mitigate the negative washback effect and address potential issues among secondary and higher secondary school students. The recommendations are organised to target these specific stakeholders.

Recommendations for Educators:

1. Teachers in Mizoram should participate in professional development programs to stay updated on best practices and deepen their knowledge and understanding of the curriculum to enhance teaching quality.
2. Teachers should incorporate activities like discussions, creative writing and project-based learning to develop practical language skills while balancing exam preparation with meaningful learning.
3. Educators should use a variety of assessment methods, such as formative assessments and open-ended tasks, to evaluate students’ overall learning progress rather than relying solely on high-stakes examinations.

Recommendations for Students:

1. It is recommended that students should focus on overall skill development rather than just exam content.
2. Engagement in active learning is recommended, which means participation in group discussions, practical applications and diverse activities.
3. Students are recommended to seek regular feedback to identify areas for improvement, while adopting a growth mindset that allows them to view mistakes as learning opportunities.

Recommendations for Parents:

1. This study shows that students feel their parents' education has limited influence on their learning. Therefore, it is recommended that parents provide more targeted guidance to support their children's learning, particularly by encouraging reading habits and communication skills.
2. It is recommended that parents should show support for policies that ensure holistic development and equal opportunities for all students.

Recommendations for Government and Official Bodies:

1. The study shows that urban and rural students had differing opinions on teaching strategies which indicate a greater need for support in rural areas. To address the disparities, it is recommended that policymakers in Mizoram should prioritise equal access to high-quality teaching methods and resources.
2. Findings from the document analysis shows incongruence between objectives of learning and the test design, particularly in testing only reading and writing skills and neglecting listening and speaking skills. It is therefore recommended to reconsider assessment formats to include listening and speaking skills.
3. The findings reveal a strong washback effect in Mizoram's classrooms, where most teachers focus heavily on exam preparation. While teaching experience does not seem to influence this pattern, it shows that teacher training is essential. It is recommended that the authorities should invest in professional

development programs to enhance teaching practices and reduce the negative washback effect.

4. Curriculum designers should explore ways to minimise exam-related stress while supporting students in developing strong language skills.
5. In order to enhance inclusivity and cultural understanding, it is recommended that texts and questions should incorporate diverse English accents and cultural viewpoints.

Recommendations for the Marketplace:

1. The marketplace can support skill-based hiring practices that value a range of skills beyond exam results, motivating students to prioritise learning over just their grades.
2. Businesses can collaborate with schools to offer career awareness programs, workshops and mentorship opportunities that can help students connect their education to real-world applications.
3. Companies can support initiatives that provide hands-on learning experiences, such as internships, apprenticeships, or industry visits that allow students to develop practical skills alongside their academic studies.

5.4 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

The researcher proposes the following directions for future studies:

1. A longitudinal study could be conducted to assess how students' academic and career trajectories are influenced by exam-focused learning environments at the secondary level.
2. Comparative studies between urban and rural schools could provide insights into how the washback effect varies based on resource availability and teaching methodologies.

3. Future research could investigate the influence of parental expectations and support on students' academic experiences and its role in shaping their perceptions of the washback effect.
4. Studies could be conducted to examine how economic background affects students' access to quality education, tutoring and exam preparation resources.
5. Studies could explore how different assessment formats such as project-based evaluations and continuous assessments, influence teaching methods and student learning outcomes in secondary education.
6. A qualitative study could be undertaken to explore effective strategies for balancing exam-oriented teaching with broader skill development, fostering a more well-rounded learning experience for students.
7. Further research could analyse the long-term effects of exam-driven instruction on students' critical thinking, problem-solving and communication skills.
8. Research could explore how using technology and digital learning tools influences the effects of examinations on teaching and learning.
9. Investigating the effectiveness of teacher training programs in reducing the negative washback effect could provide valuable insights for curriculum development.
10. 10. A comparative study could be carried out among the schools under the governance of various education boards in Mizoram, specifically MBSE and CBSE.
11. A comparative study could be carried out to examine differences in the washback effect across various educational levels in Mizoram and other states.

5.5 CONCLUSION

This study highlights the significant influence of the HSLC and HSSLC examinations on English language teaching and learning in Mizoram which highlights the presence of both positive and negative washback effects. Data accumulated from both students and teachers through questionnaires, focus group discussions and analysis of relevant documents, highlight the impact of examinations.

The methodology adopted in this study was carefully chosen to provide a comprehensive understanding of the washback effect in Mizoram's education system. This study used a sequential explanatory mixed methods design to examine the washback effect in Mizoram, combining quantitative data for measurable patterns and qualitative insights for deeper understanding. Stratified proportionate random sampling ensured fair representation, while purposive sampling allowed in-depth exploration. Validated perception scales and focus group discussions provided reliable data, analysed using statistical tests and thematic coding. This methodology effectively captured both the measurable impact and lived experiences of students and teachers, offering valuable insights for improving education in Mizoram.

While examinations motivate academic effort and strengthen basic reading and writing skills, they also influence teaching methods. This shift in teaching approaches can sometimes restrict holistic language development. Teachers mostly follow the curriculum, but because of the pressure of high-stakes examinations, they focus more on test preparation and less on interactive and communicative learning.

The positive washback effect is evident in how examinations encourage students to develop comprehension, reasoning, writing skills and literary appreciation. They provide a structured learning framework, instil discipline in study habits and ensure that students engage with core language components. However, the negative washback effect emerges in the form of a restricted focus on rote memorization, exam-oriented learning and limited opportunities for real-world language use. The absence of listening exercises and speaking activities in the final assessments significantly limits students' ability to develop essential communication skills, which makes their English learning experience more passive than interactive.

Students' perceptions of the washback effect vary based on factors such as geographical zone, school type, gender, locale, home language and their academic performances. Urban students, private and ad-hoc aided school students and those from more educated households generally perceive English learning more positively, while disparities in teaching quality and access to resources negatively affect students in rural and government school settings. Mizo-speaking students benefit from bilingual

explanations in classrooms, yet non-Mizo-speaking students often develop stronger English proficiency due to their reliance on English as a common language.

Teachers acknowledge the challenges of balancing curriculum goals with examination demands, particularly in fostering LSRW (Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing) skills. While reading and writing skills are well integrated, listening and speaking remain neglected in assessments, reinforcing a limited approach to language acquisition. The reliance on past examinations patterns for teaching further narrows students' exposure to broader linguistic competencies, further contributing to the negative washback effect.

The study shows a clear difference between teachers' and students' perceptions of the MBSE English examinations. Teachers generally viewed the examinations and curriculum as helpful guidelines that influence their teaching methods and motivate students to study. Many of them admitted focusing on examination-related activities but still believed the examinations play a positive role in shaping learning. Students, on the other hand, mostly held neutral views and showed less strong opinions, seeing the examinations more as routine requirements than as opportunities for real language learning. While many teachers recognized the motivational role of examinations, they also acknowledged that listening and speaking remain neglected in assessment, and that curriculum adequacy and textbook suitability remain areas of concern. The document analysis further confirmed this gap, as both HSLC and HSSLC question papers were found to emphasize reading and writing while underrepresenting practical skills such as listening, speaking, creativity, and self-directed learning.

Taken together, the findings reveal a contrast: teachers view examinations as useful guidelines that strongly shape their practices, whereas students perceive them more as routine requirements. The analysis also shows that although examinations reflect parts of the curriculum, they leave out essential communicative and applied skills which therefore limit the potential for holistic language learning.

To reduce the negative washback effect and promote the positive aspects, assessment methods need to be reformed. This can be achieved by incorporating listening and speaking components, encouraging reflective and self-directed learning

and integrating more creative and practical language activities. Also, it is important to bridge the gap on areas like teaching quality and resource availability across various regions, locales and also school types to ensure a more inclusive learning environment. Strengthening interactive teaching strategies, updating textbooks with engaging exercises and promoting a curriculum that goes beyond examinations preparation could significantly enhance students' long-term English proficiency and confidence.

The educational authorities, policymakers, school administrators and teachers in Mizoram can enhance students' language proficiency by adopting a more communicative and skill-based approach. This shift would better equip students with the language skills necessary for academic success, career opportunities and meaningful participation in a globalised society. By utilizing insights from this research, these stakeholders can implement effective language policies, improve teaching methodologies and refine curriculum design to promote long-term English proficiency.

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APPENDIX I
WASHBACK EFFECT PERCEPTION SCALE FOR STUDENTS

Ms Lalremchhungi
Research Scholar, IASE

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA OF STUDENTS

Age: _____

Class: IX ☐ X ☐ XI ☐ XII ☐

Stream: Arts ☐ Science ☐ Commerce ☐

Name of school: _____

Type of management: Govt. ☐ Private ☐ Adhoc aided ☐ Lumpsum ☐ Deficit ☐

Language spoken at home: _____

Gender : Male ☐ Female ☐

Father's qualification: Below Matric ☐ Matric to Graduate ☐ Masters & above ☐

Mother's qualification: Below Matric ☐ Matric to Graduate ☐ Masters & above ☐

Marks scored in English in the last annual examination: _____

Name of village/town: _____ District: _____

Date: ____/____/____

Instructions: The following statements depict the way students see how teachers teach them and how they learn. Please read the statements carefully and depending on your feeling towards it, put a tick mark ☒ on any of the five boxes given on the right side of each statement that you think suit the behaviour of you and your English teacher. There are five possible options provided for each statement viz. **Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD)**. Take care to mark

your responses against all statements. Your response will solely be for research purposes and will be kept confidential.

SI No	STATEMENTS	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	The HSLC/HSSLC English examination questions test the reading skills.					
2	Preparing for the board examinations reduces my interest in English Subject.					
3	I am more worried about English than other subjects during tests/exams.					
4	It is important to spend more time to practice writing skills as it carries more marks in the board examination.					
5	Preparing for the HSLC/HSSLC examination helps me in writing letter/applications.					
6	Preparing for HSLC/HSSLC examination helps me in writing better captions in my social media accounts.					
7	Studying English has encouraged me to read books and articles in the English language that are outside the prescribed syllabus.					
8	Preparing for the HSLC/HSSLC examination helps me when I read stories and novels written in English.					
9	My preparation for HSLC/HSSLC examination motivates me to read magazines/newspapers written in English.					
10	In my preparation for English board examination, I think that studying class notes given by the teacher is enough.					
11	My teacher is well – prepared for English classes.					
12	I think that preparing my own notes and studying them is enough for the examinations.					
13	I feel free to express my opinions in the class.					

14	For board exams , I prepare only those portions which are likely to be included in the test.					
15	I find it unnecessary to improve my listening skills as they will not be tested in the board examination.					
16	My preparation for HSLC/HSSLC examination improves my understanding of song lyrics when I listen to music on YouTube/Spotify.					
17	Preparing for the HSLC/HSSLC examination helps me to understand teacher's lecture in the class.					
18	I think that studying every topic/portion of the textbook is important whether my teacher gives importance to the topic/portion or not.					
19	My English teacher talks to us about the aims of the lesson being taught.					
20	In the classroom, I feel that my teacher is focused on making us learn new vocabulary.					
21	The HSLC/HSSLC examination has little effect on how I learn.					
22	Preparing for the HSLC/HSSLC examination helps me in conversation with my peers in English.					
23	Preparing for the HSLC/HSSLC examination helps me in communicating with English speakers outside school.					
24	My teacher encourages asking questions to clarify our doubts.					
25	My teacher provides guidelines on how to answer questions in the examination.					
26	Preparing for the HSLC/HSSLC examination helps me to understand speeches in English.					
27	If it was not important for the board examinations, I would not have studied English.					
28	My teacher is patient while answering learner's doubts.					

29	Our English teacher covers all topics from the prescribed syllabus although some of it may not be included in the board examination.					
30	My teacher encourages me to leave out the lessons that are less likely to be tested in the examination.					

APPENDIX II
WASHBACK EFFECT PERCEPTION SCALE FOR TEACHERS

Ms Lalremchhungi
Research Scholar, IASE

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA OF TEACHERS

Gender: Male ☐ Female ☐

Age: Below 21 ☐ 21 – 29 ☐ 30-39 ☐ 40 – 49 ☐ 50-59 ☐ 60 and above ☐

No. of years you have been teaching English: 1-4 ☐ 5-9 ☐ 10-14 ☐ 15-19 ☐
over 20 ☐

Level of students: Class IX ☐ Class X ☐ Class XI ☐ Class XII ☐

Educational Qualification: _____

Professional Qualification (B.Ed/ D.El.Ed etc.): _____

Village/Town _____ **District** _____

Instructions: The following statements depict the way teachers view their own teaching of English and how students learn. Please read the statements carefully and depending on your feeling towards it, put a tick mark ☒ on any of the five boxes given on the right side of each statement that you think suit the behaviour of you and your students. There are five possible options provided for each statement viz. **Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD)**. Take care to mark your responses against all statements. Your response will solely be for research purposes and will be kept confidential.

Sl No	STATEMENTS	SA	A	N	D	SD
1	I am aware of the aims and objectives outlined in English curriculum/syllabus prescribed by MBSE.					
2	My classroom activities revolve around preparation for the examination.					
3	I adopt the past MBSE examination marking criteria for the internal tests.					

4	The examination motivates students to study English.					
5	My teaching methods change as the examinations approach.					
6	My professional training and education have positive influence on my teaching.					
7	The HSLC/HSSLC English examination questions test the reading skills.					
8	I am familiar with the scheme of examination and question pattern by MBSE for English subject.					
9	The curriculum/syllabus is useful as a guideline when I teach.					
10	In a situation where examinations do not exist, I believe my students' attitude towards learning English would change.					
11	Inculcating language skills to the students is my priority, as opposed to Ensuring that my students pass in the board examinations					
12	Students prefer to be taught solely for examination preparation.					
13	My teaching experience has an influence on my current teaching.					
14	I urge my students to adjust their learning techniques in accordance with the question patterns in the examinations.					
15	The scheme of examination suggests that listening and speaking skills are not to be tested in the board final examination.					
16	The present curriculum/syllabus is adequate for learning English.					
17	In a situation where examinations do not exist, my teaching methods would be different.					
18	HSLC/HSSLC examinations reflect the aims and objectives prescribed in the curriculum.					
19	The English textbook currently in use is well suited to develop students LSRW skills.					
20	The present English syllabus helps the students in building their language skills for their further academic studies.					
21	Board examination motivates teachers to improve their teaching methodology.					
22	The board examination forces me to teach to the test.					
23	I feel pressured by society for the board examination result of my students.					
24	I believe that the MBSE English examinations are positively influencing the learning of English in secondary and higher secondary schools.					

APPENDIX III

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

I. QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

1. General Perceptions on Washback Effect

- a) How do you feel the School Leaving Certificate Examination influences the way English is taught in your school?
- b) In what ways do your teachers prepare you for the exam?
- c) Do you think the focus on exam preparation affects the way English is taught and learned? How?

2. Exam Preparation and Learning Experience

- a) How does the exam influence your English study habits?
- b) Do you focus more on memorization or understanding concepts? Why?
- c) What type of classroom activities and materials do teachers use to prepare you for the exam? Do you find them useful?

3. Impact on English Skills Development

- a) Do you feel the exam helps you improve all aspects of English (reading, writing, speaking, listening)? Why or why not?
- b) How do you feel about your ability to use English in real-life situations outside the classroom?

4. Comparison Based on Different Factors

- a) Do you think students in different zones/districts experience SLCE preparation differently? Why or why not?
- b) Do you think students from different school types (private/government) have different experiences with exam preparation? How?

- c) Does your home language influence your experience with learning English for the exam? If yes, in what ways?
- d) Do you think boys and girls approach English exam preparation differently? How?
- e) How does your family's education background impact your approach to preparing for English exams?
- f) Do students from urban and rural areas experience exam preparation differently? Why do you think so?
- g) How do your perceptions of the English exam change as you move from secondary to higher secondary levels?
- h) Do higher secondary students feel more confident in their English skills due to exam preparation, or does the pressure increase?
- i) Do high-achieving students prepare for the English exam differently from low-achieving students? How?

II. QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS

1. General Teaching Experience

- a) How do School Leaving Certificate Examinations influence your approach to teaching English?
- b) Do you feel pressure to teach in a way that aligns with the exam format? How does this affect your teaching style?
- c) What teaching methods and materials do you primarily use for exam preparation?

2. Impact on Teaching Practices

- a) How much emphasis do you place on grammar, writing, speaking, and listening skills in class?

- b) Do you find yourself teaching to the test rather than focusing on overall language development?
- c) How do students respond to English lessons focused on exam preparation?

3. Curriculum vs. Examination Alignment

- a) Do you think the exam accurately reflects the objectives of the English curriculum prescribed by MBSE? Why or why not?
- b) Are there any areas in the curriculum that are not tested in the examination but should be?

4. Comparison Based on Different Factors

- a) Do teachers with different levels of teaching experience (senior, junior teachers) approach exam preparation differently? If so, how?
- b) Do you believe that having a degree in English impacts a teacher's ability to teach the subject effectively in schools? If so, in what ways?
- c) Do you think teachers with professional qualifications (e.g. B. Ed) prepare students differently than those with no professional qualifications? Why?

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DEPARTMENT	: EDUCATION MIZORAM UNIVERSITY
TITLE OF THE THESIS	: WASHBACK EFFECT OF SCHOOL LEAVING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS OF MIZORAM BOARD OF SCHOOL EDUCATION ON THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF ENGLISH IN MIZORAM

ONE DAY NATIONAL SEMINAR ON RECENT TRENDS IN EDUCATION



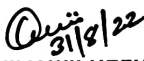
This is to certify that

LALREMCHHUNGI
RESEARCH SCHOLAR, IASE

presented a paper on the topic

'Washback Effect: A Conceptual Overview and Review of Related Literature'

on 31st August, 2022, held at the Auditorium of
Institute of Advanced Studies in Education, Aizawl, Mizoram.


(Dr. LALCHAWIMAWII NGENTE)
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Principal


(LALRINFELI KHIANGTE)
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School of Education
Mizoram University (A Central University), Aizawl

CERTIFICATE OF PARTICIPATION

This is to certify that

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in the International Conference on Higher Education: Issues, Challenges and Ways Forward
held on 25th-27th October, 2023, organized by the School of Education, Mizoram
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DATE OF ADMISSION	: 18.08.2021
APPROVAL OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL	
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REGISTRATION NO. & DATE	: MZU/Ph.D./1808 of 18.08.2021
EXTENSION (If Any)	: NIL

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ABSTRACT

**WASHBACK EFFECT OF SCHOOL LEAVING CERTIFICATE
EXAMINATIONS OF MIZORAM BOARD OF SCHOOL
EDUCATION ON THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF
ENGLISH IN MIZORAM**

**AN ABSTRACT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF
PHILOSOPHY**

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MZU REGISTRATION NO: 1706514

Ph.D. REGISTRATION NO: MZU/Ph.D./1808 of 18.08.2021



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED STUDIES IN EDUCATION

(An Affiliated Institute of Mizoram University)

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

SEPTEMBER, 2025

**WASHBACK EFFECT OF SCHOOL LEAVING CERTIFICATE
EXAMINATIONS OF MIZORAM BOARD OF SCHOOL
EDUCATION ON THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF
ENGLISH IN MIZORAM**

By

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Submitted

**In partial fulfilment of the requirement of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in
Education of Mizoram University, Aizawl.**

INTRODUCTION

English is a global language essential for commerce, education and career growth (Crystal, 2003). It dominates business, science, and cultural exchange, facilitating communication across diverse populations (Graddol, 1997; Kirkpatrick, 2007) and proficiency in English is linked to economic opportunities and national development (Seidlhofer, 2011). In India, English remains an associate language due to linguistic diversity and serves as a medium for accessing global knowledge (Syal, 2019). Today, it is integral to governance, media, and digital spaces, reinforcing its role in academic and career success (Phillipson, 2003; Graddol, 2006; Rao, 2019).

Present Status of English in Mizoram

English is introduced as a second language from entry level and serves as the medium of instruction in secondary and higher secondary education. However, fluency remains a challenge, as students rely on rote memorization rather than comprehension (Lalchhanhima, 2024). Limited exposure, ineffective teaching methods, and an exam-driven system contributes to low proficiency (Lalsangpuii, 2015). Mizoram's homogeneous society, fear of social judgment and a literature- and grammar-focused syllabus limits practical language development.

The Mizoram Board of School Education (MBSE), established in 1976, conducts HSLC and HSSLC exams statewide in the months of February to April, which serve as benchmarks for academic progression. Individual schools do conduct periodic assessments which contributes 20% of total marks, but the annual board exams hold much greater weight, contributing the rest 80%. Subjects without practicals are graded out of 80 marks, while those with practicals are split into 70 (theory) and 10 (practical). Students must score at least 33% in each component and obtain a minimum 'D' grade in internal assessments to pass.

Washback: A Brief Introduction

Washback, or backwash, refers to the influence of testing on teaching and learning (Alderson & Wall, 1993). Tests shape instructional methods as teachers align lessons with assessments, and students focus on exam-related skills rather than deep

learning (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2019). This test-driven approach can hinder creative and analytical thinking (Alderson, 2005).

The concept of washback gained prominence in the 1990s through Alderson and Wall. Related terms such as systemic validity (Creswell, 2009), test impact (Cohen et al., 2007), and consequential validity (Anderson & Bachman, 2008) describe similar phenomena (Alebachew & Minda, 2019). Research from the 1990s onward explored how assessments influence teaching and learning behaviours, promoting discussions on improving testing for meaningful education (Nodoushan, 2021). Assessments play a critical role as both formative and summative tests impact learners and teachers. While classroom tests identify student strengths and weaknesses, high-stakes tests shape instructional methods, often creating stress (Madaus, 1988).

Aspects of Washback

Washback effect can be positive or negative. Buck (1988) argued that teachers and students adapt their methods to maximize test scores, sometimes at the expense of genuine learning. However, Alderson and Wall (1993) noted that well-designed tests encourage deeper engagement. When test objectives align with curriculum goals, students focus on relevant content, and teachers tailor instruction effectively. For example, an oral proficiency test can enhance speaking skills and foster meaningful learning experiences. This is when the washback effect is termed as “positive”.

Negative washback occurs when tests promote narrow learning. Taylor (2005) observed that if writing is assessed through multiple-choice questions, students prioritize test-taking strategies over actual writing. Standardized tests often limit instructional variety (Nodoushan, 2021). Vernon (1956) warned that curricula may be distorted when teachers focus solely on test-related content, reducing genuine learning opportunities.

High-stakes exams like HSLC and HSSLC significantly influence teaching. Teachers emphasize exam-specific skills, often neglecting broader language development (Cheng, 1997). Pressure to cover extensive curricula restricts creative teaching methods (Hughes, 2003). Dall’occo et al. (2024) highlighted teachers’ frustration with rigid syllabi that leave little room for engaging activities.

Exam-driven learning has long-term consequences. Students trained for high-stakes tests may excel in reading and writing but struggle with real-world communication (Alderson & Wall, 1993). Zhao (2023) found that examination-driven English education left university students unprepared for practical communication. Similarly, Zhang (2021) noted that students felt their exams overemphasized reading and writing while neglecting listening and speaking, affecting their college experiences.

In the long run, excessive test focus limits problem-solving and critical thinking skills, impacting academic and career success. While structured assessments are necessary, balancing them with comprehensive learning approaches is crucial for long-term proficiency.

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

English is vital in India's education system, especially in Mizoram, serving as an associate official language and a medium of instruction. The Constitution recognizes English as a second language, influencing academics, professional, and social settings. The Kothari Commission (1964-66) emphasized English's role in education but noted accessibility issues, particularly in rural areas. It stressed bridging this gap to provide equal learning opportunities.

India's Grade 10 and 12 board exams are high-stakes, influencing future education and careers. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 introduced reforms allowing students to retake exams to reduce pressure and improve performance. Despite these changes, exams still dictate teaching approaches, encouraging rote memorization over conceptual learning.

Examination pressure in Mizoram affects students' study habits, leading to cramming and superficial learning instead of deeper understanding. The high-stakes nature of exams prioritizes test preparation over holistic education. While washback studies often focus on teachers, fewer explore students' perspectives. Examining key stakeholders' perceptions is essential to understanding its full impact.

Alderson & Wall's (1993) research introduced 15 hypotheses on how tests shape education, but washback studies in India remain limited, with no known studies

in Mizoram. This study examines high-stakes examinations' growing influence, assessing both benefits and drawbacks. The findings may help refine MBSE exam design, informing policymakers, educators, and students. Educators could improve strategies, and students may gain insights into examinations' impact on learning.

In conclusion, this study is crucial for improving English education in Mizoram, addressing key challenges, and ensuring exams support meaningful learning rather than rote memorization. The present study seeks to answer the research question given below:

1. What are the perceptions of secondary and higher secondary students on the washback effect of the School Leaving Certificate Examinations on the Teaching and Learning of English?
2. Are there any differences between the perceptions of students on the washback effects of School Leaving Certificate Examinations with respect to their zones, gender, locale, home language, level of education, type of school management, father's educational qualification, mother's educational qualification and academic achievement?
3. What are the perceptions of secondary and higher secondary teachers on the washback effect of the School Leaving Certificate Examinations on the Teaching and Learning of English?
4. Are there any differences between the perceptions of teachers on the washback effects of School Leaving Certificate Examinations with regards to their teaching experience, professional qualification and subject specialization?
5. What are the discrepancies/alignments between the aims and objectives outlined in the English Curriculum prescribed by the MBSE and the question design in the subsequent School Leaving Certificate Examinations?

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem under investigation reads as “Washback Effect of School Leaving Certificate Examinations of Mizoram Board of Secondary Education on the Teaching and Learning of English in Mizoram”

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF THE TERMS USED

Washback Effect : In the present study, washback effect refers to the influence of School Leaving Certificate Examinations on teaching and learning process.

Mizoram Board of School Education: Mizoram Board of School Education is an autonomous governmental body for academic administration in Mizoram, India, having its jurisdiction from elementary to higher secondary education.

School Leaving Certificate Examinations: High School Leaving Certificate (HSLC) and (Higher Secondary School Leaving Certificate (HSSLC) Examinations.

English : In the present study, English refers to an academic subject taught in secondary and higher secondary schools.

Senior teacher : Senior teacher here refers to teachers who have over 15 years of teaching experience.

Junior teacher : Junior teacher here refers to teachers with 15 years or less of teaching experience.

Professional Qualification : In the present study, professional qualification refers to B. Ed (Bachelor of Education) degree.

Subject Specialization : In this study, subject specialization refers to the teachers' academic qualifications in their respective fields.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. a) To develop and standardize a perception scale for students to assess the washback effect of the School Leaving Certificate Examinations on the Teaching and Learning of English.

- b) To develop a perception scale for teachers to assess the washback effect of the School Leaving Certificate Examinations on the Teaching and Learning of English.
- 2. To assess the perceptions of students on the washback effect of the School Leaving Certificate Examinations on the Teaching and Learning of English.
- 3. To compare the perceptions of students on the washback effects of School Leaving Certificate Examinations based on zones, gender, locale, home language, level of education, type of school management, father's educational qualification, mother's educational qualification and academic achievement.
- 4. To assess the perceptions of secondary and higher secondary teachers on the washback effect of the School Leaving Certificate Examinations on the Teaching and Learning of English.
- 5. To compare the perceptions of teachers on the washback effects of School Leaving Certificate Examinations based on teaching experience, professional qualification and subject specialization.
- 6. To examine the discrepancies/alignments between the aims and objectives outlined in the English Curriculum prescribed by MBSE and the question designs in the subsequent school leaving certificate examinations.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

- 1. There is no significant difference between the students from different zones of Mizoram on the washback effect of the School Leaving Certificate Examinations on the Teaching and Learning of English.
 - a) There is no significant difference between students from Central and North zones.
 - b) There is no significant difference between students from Central and West Zones.
 - c) There is no significant difference between students from Central and East zones.
 - d) There is no significant difference between students from Central and South zones.
 - e) There is no significant difference between students from North and West zones.
 - f) There is no significant difference between students from North and East zones.
 - g) There is no significant difference between students from North and South zones
 - h) There is no significant difference between students from West and East zones.

- i) There is no significant difference between students from West and South zones.
 - j) There is no significant difference between students from East and South zones.
2. There is no significant difference between the perception of male and female students on the washback effect of the School Leaving Certificate Examinations on the Teaching and Learning of English.
- a) There is no significant difference in impact on LSRW skills with respect to gender.
 - b) There is no significant difference in views on HSLC/HSSLC examinations with respect to gender.
 - c) There is no significant difference in views on teacher's teaching strategies with respect to gender.
 - d) There is no significant difference in views on personal learning with respect to gender.
3. There is no significant difference between the perception of urban and rural students on the washback effect of the School Leaving Certificate Examinations on the Teaching and Learning of English.
- a) There is no significant difference in impact on LSRW skills with respect to locale.
 - b) There is no significant difference in views on HSLC/HSSLC examinations with respect to locale.
 - c) There is no significant difference in views on teacher's teaching strategies with respect to locale.
 - d) There is no significant difference in views on personal learning with respect to locale.
4. There is no significant difference between the perception of students whose home language is Mizo and others on the washback effect of the School Leaving Certificate Examinations on the Teaching and Learning of English.
- a) There is no significant difference in impact on LSRW skills with respect to home language.
 - b) There is no significant difference in views on HSLC/HSSLC examinations with respect to home language.
 - c) There is no significant difference in views on teacher's teaching strategies with respect to home language.

- d) There is no significant difference in views on personal learning with respect to home language.
5. There is no significant difference between the perception of secondary and higher secondary students on the washback effect of the School Leaving Certificate Examinations on the Teaching and Learning of English.
- a) There is no significant difference in impact on LSRW skills with respect to level of education.
 - b) There is no significant difference in views on HSLC/HSSLC examinations with respect to level of education.
 - c) There is no significant difference in views on teacher's teaching strategies with respect to level of education.
 - d) There is no significant difference in views on personal learning with respect to level of education.
6. There is no significant difference between the students based on type of school management on the washback effect of the School Leaving Certificate Examinations on the Teaching and Learning of English.
- a) There is no significant difference in impact on LSRW skills with respect to type of school management.
 - b) There is no significant difference in views on HSLC/HSSLC examinations with respect to type of school management.
 - c) There is no significant difference in views on teacher's teaching strategies with respect to type of school management.
 - i) There is no significant difference in views on teacher's teaching strategies between government and private school students.
 - ii) There is no significant difference in views on teacher's teaching strategies between government and ad-hoc aided school students.
 - iii) There is no significant difference in views on teacher's teaching strategies between private and ad-hoc school students.
 - d) There is no significant difference in views on personal learning with respect to type of school management.
 - i) There is no significant difference in views on personal learning between government and private school students.
 - ii) There is no significant difference in views on personal learning between government and ad-hoc aided school students.

iii) There is no significant difference in views on personal learning between private and ad-hoc school students.

7. There is no significant difference between the students based on their father's educational qualification on the washback effect of the School Leaving Certificate Examinations on the Teaching and Learning of English.

- a) There is no significant difference in impact on LSRW skills with respect to their father's educational qualification.
- b) There is no significant difference in views on HSLC/HSSLC examinations with respect to their father's educational qualification.
- c) There is no significant difference in views on teacher's teaching strategies with respect to their father's educational qualification.
- d) There is no significant difference in views on personal learning with respect to their father's educational qualification.

8. There is no significant difference between the students based on their mother's educational qualification on the washback effect of the School Leaving Certificate Examinations on the Teaching and Learning of English.

- a) There is no significant difference in impact on LSRW skills with respect to their mother's educational qualification.
- b) There is no significant difference in views on HSLC/HSSLC examinations with respect to their mother's educational qualification.
- c) There is no significant difference in views on teacher's teaching strategies with respect to their mother's educational qualification.
- d) There is no significant difference in views on personal learning with respect to their mother's educational qualification.

i) There is no significant difference in views on personal learning between students with mothers who are below matric and matric to graduates.

ii) There is no significant difference in views on personal learning between students whose mothers are below matric and masters and above.

iii) There is no significant difference in views on personal learning between students whose mothers are matric to graduates and masters above.

9. There is no significant difference between the students based on their academic achievement on the washback effect of the School Leaving Certificate Examinations on the Teaching and Learning of English.

- i) There is no significant difference between low and average achievers based on their academic achievement.
 - ii) There is no significant difference between low and high achievers based on their academic achievement.
 - iii) There is no significant difference between average and high achievers based on their academic achievement.
- a) There is no significant difference in impact on LSRW skills with respect to their academic achievement.
- i) There is no significant difference in impact on LSRW skills between low and average achievers.
 - ii) There is no significant difference in impact on LSRW skills between low and high achievers.
 - iii) There is no significant difference in impact on LSRW skills between average and high achievers.
- b) There is no significant difference in views on HSLC/HSSLC examinations with respect to their academic achievement.
- i) There is no significant difference in views on HSLC/HSSLC examinations between low and average achievers.
 - ii) There is no significant difference in views on HSLC/HSSLC examinations between low and high achievers.
 - iii) There is no significant difference in views on HSLC/HSSLC examinations between average and high achievers.
- c) There is no significant difference in views on teacher's teaching strategies with respect to their academic achievement.
- i) There is no significant difference in views on teacher's teaching strategies between low and average achievers.
 - ii) There is no significant difference in views on teacher's teaching strategies between low and high achievers.
 - iii) There is no significant difference in views on teacher's teaching strategies between average and high achievers.
- d) There is no significant difference in views on personal learning with respect to their academic achievement.
- i) There is no significant difference in views on personal learning between low and average achievers.

- ii) There is no significant difference in views on personal learning between low and high achievers.
 - iii) There is no significant difference in views on personal learning between average and high achievers.
10. There is no significant difference between the perception of senior and junior teachers on the washback effect of the School Leaving Certificate Examinations on the Teaching and Learning of English.
 11. There is no significant difference in the perceptions of teachers who specialize in English and other subjects regarding the washback effect of the School Leaving Certificate Examinations on the Teaching and Learning of English.
 12. There is no significant difference between the perception of trained and untrained teachers on the washback effect of the School Leaving Certificate Examinations on the Teaching and Learning of English.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A total of 68 related studies has been reviewed ranging from 1993 to 2024, covering a span of 31 years. The reviewed studies have been categorised as:

1. Concept studies	:3
2. Studies conducted on the perception of teachers	:21
3. Studies conducted on the perception of students	:20
4. Studies conducted on the perception of both teachers and students	:17
5. Studies conducted through analysis of documents and system of examination	:7

METHODOLOGY

The present study employs sequential explanatory mixed methods design with quantitative as well as qualitative components for data collection and analysis.

Population

The population for the study comprises of all secondary and higher secondary schools in Mizoram; involving the students and the English teachers within these

schools. For the purpose of this study, the state has been segmented into five zones: Central, East, South, West and North. Table 1 provides a detailed overview of the districts within each zone along with the respective number of schools.

Table 1

Population for the Study

Sl. No	Zone	Districts	No. of Secondary Schools			No. of Higher Secondary Schools			Total	
			Govt.	Private	Aided	Govt.	Private	Aided	District	Zone
1	Central	Aizawl	63	102	31	12	54	8	270	330
2		Serchhip	22	13	13	2	7	3	60	
3	East	Champhai	21	15	18	1	8	0	63	156
4		Khawzawl	9	14	5	0	3	2	33	
5		Saitual	24	14	12	3	6	1	60	
6	South	Hnahthial	12	4	6	1	5	2	30	290
7		Lawngtlai	29	31	5	3	18	0	86	
8		Lunglei	43	35	17	4	23	1	123	
9		Siaha	17	13	10	1	10	0	51	
10	West	Mamit	31	15	11	2	3	0	62	62
12	North	Kolasib	26	10	10	2	5	2	55	55
Total			297	266	138	31	142	19	893	

Source: Directorate of School Education (as on 20.04.2022)

Sample and Sampling Design

In the present study, schools are taken as the sampling unit. The study employs stratified proportionate random sampling technique for collecting quantitative data while purposive sampling is utilised for collecting qualitative data.

In Mizoram there are approximately 650 secondary and higher secondary schools with 40000 students in secondary schools and 25000 students in higher secondary schools. The required sample size was calculated using Yamane's (1967) formula for known population sizes which gives the formula as:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

where n = required sample size

N = total population size

e = Margin of error

The sample size is calculated separately for secondary and higher secondary students using a margin of error $e = 0.05$ (5%). The sample size for secondary students was calculated to be 396 and that for higher secondary students was 393. Thus, the total sample size was calculated as $396 + 393 = 789$. To account for non-responses and incomplete responses, data was collected from 900 students (450 each from secondary and higher secondary students respectively).

A mixed sampling design was utilised to identify the respondents. In the initial stage, the researcher randomly selected 25 secondary schools and 25 higher secondary schools, with approximate proportional numbers in each zone. The researcher then randomly selected 20 students from each school with approximately proportional numbers from each gender.

Table 2

Sample of Schools

	Secondary			Higher Secondary			Total
Zones	Govt	Aided	Pvt	Govt	Aided	Pvt	
Central	3	2	4	2	1	6	18
East	1	1	1	1	1	2	7
South	4	1	3	1	1	5	15
West	1	1	1	1	0	1	5
North	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
	10	6	10	6	4	15	
Total		25			25		50

Data was collected from all the English teachers from the selected sample of schools; the details of which are presented in Table 3.

Table 3
Sample of Teachers

Teacher Category	Number of Teachers
Secondary School Teachers	55
Higher Secondary School Teachers	49
Total	104

To gather qualitative data, purposive sampling was employed, selecting a small group of participants for in-depth exploration. In each zone, eight (8) students were chosen to participate in a Focus Group Discussion. Additionally, a group of nine (9) English teachers was selected from the five zones as representatives for discussion.

TOOLS USED FOR DATA COLLECTION

The following tools were used for data collection:

- 1) Washback Effect Perception Scale for Students developed by the researcher.
- 2) Washback Effect Perception Scale for Teachers developed by the researcher.
- 3) Focus Group Discussion

Administration of Tools and Collection of Data

The Washback Effect Perception Scale was administered to 859 secondary and higher secondary students. Prior approval was obtained from school heads, and students were briefed on the purpose of the study, confidentiality and instructions before participation. They were given sufficient time to reflect on each statement and respond sincerely. Any queries were addressed and personal information was handled with discretion.

Teacher data was collected through Google Forms and in-person interactions. Seventy-eight (78) teachers responded through the Google forms, while twenty-six (26) were approached directly by the researcher.

Student focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted online via Zoom and Google Meet, allowing for in-depth insights. These sessions were recorded for later analysis. The researcher, who also moderated the discussions, ensured clear explanations of questions and topics to facilitate meaningful participation. Similarly,

the teacher FGD was conducted online via Zoom to accommodate teachers from different regions.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Quantitative Data Analysis

1. Descriptive Statistics: Measures such as mean, standard deviation, percentage, and z-score were used to analyse score distribution and classify students.
2. Tests of Significance:
 - a) t-test: T – test was applied to compare mean differences based on gender, locale, home language and level of education.
 - b) ANOVA: ANOVA was used to compare multiple groups categorized by school management type, parental education and academic achievement.
 - c) Chi-square test: Chi- square test was employed to analyse and compare teacher responses.

Qualitative Data Analysis

1. Transcription and Translation: Focus Group Discussions were carefully transcribed and translated.
2. Data Familiarization: The researcher reviewed transcripts multiple times.
3. Coding: Initial coding identified recurring themes, followed by thematic coding to organize responses.
4. Identifying Patterns: Similarities and differences in responses were analysed.
5. Alignment with Objectives: Findings were checked for consistency with research goals.
6. Triangulation: Qualitative findings were compared with quantitative data for validation.

MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. Construction and standardization of Washback Effect perception scale for students

The researcher identified a lack of tools to measure the Washback Effect on language learning among secondary school students. Recognizing the need for a specialized instrument, a new tool was developed and standardized using Likert's technique. The tool was designed to assess reliability, validity, and suitability for this demographic while updating its norms. The development process involved multiple steps to ensure accuracy and effectiveness.

Selection of Items

In the initial stage, the researcher thoroughly reviewed existing literature on the Washback Effect. A total of 85 statements were compiled for evaluation using a 5-point Likert scale. These statements aim to capture students' perceptions of the Washback Effect from various angles i.e. their knowledge of their prescribed English curriculum, their views on the teaching strategies adopted by their teacher, classroom activities, and also how they perceive their own learning method.

Content Validation

The preliminary draft was shared with 60 experts across the state, asking them to evaluate each statement based on criteria like language clarity, statement redundancy and alignment between the tool and objectives of the study. A total of 44 responses were received, providing valuable feedback. Based on these inputs, several statements were revised, and some were removed. The revised statements were then sent to 6 experts for a final review. After incorporating their suggestions, the updated version of the WEPS now includes 50 items, grouped into four dimensions: Impact on LSRW skills, Views on HSLC/HSSLC examinations, Views on teachers' teaching strategies, and Views on personal learning.

Try Out

The WEPS which now contain 50 items, was subsequently administered to a random sample of 100 students from two schools, one government-managed and one privately managed. The sample included 43 males and 57 females, with ages ranging

from 14 to 20. Students were encouraged to respond honestly and truthfully. The response categories followed a 5-point Likert scale with differential weighting. For positive items, the category ‘Strongly Disagree’ was assigned a weight of 1, ‘Disagree’ a weight of 2, ‘Neutral’ a weight of 3, ‘Agree’ a weight of 4, and ‘Strongly Agree’ a weight of 5. For negative items, the scoring was reversed. After administering the scale to secondary school students, an item analysis was performed, which involved determining the discrimination value for each item.

Item Discrimination

The raw scores were arranged in ascending order, with the top and bottom 27% selected for item analysis and discrimination. The significance of each item was tested using t-test. Items significant at the 0.05 confidence level were retained for the final scale, while non-significant items were removed. After the process, the final scale thus consisted of 30 items out of which 21 were worded positively and 9 statements were worded negatively.

Establishment of Reliability

After the removal of items, the test-retest method was used to assess the scale’s external reliability where the tests were administered two weeks apart. Initially, 130 students participated in the test. However, only 123 of these students were available for the second test. Consequently, only the tests from the 123 students who completed both sessions were analysed. The test-retest reliability was calculated using Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, yielding a coefficient of 0.76, which is considered an acceptable level of reliability.

The internal reliability was assessed using Split-half method wherein the items in the test were divided into two halves, consisting of even and odd items. Here the coefficient correlation obtained was 0.58.

Establishment of Norms for Interpretation

To establish norms for the Washback Effect Perception Scale, the test was administered to 859 secondary school students across Mizoram. Their responses were scored following the previously outlined procedure. The raw scores were then converted into z-scores for result interpretation, as displayed in the following table.

Table 4***Raw Score with the Corresponding Z-score***

Raw Scores	Z Score	-	Raw Scores	Z Score	-	Raw Scores	Z -Score	Raw Scores	Z -Score
70	-3.59933		86	-1.81544		102	-0.03154	118	1.752352
71	-3.48784		87	-1.70394		103	0.079952	119	1.863846
72	-3.37634		88	-1.59245		104	0.191445	120	1.975339
73	-3.26485		89	-1.48096		105	0.302939	121	2.086833
74	-3.15336		90	-1.36946		106	0.414432	122	2.198326
75	-3.04186		91	-1.25797		107	0.525925	123	2.309819
76	-2.93037		92	-1.14648		108	0.637419	124	2.421313
77	-2.81888		93	-1.03498		109	0.748912	125	2.532806
78	-2.70738		94	-0.92349		110	0.860406	126	2.644299
79	-2.59589		95	-0.812		111	0.971899	127	2.755793
80	-2.4844		96	-0.7005		112	1.083392	128	2.867286
81	-2.3729		97	-0.58901		113	1.194886	129	2.97878
82	-2.26141		98	-0.47751		114	1.306379	130	3.090273
83	-2.14992		99	-0.36602		115	1.417872	131	3.201766
84	-2.03842		100	-0.25453		116	1.529366	132	3.31326
85	-1.92693		101	-0.14303		117	1.640859		

Using the z-score range provided below, washback effect levels perception was categorized into five levels: Highly Positive, Moderately Positive, Average, Moderately Negative, and Highly Negative. The details are shown in the following table:

Table 5***Norms for interpretation of the levels of Washback Effect based on z-score***

Sl. No.	Raw Score	Range of Z-Score	Categories
1	Above 118	Above +1.8	Highly Positive
2	109 to 118	+0.6 to +1.8	Moderately Positive
3	97 to 108	-0.6 to +0.6	Neutral
4	86 to 96	-1.8 to -0.6	Moderately Negative
5	Below 86	Below -1.8	Highly Negative

Dimension- Wise Establishment of Norms for Interpretation

Dimension 1 - Impact on LSRW Skills

Table 6

Raw score with the corresponding z-score for Impact on LSRW skills.

Raw Scores	Z Score	Raw Scores	Z -Score	Raw Scores	Z -Score	Raw Scores	Z -Score
13	-3.79026	26	-1.1331	39	1.52405	52	4.181203
14	-3.58586	27	-0.92871	40	1.728447	53	4.3856
15	-3.38146	28	-0.72431	41	1.932843	54	4.589996
16	-3.17707	29	-0.51991	42	2.137239	55	4.794393
17	-2.97267	30	-0.31552	43	2.341636	56	4.998789
18	-2.76827	31	-0.11112	44	2.546032	57	5.203186
19	-2.56388	32	0.093275	45	2.750429	58	5.407582
20	-2.35948	33	0.297672	46	2.954825	59	5.611978
21	-2.15509	34	0.502068	47	3.159221	60	5.816375
22	-1.95069	35	0.706464	48	3.363618		
23	-1.74629	36	0.910861	49	3.568014		
24	-1.5419	37	1.115257	50	3.772411		
25	-1.3375	38	1.319654	51	3.976807		

Table 7

Norms for Interpretation on Impact on LSRW Skills based on z-score

Category	z-score	Raw Scores
Highly Positive	Above +1.8	Above 40
Moderately Positive	+0.6 to + 1.8	35 to 40
Neutral	-0.6 to +0.6	29 to 34
Moderately Negative	-1.8 to -0.6	22 to 28
Highly Negative	Below -1.8	Below 22

Dimension 2 - Views on HSLC/HSSLC Examinations

Table 8

Raw score with the Corresponding z-score for Views on HSLC/HSSLC Examinations

Raw Scores	Z -Score	Raw Scores	Z -Score	Raw Scores	Z -Score	Raw Scores	Z -Score
6	-3.14476	15	1.164374	24	5.473506	33	9.782639
7	-2.66597	16	1.643167	25	5.952299	34	10.26143
8	-2.18717	17	2.121959	26	6.431091	35	10.74022
9	-1.70838	18	2.600752	27	6.909884	36	11.21902
10	-1.22959	19	3.079544	28	7.388676	37	11.69781
11	-0.7508	20	3.558337	29	7.867469	38	12.1766
12	-0.272	21	4.037129	30	8.346261	39	12.65539
13	0.206789	22	4.515921	31	8.825054	40	13.13419
14	0.685582	23	4.994714	32	9.303846	41	13.61298

Table 9

Norms for Interpretation on Views on HSLC/HSSLC Examinations based on z-score

Category	z-score	Raw Scores
Highly Positive	Above +1.8	Above 16
Moderately Positive	+0.6 to + +1.8	14 to 16
Neutral	-0.6 to +0.6	12 to 13
Moderately Negative	-1.8 to -0.6	9 to 11
Highly Negative	Below -1.8	Below 9

Dimension 3 - Views on Teacher's Teaching Strategies

Table 10

Raw Score with the Corresponding z-score for Views on Teacher's Teaching Strategies

Raw Scores	Z Score	-	Raw Scores	Z -Score	Raw Scores	Z -Score	Raw Scores	Z -Score
16	-3.68612		23	-1.47849	30	0.729147	36	2.621406
17	-3.37075		24	-1.16311	31	1.044524	37	2.936782
18	-3.05537		25	-0.84773	32	1.3599	38	3.252158
19	-2.73999		26	-0.53236	33	1.675276	39	3.567535
20	-2.42462		27	-0.21698	34	1.990653	40	3.882911
21	-2.10924		28	0.098394	35	2.306029		
22	-1.79386		29	0.413771	36	2.621406		

Table 11

Norms for interpretation of Views on Teacher's Teaching Strategies based on z-score

Category	z-score	Raw Scores
Highly Positive	Above +1.8	Above 33
Moderately Positive	+0.6 to +1.8	30 to 33
Neutral	-0.6 to +0.6	26 to 29
Moderately Negative	-1.8 to -0.6	22 to 25
Highly Negative	Below -1.8	Below 22

4.1.7.4: Dimension 3 - Views on Personal Learning

Table 12

Raw score with the Corresponding z-score for Views on Personal Learning

Raw Scores	Z Score	-	Raw Scores	Z -Score	Raw Scores	Z -Score	Raw Scores	Z -Score
20	-2.71492		26	-1.16104	32	0.392841	38	1.94672
21	-2.45594		27	-0.90206	33	0.651821	39	2.2057

22	-2.19696	28	-0.64308	34	0.910801	40	2.464679
23	-1.93798	29	-0.3841	35	1.169781	41	2.723659
24	-1.679	30	-0.12512	36	1.42876		
25	-1.42002	31	0.133861	37	1.68774		

Table 13*Norms for Interpretation of Views Personal Learning based on z-score*

Category	z-score	Raw Scores
Highly Positive	Above +1.8	Above 38
Moderately Positive	+0.6 to +1.8	33 to 38
Neutral	-0.6 to +0.6	29 to 32
Moderately Negative	-1.8 to -0.6	24 to 28
Highly Negative	Below -1.8	Below 24

FINDINGS ON STUDENTS' PERCEPTION**2. Overall Perception of Students on the Washback Effect**

Among 859 students, 3.61% had a highly positive perception of the Washback Effect, 19.56% were moderately positive, 51.57% were neutral, 22.35% were moderately negative, and 2.91% were highly negative. In focus group discussions, students felt HSLC/HSSLC examinations improved grammar, vocabulary, comprehension, and writing but had little impact on listening and speaking, which they saw as dependent on classroom interaction, reading, and individual effort.

3. Impact on LSRW Skills

The analysis showed that 2.56% of respondents had a highly positive perception of the Washback Effect, 50.87% were moderately positive, 22% were neutral, 21.19% were moderately negative, and 3.38% were highly negative. In focus group discussions, students felt HSLC and HSSLC exams improved their grammar, vocabulary, comprehension, and writing but had little effect on listening and speaking, which they saw as influenced by classroom learning, reading, and individual effort.

4. Views on HSLC/HSSLC Examination

The analysis showed that 1.75% of respondents had a highly positive perception of the Washback Effect, while 27.47% were moderately positive. 43.54% remained neutral, whereas 25.38% had a moderately negative perception, and 1.86% were highly negative. In focus group discussions, some of the participants agreed that HSLC and HSSLC exams motivated them to study harder, expand their knowledge, and shape their future goals. However, one participant expressed concern that intense competition often limits learning to the syllabus and commercial notes.

5. Views on Teacher's Teaching Strategies

The analysis found that 2.79% of respondents had a highly positive perception, 24.56% were moderately positive, 49.79% were neutral, 20.26% were moderately negative, and 2.68% were highly negative. In focus group discussions, students appreciated their teachers' preparedness and diverse teaching methods. They valued unrestricted learning and believed exploring beyond the syllabus enhanced their knowledge and preparation for higher studies.

6. Views on Personal Learning

Only 0.81% of respondents had a highly positive perception of the Washback Effect, 31.66% were moderately positive, 35.67% were neutral, 27.94% were moderately negative, and 3.03% were highly negative. In focus group discussions, views on English varied - some valued it for higher studies, while others saw it as an obligation. Study habits reflected an exam-focused approach, with reliance on "bazaar notes" or memorization of teacher-provided materials.

7. Overall Students' Perception and Comparison based on Different Zones:

Most students across all zones hold a neutral perception of the washback effect (46.96%–57.93%). The Central and South zones show a stronger negative tendency, while the East zone has the highest moderately positive responses (29.57%). Highly positive and highly negative perceptions remain minimal across all regions.

- Students from the Central zone scored higher than those in the North and South.

- The West and East zones scored higher than the Central zone.
- The North zone had the lowest scores, especially compared to the West and East.
- No significant differences were found between some zones, such as North and South or West and East.
- LSRW Skills: Students from the West, East, and South scored higher than the North.
- HSLC/HSSLC Exams: The West and East slightly outperformed the South.
- Teaching Strategies: The West and East scored higher than the North and South.
- Personal Learning: The Central, North, West, and East scored higher than the South.

In the focus group discussions, the participants felt that students in Aizawl (Central zone) benefit more from better teachers and resources, while students in other zones struggle due to limited opportunities.

8. Students' Perception of Washback Effect and Comparison based on Gender.

- The study analysed 859 students (400 males, 459 females)
- Most males (53.50%) and nearly half of females (49.89%) were neutral. Highly positive perceptions were more common among females (5.66%) than males (1.25%), while moderately negative views were higher in males (26.75%).
- A significant difference was found favouring females in overall perception, Impact on LSRW Skills, Views of Teacher's Teaching Strategies and Views on Personal Learning.
- There was no significant difference found between males and females in Views on HSLC/HSSLC Examinations
- In focus group discussions, students felt that girls enjoyed English more, reading even during holidays, while boys found reading and writing tedious.

Overall, female students were perceived to benefit more from learning English due to greater effort and interest.

9. Students' Perception of Washback Effect and Comparison based on Locale

- The study analysed 859 students, with 451 from urban and 408 from rural areas.
- Most students had a neutral perception (urban: 49.67%, rural: 53.68%). Highly positive perceptions were slightly higher among rural students (4.41%) than urban students (2.88%), while moderately positive views were more common in urban areas (21.06%) than rural (17.89%). Moderately negative perceptions were similar (urban: 23.28%, rural: 21.32%), but highly negative views were significantly more frequent in urban students (21.32%) than rural (2.7%).
- Urban students had a more positive perception of teachers' teaching strategies.
- No significant difference was found between urban and rural students in overall perception, Impact on LSRW Skills, Views On Teacher's Teaching Strategies and Views on Personal Learning.
- In focus group discussions, students agreed that locale influences English learning, with urban schools offering better teaching, stricter teachers, and more exposure to English. Rural students had fewer opportunities to practice, giving urban students an advantage in board exam preparation.

10. Students' Perception of Washback Effect and Comparison based on Home Language

- The study analysed 859 students, with 775 speaking Mizo at home and 84 speaking other languages.
- Among Mizo-speaking students, 3.74% had highly positive and 20% moderately positive perceptions, while the majority (52.77%) held highly negative views. In contrast, among non-Mizo speakers, 2.38% had highly positive, 15.48% moderately positive and 40.48% highly negative perceptions.

- There was a significant difference found in perception between students speaking Mizo at home and students speaking other languages in – Overall perception, Views on Teacher’s Teaching Strategies and Views on Personal Learning; wherein the difference favoured the Mizo- speaking students.
- No significant difference was found in Views on LSRW skills and Views on HSLC/HSSLC Examinations.
- In focus group discussions, perceptions on home language’s role in English learning were mixed. Some believed practice matters more than home language, while others felt English-speaking families had an advantage. Some suggested non-Mizo speakers might develop better English skills, as they use English as a common language.

11. Students’ Perception of Washback Effect and Comparison based on Level of Education

- The study analysed 859 students, with 433 from secondary and 426 from higher secondary schools.
- Majority of the students had a neutral perception (secondary: 50.12%, higher secondary: 53.05%). Moderately positive views were slightly higher in higher secondary (20.65%) than secondary (18.48%), while moderately negative perceptions were more common in secondary (24.25%) than higher secondary (20.42%). Highly positive (secondary: 4.62%, higher secondary: 2.58%) and highly negative perceptions (secondary: 2.54%, higher secondary: 3.29%) were low.
- A significant difference was found in Views on personal Learning which showed that Higher secondary students had a more positive perception.
- There was no significant difference found in- overall perception views on LSRW skills, Views on HSLC/HSSLC Examinations and Views On Teacher’s Teaching Strategies.
- In focus group discussions, opinions varied on English learning at different levels. Some felt secondary students focus more on English due to board

exams, while others believed higher secondary students gain a deeper understanding through a broader syllabus.

12. Students' Perception of Washback Effect and Comparison based on Type of School Management

- The study analysed 859 students from government (349), private (323), and ad-hoc aided (187) schools.
- The analysis shows that most students had a neutral perception of the washback effect (50.43% government, 52.94% private, 51.34% ad-hoc aided). Moderately positive perceptions were more common among ad-hoc aided students (26.20%), followed by private (19.81%) and government (15.76%) school students. Moderately negative perceptions were highest in government schools (27.79%), while private (18.89%) and ad-hoc aided (18.18%) schools had similar proportions. Highly positive perceptions were observed in a small percentage of students (4.01% government, 4.02% private, 2.14% ad-hoc aided), while highly negative perceptions were slightly more frequent in private schools (4.33%) compared to government (2.01%) and ad-hoc aided (2.14%) schools.
- A significant difference was found between the groups that shows:
 - In Views on Teacher's Teaching Strategies, Government school students had more favourable perception than private school students, but ad-hoc aided students had the most positive perceptions overall.
 - In Views on Personal Learning, Private and ad-hoc aided students had a more positive perception than Government school students, with ad-hoc aided students ranking highest.
- There was no significant difference found in- Overall perception, Impact on LSRW skills, Views on HSLC/HSSLC examinations.
- In focus group discussions, participants noted that private schools emphasize English more, providing a better language environment, discouraging memorization, and encouraging real-life application of English skills.

13. Students' Perception of Washback Effect and Comparison based on Father's Educational Qualification

- The study analysed 859 students based on their fathers' educational qualifications and found no significant difference in their perception of the washback effect.
- Most students held a neutral perception, with higher percentages among those whose fathers had lower educational qualifications (53.67% non-matric, 50.62% matric to graduate, 25.58% master's or higher). Moderately positive perceptions increased with higher paternal education (18.26%, 19.75%, 25.58%), while moderately negative perceptions were more common among students with less-educated fathers (23.16%, 22.53%, 17.44%). Highly positive perceptions were low but slightly increased with education level (2.45%, 4.63%, 5.81%), whereas highly negative views varied (2.45%, 2.47%, 6.98%).
- There was no significant difference found between the groups in their overall perception and all the four dimensions.
- Focus group discussions revealed mixed opinions - some felt a father's education had little impact due to work commitments, while others believed educated fathers provided better language guidance and a more supportive environment for learning English.

14. Students' Perception of Washback Effect and Comparison based on Mother's Educational Qualification

- The sample consisted of 859 students, with 509 having mothers whose education was below matric, 302 with mothers who had completed matric to graduation, and 48 with mothers holding a master's degree or higher.
- The majority of students had a neutral perception of the washback effect (54.17% for highly educated mothers, 52.07% for non-matriculates, and 50.33% for matric to graduate mothers). Moderately negative perceptions were more common among students with less educated mothers (23.38% for non-matriculates, 21.85% for matric to graduate, and 14.58% for highly educated mothers). Moderately positive perceptions increased with maternal education (27.08% for highly educated mothers, 20.86% for matric to graduate, and

18.07% for non-matriculates). Highly negative perceptions were slightly higher among students with highly educated mothers (4.17%) compared to matric to graduate (2.95%) and non-matriculate mothers (2.65%). A highly positive perception was absent among students whose mothers had a master's degree or higher but was present in other groups.

- A significant difference in Views on Personal Learning was found between students with non-matriculate and matric to graduate mothers, favouring the former, while no significant differences were observed between other groups.
- No significant differences were found in overall perception, and Impact on LSRW skills, Views on HSLC/HSSLC examinations, and Teacher's Teaching Strategies.
- Focus group discussions revealed mixed views on maternal education's role in English learning, with some believing mothers provide crucial support, while others felt students are mostly independent at this stage.

15. Students' Perception of Washback Effect and Comparison based on Academic Achievement

- The study analysed the perceptions of 859 students based on academic achievement, categorizing them into low (102), average (538), and high achievers (219).
- The majority held a neutral perception of the washback effect (52.94% low, 53.16% average, 47.03% high achievers). Highly positive perceptions were absent among low achievers but were present in 5.48% of high achievers and 3.53% of average achievers, while moderately positive perceptions were highest among high achievers (33.79%) compared to 14.71% low and 14.68% average achievers. Moderately negative perceptions were most common among average achievers (26.02%), followed by low (25.49%) and high achievers (11.87%), while highly negative perceptions were most frequent among low achievers (6.86%), compared to 2.6% average and 1.83% high achievers.

- There was a significant difference found in their overall perception, with low achievers having a more negative perception than high achievers, while high achievers had a more positive perception than average achievers.
- In Impact on LSRW Skills, high achievers had a significantly more positive perception than low achievers, with no significant difference between low and average or average and high achievers.
- In Views on HSLC/HSSLC Examinations, high achievers had a significantly more favourable perception than both low and average achievers, while no significant difference was found between low and average achievers.
- In Views on Teacher's Teaching Strategies, high achievers viewed teachers' strategies more positively than both low and average achievers, with no significant difference between the latter two groups.
- In Views on Personal Learning, a significant difference was found between average and high achievers, favouring high achievers, but no significant difference was observed between low and average achievers or low and high achievers.

FINDINGS ON TEACHERS' PERCEPTION

16. Statement no 1: I am aware of the aims and objectives outlined in the English curriculum prescribed by MBSE.

- The majority of English teachers (69%) reported being aware of the MBSE English curriculum, with 18% strongly agreeing, while 10% were neutral and 3% were unaware.
- There was a significant difference found between the teachers based on professional education (trained and untrained teachers). However, no significant difference in awareness was found between teachers based on teaching experience and subject specialization.
- In the focus group discussion, participants shared their understanding of the aims and objectives, though one admitted to assuming the curriculum's objectives without reading the document.

17. Statement no 2: My classroom activities revolve around preparation for the examination.

- The findings indicate that teachers are divided on whether their classroom activities emphasize exam preparation, with 49% agreeing, 28% neutral, and the rest disagreeing.
- There was no significant difference found between teachers based on teaching experience and professional education, but it was found that subject specialization influenced perceptions, with English degree holders differing from others.
- In the focus group discussion, teachers acknowledged feeling pressured to focus on exams due to time constraints and student success expectations. While some prioritized exam-focused teaching, others advocated for a balanced approach, emphasizing the long-term value of English learning beyond exams.

18. Statement no 3: I adopt the past MBSE examination content and marking criteria for the internal tests.

- Half of the teachers (50%) agreed that they adopt past MBSE examination content and marking criteria for internal tests, with 13% strongly agreeing, while 20% remained neutral and 17% disagreed.
- Teaching experience and subject specialization had no significant impact, but trained and untrained teachers differed in their views.
- In the focus group discussion, teachers stated that their tests follow the MBSE question pattern to help students manage time effectively, believing that the existing marking criteria are sufficient and do not require changes.

19. Statement no 4: The examination motivates students to study English.

- The findings reveal that 66% of teachers agree that the examination motivates students to study English, while 17% remain neutral and 17% disagree.
- No significant differences were found based on teaching experience, professional education, or subject specialization, suggesting that exam-focused teaching is common among all teacher groups.

- In the focus group discussion, teachers said that exams affect students in different ways - some become more focused and actively study, while others find it hard to stay motivated, making it difficult for teachers to keep them engaged.

20. Statement no 5: My teaching methods change as the examinations approach.

- The findings indicate that 61% of teachers believe exams shape their teaching, while 21% are neutral and 18% disagree.
- Teaching experience and training do not significantly impact this perception, but subject specialization does.
- In the focus group discussion, teachers shared that they start with a comprehensive approach but shift to commonly tested questions as exams get closer due to time constraints and students' slow progress.

21. Statement no 6: My professional training and education have positive influence on my teaching.

- The findings reveal that all teachers acknowledge the influence of professional education on their teaching, with 28% considering strongly agreeing, 66% agreeing, and 6% remaining neutral.
- Teaching experience and professional training was found to have an impact on their perceptions, while subject specialization was found to be insignificant.
- In the focus group discussion, participants noted that while B. Ed-trained teachers are expected to have better practices, some rely on shortcuts or struggle to implement their training due to syllabus demands.

22. Statement no 7: The HSLC\HSSLC English examination questions test the reading skills.

- The findings show mixed opinions, with 53% agreeing that the English question papers test the reading skills, 17% undecided, and 30% disagreeing.
- No significant differences were found based on teaching experience, professional education, or subject specialization.

- In the focus group discussion, teachers acknowledged that exams assess reading skills through comprehension passages but felt the approach was insufficient. They suggested incorporating practical reading sessions to improve evaluation.

23. Statement no 8: I am familiar with the scheme of examination and question pattern by MBSE for English subject.

- The findings show that 69% of teachers strongly agreed and 19% agreed with the statement, while 7% were neutral and 5% disagreed.
- No significant differences were observed based on teaching experience, professional education, or subject specialization.
- In the focus group discussion, teachers emphasized the importance of understanding question weightage in the MBSE examination pattern, with one humorously referring to past exam questions as their "Bible," highlighting their reliance on previous patterns for preparation.

24. Statement no 9: The curriculum/syllabus is useful as a guideline when I teach.

- The majority of teachers (80%) agreed with the statement, while 10% strongly agreed. A small portion (9%) remained neutral, and only 1% disagreed.
- There was no significant difference based on teaching experience or subject specialization. However, a significant difference was found between trained and untrained teachers in their perceptions.
- In the focus group discussion, the participants expressed a consensus that they structure their teaching content and methods accordingly.

25. Statement no 10: In a situation where examinations do not exist, I believe my students' attitude towards learning English would change.

- The findings indicate that 14% of teachers strongly agreed and 60% agreed with the statement, while 15% were neutral and 11% disagreed.
- It was found that teaching experience and professional education had no significant impact on their views, but subject specialization influenced perceptions.
- In the focus group discussion, opinions were mixed on how exams shape students' attitudes toward English. Some believed exams positively impact

students, especially girls, who enjoy the subject, while others felt exam pressure makes it unclear whether students genuinely like English or study it out of necessity.

26. Statement no 11: Inculcating language skills to the students is my priority, as opposed to ensuring that my students pass in the board examinations.

- The majority of teachers (54%) agreed with the statement, while 16% strongly agreed. About 22% remained neutral, and 8% disagreed.
- No significant differences were found based on teaching experience, professional education, or subject specialization regarding the prioritization of inculcating language skills.
- All participants agreed on the importance of teaching language skills but acknowledged challenges like time constraints and the need to focus on exams. While they valued language development, they also had to prioritize exam success, balancing both aspects.

27. Statement no 12: Students prefer to be taught solely for examination preparation.

- Half of the teachers (50%) agreed with the statement, while 8% strongly agreed. Meanwhile, 15% remained neutral, and 27% disagreed.
- No significant differences were found based on teaching experience, professional education, or subject specialization regarding teachers' perceptions of students' preferred teaching goals.
- Teachers shared that students are mainly focused on passing their exams and expect lessons to be tailored toward that goal. Many students worry about failing, so they rely on their teachers to highlight the most important points for success.

28. Statement no 13: My teaching experience has an influence on my current teaching.

- All teachers agreed that experience influences their teaching, with 68% agreeing, 27% strongly agreeing, and 5% neutral.

- There was no significant difference based on teaching experience and subject specialization. However, it was found that professional education had an impact on their perception.
- In the focus group discussion, it was revealed that senior teachers were recognized for their ability to navigate the syllabus and exams efficiently, helping both lesson planning and struggling students. However, some participants argued that dedication, not just experience, determines effective teaching.

29. Statement no 14: I urge my students to adjust their learning techniques in accordance with the question patterns in the examinations.

- The majority of respondents (60%) agreed with the statement, while 7% strongly agreed. Meanwhile, 20% remained neutral, 12% disagreed, and 2% strongly disagreed.
- No significant differences were found based on teaching experience, professional education, or subject specialization.
- The participants, who are teachers shared that they advised students to focus on high-mark sections, study harder, and manage their time effectively before the HSLC/HSSLC exams.

30. Statement no 15: The scheme of examination suggests that listening and speaking skills are not to be tested in the board final examination.

- The majority of respondents (50%) agreed with the statement, while 6% strongly agreed. Meanwhile, 28% remained neutral, and 16% disagreed.
- No significant differences were found based on teaching experience, professional education, or subject specialization.
- In the FGD, the teachers acknowledged their awareness of the board examination marking criteria and noted that listening and speaking skills are not assessed in the final exams. However, they emphasized that these skills should be evaluated through internal assessments.

31. Statement no 16: The present curriculum/syllabus is adequate for learning English.

- The findings reveal mixed opinions on the adequacy of the English curriculum. While 43% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that it is sufficient, 34% disagreed, and 24% remained neutral.
- There was no significant difference found based on teaching experience and professional training. However, based on subject specialization, teachers specializing in English had different views compared to those specializing in other subjects.
- In the focus group discussion, teachers had mixed views on the English curriculum. Some felt that textbooks should include more exercises to develop listening, speaking, reading, and writing (LSRW) skills. Others believed the curriculum is well-structured but not very practical in the current system. Some felt it is suitable for the present educational context in Mizoram.

32. Statement no 17: In a situation where examinations do not exist, my teaching methods would be different.

- The findings indicate that 70% of teachers (57% agreed, 13% strongly agreed) believe their teaching methods would change if examinations did not exist, while 17% remained neutral and 14% (11% disagreed, 3% strongly disagreed) did not support the statement.
- No significant differences were found based on teaching experience, professional education, or subject specialization.
- In the focus group discussion, teachers expressed frustration that exams limit their ability to teach as they prefer, restricting interactive classroom activities. However, some acknowledged that exams also provide structure, keeping both teachers and students focused.

33. Statement no 18: HSLC/HSSLC examinations reflect the aims and objectives prescribed in the curriculum.

- Most teachers (62%) agreed that board exams align with curriculum objectives, while 30% were neutral and 9% disagreed.

- It was found that junior and senior teachers had differing views, but no significant differences were found between trained and untrained teachers or those with different subject specializations.
- In the focus group discussion, participants raised concerns about gaps in assessment. Some argued that exams should include listening and speaking skills, while others suggested incorporating more higher-order thinking (HOTS) questions. However, they noted that many students might struggle with such questions under current educational conditions.

34. Statement no 19: The English textbook currently in use is well suited to develop students LSRW skills.

- The findings showed that the teachers are divided in their opinions as 34% of teachers agreed with the statement, 9% strongly agreed, and 24% were neutral. However, 33% disagreed, and 1% strongly disagreed.
- When comparing based on teaching experience, professional education and subject specialization, no significant difference was found.
- In the focus group discussion, participants had differing opinions. One felt that while it includes enough exercises, they are not utilized effectively due to time constraints. Another disagreed, arguing that the exercises are outdated and unengaging, making them ineffective even if time allows.

35. Statement no 20: The present English syllabus helps the students in building their language skills for their further academic studies.

- The findings indicate that a majority of teachers (58%) agreed, and 2% strongly agreed that the syllabus helps in building language skills, while 14% disagreed, and 26% remained neutral.
- No significant difference was found in opinions based on teaching experience or professional education. However, a significant difference was observed between teachers specializing in English and those from other subjects.
- In the focus group discussion, one participant expressed that if students are engaged in all the prescribed activities, they will likely gain enough knowledge to pursue higher studies. Other participants agreed, with one noting that the

grammar lessons and activities in the syllabus are sufficient to help students in their further learning.

36. Statement no 21: Board examination motivates teachers to improve their teaching methodology.

- The findings show that nearly half of the teachers (48%) agreed with the statement, with a small 3% strongly agreeing. A quarter of the respondents (25%) remained neutral, while 21% disagreed, and 3% strongly disagreed.
- There was no difference found between the teachers' perceptions based on teaching experience, professional education and subject specialization.
- The focus group discussion revealed that some teachers felt exams limited interactive activities, while others saw both benefits and drawbacks, acknowledging that exams help maintain focus but also restrict creativity. Overall, the discussion highlighted board exams as both a challenge and a motivator for teachers.

37. Statement no 22: The board examination forces me to teach to the test.

- The findings show that teachers have different opinions on whether board exams force them to teach only for the test. While 42% agreed or strongly agreed, 38% disagreed, and 21% remained neutral.
- There were no significant differences in perceptions based on teaching experience, professional education, or subject specialization, meaning teachers from all backgrounds shared similar views.
- The focus group discussion revealed that examination pressure limits teaching flexibility. While some teachers focus on key topics to help weaker students, others regret having to exclude creative activities as they need to prioritize examination preparation over a more engaging learning experience.

38. Statement no 23: I feel pressured by society for the board examination result of my students.

- The study reveals mixed opinions among teachers regarding societal pressure over board exam results. While 46% of teachers feel pressured (32% agreeing and 14% strongly agreeing), 36% do not, and 18% remain neutral.

- It was found that no significant difference exists between teachers' perception based on teaching experience, professional education and subject specialization.
- Participants in the focus group discussion agreed that societal pressure on teachers is significant. When students perform well, they receive the credit, but when they fail, teachers are often blamed. This creates a sense of pressure on educators. However, one participant mentioned that with experience, they have learned to ignore most of the criticism.

39. Statement no 24: I believe that the MBSE English examinations are positively influencing the learning of English in secondary and higher secondary schools.

- Most teachers (64%) agreed that MBSE English examinations have a positive impact on students' learning, while a small percentage (2%) strongly agreed. About 22% remained neutral, and 12% disagreed.
- There was no significant difference found on the basis of teaching experience, professional education and subject specialization.
- The focus group discussion showed that participants agreed board exams have a positive impact on learning English in secondary and higher secondary schools. While they recognized that improvements are needed, they believed exams are important because they help students stay focused on learning.

40. Examination of the Discrepancies/Alignments between the Aims and Objectives Outlined in the Prescribed English Curriculum and the Question Design of HSLC/HSSLC

a) Findings from Analysis of HSLC Question design

- Objective 1 (Listening and Comprehension): Covered in Writing (Section B), Grammar (Section C), and Literature (Section D) but lacks focus on listening skills.
- Objective 2 (Independent Inquiry & Thinking): Encouraged in Reading (Section A) and Literature (Section D) but could include more structured reflection.

- Objective 3 (Social Communication & Skills): Addressed in Writing (Section B), Grammar (Section C), and Literature (Section D) but lacks real-world applications like discussions or role-plays.
- Objective 4 (Reasoning & Articulation): Strengthened through Reading (Section A), Writing (Section B), and Literature (Section D) by developing logical thinking and structured responses.
- Objective 5 (Competence in English Registers & Language Use): Found in Reading (Section A), Writing (Section B), Grammar (Section C), and Literature (Section D), ensuring exposure to different forms of English.
- Objective 6 (Cultural & Linguistic Competence): Addressed in Literature (Section D) but could be expanded to other sections for a broader cultural perspective.
- Objective 7 (Vocabulary & Reference Skills): Developed through Reading (Section A), Writing (Section B), and Grammar (Section C), though grammar could emphasize dictionary and thesaurus use more.
- Objective 8 (Creativity & Expression): Encouraged in Reading (Section A) and Literature (Section D) but could be improved in grammar and writing exercises.
- Objective 9 (Self-Learning & Independent Study): Promoted in Writing (Section B) and Grammar (Section C) but lacks peer review and self-editing opportunities.
- Objective 10 (Organization & Editing Skills): Strengthened through Literature (Section D) but could include more structured feedback activities.

The analysis of the HSLC question design shows several gaps between the objectives and the examination structure:

Listening skills (Objective 1) are not directly tested. Independent thinking (Objective 2) lacks structured reflection. Social communication (Objective 3) misses real-world applications like discussions. Reasoning (Objective 4) could benefit from more feedback opportunities. Cultural competence (Objective 6) is limited to literature. Vocabulary skills (Objective 7) need more focus on dictionary use. Creativity

(Objective 8) could be better integrated into writing and grammar. Self-learning (Objective 9) lacks peer review and self-editing. Organization skills (Objective 10) require structured feedback for improvement.

b) Findings from Analysis of HSSLC Question design

The Reading (Section A), Writing (Section B), and Literature (Section C) sections align with the aims and objectives in the curriculum by enhancing comprehension, confidence, organization, reasoning, and creative expression.

- Objective 1 (Listening & Comprehension): Not included in the exam since there are no listening tasks.
- Objective 2 (Confidence & Proficiency): Well covered in Reading, Writing, and Literature sections.
- Objective 3 (Oral Discussions & Presentations): Not tested because there are no speaking or discussion activities.
- Objective 4 (Text Organization & Reasoning): Tested well in Reading, Writing, and Literature.
- Objective 5 (Identifying Key Points & Language Skills): Included in Reading and Writing sections.
- Objective 6 (Communicative Competence): Partially covered, focusing more on writing than speaking.
- Objective 7 (Advanced Language & Reference Skills): Tested in Reading and Writing, but not emphasized in Grammar.
- Objective 8 (Translation Skills & Creativity): Not tested directly, and creative writing is limited.
- Objective 9 (Independent Inquiry & Self-Learning): Partially included, but lacks reflective activities.
- Objective 10 (Literary Appreciation & Organization): Well covered in Literature and Writing sections.

Overall, the curriculum objectives are well covered, though listening comprehension (Objective 1), Objective 3 (Oral Discussions and Presentations) and translation skills (Objective 8) could be more explicitly incorporated.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

This research carries important educational implications, highlighting the effects of examinations on secondary school students in Mizoram. It has the potential to make a meaningful contribution to educational policies and practices in the region. Studying the washback effect in Mizoram's education system provides critical insights into how high-stakes exams such as HSLC and HSSLC affect educational practices of the region.

The constructed and standardized Washback Effect Perception Scale serves as a tool for guiding curriculum and assessment reforms. It supports student well-being by identifying ineffective study habits and promoting better learning practices.

HSLC and HSSLC exams strengthen reading and writing skills but neglect listening and speaking skills. Curriculum developers should integrate communicative tasks, while examination boards design assessments reflecting real-world use. Policymakers must reform evaluation to encourage critical thinking, and teachers should adopt interactive methods. School administrators can support training, and parents should promote active study habits. These collective efforts will enhance student engagement, language proficiency, and learning quality in Mizoram.

Gender-based findings indicate differences in washback perception, necessitating inclusive teaching strategies to boost boys' interest in English. Encouraging interactive reading and writing activities can improve engagement among male students. Since assessment patterns are neutral, ensuring they accommodate various learning styles is crucial. Schools should promote peer learning and extracurricular programs to enhance motivation for all students, thereby ensuring equal learning opportunities and better language acquisition.

Bridging urban-rural disparities requires action from education policymakers to allocate resources, school administrators to improve teacher training, and teachers to create language-rich environments. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and

community leaders can support access to learning materials, while parents play a role in encouraging English practice at home.

Supporting students from diverse linguistic backgrounds is also crucial. Mizo-speaking students exhibit varied perceptions of the washback effect, emphasizing the need for tailored teaching strategies that cater to both Mizo and non-Mizo speakers. A bilingual approach, while maintaining English proficiency, can create a more inclusive learning environment. Balancing exam preparation with language development is key to ensuring long-term knowledge retention. Secondary students focus more on exams, whereas higher secondary students develop broader comprehension. Integrating skill-based learning in the curriculum can help students retain knowledge beyond the examination phase.

Improving teaching methods across school types is another crucial factor. Private schools emphasize practical English use, while government schools often rely on memorization due to resource constraints. Standardizing effective teaching strategies and promoting real-world language applications can enhance student engagement and comprehension.

Parental education and academic performance are closely linked. Students with educated parents tend to have a more positive perception of English learning. Schools should provide additional learning support for students from less-educated backgrounds through mentorship programs, tutoring, and independent learning resources.

The finding that high achievers perceive exams and teaching methods more positively, should induce teachers to implement mentorship programs, schools to offer remedial classes, and education policymakers to promote interactive learning approaches. School administrators should provide necessary resources, while parents can offer support at home to help struggling students build confidence and improve performance.

Teachers often focus on exam preparation, limiting comprehensive skill development. Schools should integrate interactive teaching methods and promote year-round learning strategies. Strengthening teacher training programs will enhance curriculum awareness and pedagogical effectiveness. Additionally, MBSE

examination reforms should incorporate listening and speaking assessments through internal evaluations to ensure holistic language learning.

Excessive societal pressure affects teaching, necessitating assessment reforms by policymakers, curriculum updates by developers, teacher support from administrators, and parental encouragement for balanced learning. Exam patterns should incorporate higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) to foster critical thinking and deeper understanding. These improvements will make English education in Mizoram more effective, preparing students for academic and professional success.

Finally, document analysis reveals gaps in curriculum and exam design, particularly in listening, oral communication, creativity, and independent learning. Curriculum developers should integrate listening and speaking tasks, while examination boards must create assessments reflecting real-world communication. Teachers can bridge gaps through peer review, reflective writing, and vocabulary activities, supported by school administrators through professional development programs.

This study impacts policymakers, educators, exam boards, school administrators, teachers, students, parents, and NGOs. It informs assessment reforms, curriculum updates, teacher training, and resource allocation, fostering better learning experiences and language proficiency in Mizoram.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Rea-Dickins (1997) identified five key stakeholders in education: educators, students, parents, government bodies, and the marketplace. This includes businesses, industries, and job markets influencing education. Based on the study's findings, the researcher proposes targeted recommendations to mitigate negative washback effects and address issues among secondary and higher secondary students.

Recommendations for Educators:

1. Teachers in Mizoram should participate in professional development programs to stay updated on best practices and deepen their knowledge and understanding of the curriculum to enhance teaching quality.

2. Teachers should incorporate activities like discussions, creative writing, and project-based learning to develop practical language skills while balancing exam preparation with meaningful learning.
3. Educators should use a variety of assessment methods, such as formative assessments and open-ended tasks, to evaluate students' overall learning progress rather than relying solely on high-stakes exams.

Recommendations for Students:

1. It is recommended that students should focus on overall skill development rather than just exam content.
2. Engagement in active learning is recommended, which means participation in group discussions, practical applications, and diverse activities.
3. Students are recommended to seek regular feedback to identify areas for improvement, while adopting a growth mindset that allows them to view mistakes as learning opportunities.

Recommendations for Parents:

1. The study finds that students perceive minimal influence from their parents' education on their learning. Thus, parents should offer more targeted support, especially by fostering reading habits and communication skills.
2. It is recommended that parents should show support for policies that ensure holistic development and equal opportunities for all students.

Recommendations for Government and Official Bodies:

1. The study shows that urban and rural students had differing opinions on teaching strategies which indicate a greater need for support in rural areas. To address the disparities, it is recommended that policymakers in Mizoram should prioritize equal access to high-quality teaching methods and resources.
2. Findings from the document analysis shows incongruence between objectives of learning and the test design, particularly in testing only reading and writing skills and neglecting listening and speaking skills. It is therefore recommended to reconsider assessment formats to include listening and speaking skills.

3. Findings show a strong washback effect in Mizoram's classrooms, with teachers prioritizing examination preparation. Since experience has little impact, professional training is crucial. Authorities should invest in development programs to improve teaching and reduce negative washback.
4. Curriculum designers should explore ways to minimize exam-related stress while supporting students in developing strong language skills.
5. In order to enhance inclusivity and cultural understanding, it is recommended that texts and questions should incorporate diverse English accents and cultural viewpoints.

Recommendations for the Marketplace:

1. The marketplace can support skill-based hiring practices that value a range of skills beyond exam results, motivating students to prioritize learning over just their grades.
2. Businesses can collaborate with schools to offer career awareness programs, workshops, and mentorship opportunities that can help students connect their education to real-world applications.
3. Companies can support initiatives that provide hands-on learning experiences, such as internships, apprenticeships, or industry visits that allow students to develop practical skills alongside their academic studies.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

The researcher proposes the following directions for future studies:

1. A longitudinal study could be conducted to assess how students' academic and career trajectories are influenced by exam-focused learning environments at the secondary level.
2. Comparative studies between urban and rural schools could provide insights into how the washback effect varies based on resource availability and teaching methodologies.
3. Future research could investigate the influence of parental expectations and support on students' academic experiences and its role in shaping their perceptions of the washback effect.

4. Studies could be conducted to examine how economic background affects students' access to quality education, tutoring, and exam preparation resources.
5. Studies could explore how different assessment formats such as project-based evaluations and continuous assessments, influence teaching methods and student learning outcomes in secondary education.
6. A qualitative study could be undertaken to explore effective strategies for balancing exam-oriented teaching with broader skill development, fostering a more well-rounded learning experience for students.
7. Further research could analyse the long-term effects of exam-driven instruction on students' critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills.
8. Investigating the effectiveness of teacher training programs in reducing the negative washback effect could provide valuable insights for curriculum development.
9. A comparative study could be carried out among the schools under the governance of various education boards in Mizoram, specifically MBSE and CBSE.
10. A comparative study could be carried out to examine differences in the washback effect across various educational levels in Mizoram and other states.

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