

# Preferential treatment moderating role on parental social economic status impact on students achievement in computer studies

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## Abstract

Parental Social Economic Status will continue to change from time to time and there has been inconsistency on its impact on students' academic performance. This study investigated the moderating effect of preferential treatment on the impact of Parental Social Economic Status on students' academic performance in Ogun state. The study used descriptive survey research design with 392 students as sample, selected through multi stage sampling approach. Parental Social economic Status Scale (PSESS, 0.77), Preferential Treatment Scale (PTS0.82) and Students Academic Performance Proformat were used for data collection. Percentage and regression were used for data analysis. Finding of the study showed that PSES and preferential treatment has significant impact on students academic performance ( $F_{(1,390)} = 173.734$   $P < 0.05$ ,  $F_{(1,390)} = 7.250$   $P < 0.05$ ). The combination of PSES and preferential treatment also produced significant outcome ( $F_{(1,389)} = 87.956$   $P < 0.05$ ). The moderating effect of preferential treatment on the impact of PSES on students' academic performance was also significant ( $t = 12.869$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). It is concluded that there is significant moderating effect of preferential treatment on impact of PSES on students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Ogun State

**Keywords:** Academic Performance, Preferential treatment, Parental Social Economic Status.

## Introduction

The importance of education from individual to national development will continue to attract investigation from stakeholders. This is based on the premise that without education, individual and nations cannot reach full potentials. This is because education as been described as the catalyst to the development of individuals, society and the nation as a whole (Asiru, 2014). One of the major indices of students attainment in education is the level of academic success recorded. Academic achievement is the direct reflection of students' academic learning and

mastery of knowledge (Gijsselaers, 2017), which is related to their graduation and future employment, and it can also reflect the quality of education received.

Literature has however documented different factors serving as hindrance to students poor achievement especially at the senior secondary school level. In most studies, parental factor has consistently been shown to be a factor of great importance in this regard. Uchechukwu et al (2014) opined that socioeconomic status is social and economic measure of a person's position relative to others based on income, gender, education, and occupation. Socioeconomic status is an economic and sociological combined total measure of a person's work experience and of an individual's or family's economic and social position relative to others, based on income and education, and occupation (Marmot, Michael, 2004) Daxuan (2022) remarked that SES usually reveal inequities in access to resources, plus issues related to privilege, power, and control.

Socioeconomic status is typically broken into three categories, high, middle, and low to describe the three areas a family or an individual may fall into when placing a family or individual into one of these categories any or all of the three variables income, education, and occupation can be assessed (Lareau, Annette cited in Okioga, 2013). Additionally, low income and little education have shown to be strong predictors of a range of physical and mental health problems due to environmental conditions may be the entire cause of that person's social predicament to begin with. Previous studies have shown the relationship of students academic performance and parental social economic status (Mueller and Essifile, 2020, Suna, et al 2020, Walker (2012). Similar view is shared by Machebe (2012), where it was concluded that, parental socio-economic status could influence academic performance of their children at school. This is argueably because the responsibility of training a child always lies in the hand of the parents. Student's academic outcome cannot be detached from the type of school they attend. The status of the school factors include school structure, school composition, and school climate (Easim et al. 2017). This in most context is defined by parental social economic status.

Parents have different styles of rearing children which in most cases is influenced by social economic class and status. Also, important to mention is how different parent inculcate discipline and correct wrong doing of their children. These differences among others ways of rearing children influence the average tendencies of families for different occupational classes." (Rothstein, 2004) The health status of the children which could also be traceable to parental socio-economic background can be another factor that can affect the academic performance of the students, Adewale in Machebe and Ifelunni (2014) had reported that in a rural community where nutritional status is relatively low and health problems are prevalent, children academic performance is greatly hindered. Mudassir and Abubakar (2015) on the impact of Parents' educational status on academic performance of secondary school pupils in Kuala Terengganu, Malaysia revealed that students from parents with formal education perform better than those from parents with informal education However, Machebe, (2017) acknowledge that there is inconsistency on the result of the impact of SES on students' academic performance. Which is contrary to common report on the impact of SES on students' academic performance. Giving possible reason for the change in the trend of out on the impact of SES on students' performance. Students with high parental social economic status may also be able to afford extra coaching for their children to boost their academic performance. They are provided with the required learning materials and all other things that are necessary for proper learning (Osonwa, Adejobi, Iyam, & Osonwa, 2013). Put differently, socio economic status of parents does not only affect the academic performance of the students but also makes it possible for children from low financial background not to compete very well with their counterparts from high socioeconomic background under the same academic environment (Osonwa, et al (2013) Daxuan (2022) explained that development of technology and economy, and the level of the normal family background has improved. The researcher further maintained that the cost to cultivate a highly achieved student requires less cost than in the past.

However, this may not be the true situation of things in a country like Nigeria where access to technology, economy, family background cannot be said to have improved. Rather **families with low socioeconomic status often lack the financial, social, and educational supports that characterize families with high socioeconomic status** (Okioga, 2013). **Thus**, children coming from low financial background are not usually well motivated to function effectively in the classroom (Uchechukwu, Jeribe, Opara, Christopher & Chinyerem (2014).

Teachers are prone to be aware of students parental social economic status. There are different avenues from which teachers can identify this. This can be through open day, where parents are allowed within the school hours to come access their children progress and lodge their complains. It can also be through parent Teachers Association meetings organized by the school to discuss important issue on the progress of the students and school at large or any other school organized activities. Experienced have shown that parents in Nigeria are accustomed to gifting their children class teachers presents as means of appreciating their efforts. Though the appropriateness and acceptability of depends on school policy. However, by this, teachers may begin to profile and start showing commitment to students whose parents seems to be of high social economic status based on the present or gift received. This may lead to preferencing such student.

Lichtenstein and Slovic (2006) construed preferences as an individual's attitude towards a set of objects, typically reflected in an explicit decision-making process. However, it does not mean that a preference is necessarily stable overtime. Preference can be notably modified by decision making processes. Preferential treatment is sometimes viewed as reverse of discrimination, occurs whenever a person receives a benefit because he or she is of the correct race, gender, economic status, religious affiliation or other categorization (Michael 2011). Empirical evidences from past studies indicated that one of the factors related to student academic success was a positive relationship between student and teacher (Prewett *et al.*, 2019; Sointu *et al.*, 2017). This explain one of the possible reasons why preferential treatment may have impact on students. In the case of preferential treatment, some students may feel neglect or inferior to others based on perceived preferential treatment. They may perceive that some teachers believe student deserve preferential treatment due to different reason (Fuller *et al.*, 2017). In the same vein, Student may come to feel entitled to preferential treatment while others student may feel resentful that a group of students receives special benefits (Hawley *et al.*, 2014). It is important that students need to believe teachers treat them equitably to prevent a negative influence on the teacher-student relationship (Mitchell *et al.*, 2018). As a result, students perceive unfairness when they see students receiving preferential treatment (Trusz, 2017). Fuller *et al.* (2019) also found that college students perceived that student-athletes received preferential treatment in the form of additional time to complete assignments and relaxed grading standards. The study further reported that preferential treatment resulted in negative feelings for both college student-athletes and professors. Unfortunately, Fuller *et al.* (2017) found that some teachers perceived pressures from coaches and administrators to provide preferential treatment, causing some resentment among teachers. Akorede and Akorede and Salami (2012) found out that preferential treatment increased the academic benefit of effort from the students. They both stated that when preferential treatment if mild, it reduces the expected academic achievement of the disadvantaged (low and moderate students). However, the findings of Espenshade *et al* (2004) asserted that preferential treatment does not alter the marginal benefit of effort from the students. Also, Pepple (2020) investigated the relationship of school facilities, preferential treatment and class size with academic achievement in Senior Secondary School Chemistry and reported significant impact of preferential treatment. Thus, the role of preferential treatment on effect of PSES is an interesting one to investigate. Unfortunately, there is sparse studies of this context in this area thus calling for the need to investigate the moderating effect of PSES on student academic performance. The study used three core cross cutting subjects at the senior secondary level in Nigeria as bases of students' academic performance (Mathematics, English and Civic Education)

### **Objectives of the study**

The study investigated the moderating effect of preferential treatment on the impact of PSES on students' achievement in public senior secondary schools in Ogun State, Nigeria.

### **Statement of Hypotheses**

1. Parental social economic status will not significantly impact students' Academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Ogun State, Nigeria.
2. Preferential treatment will significantly impact students' Academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Ogun State, Nigeria.

3. Preferential treatment will not significantly moderate the impact of parental social economic status on students' Academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Ogun State, Nigeria.

### Methodology

The study used descriptive survey research design. The design allowed for data collection as they exist without manipulation. The model explaining the moderating influence of parental engagement on the impact of attention span on students' academic achievement in Computer Studies is illustrated in Figure 1.

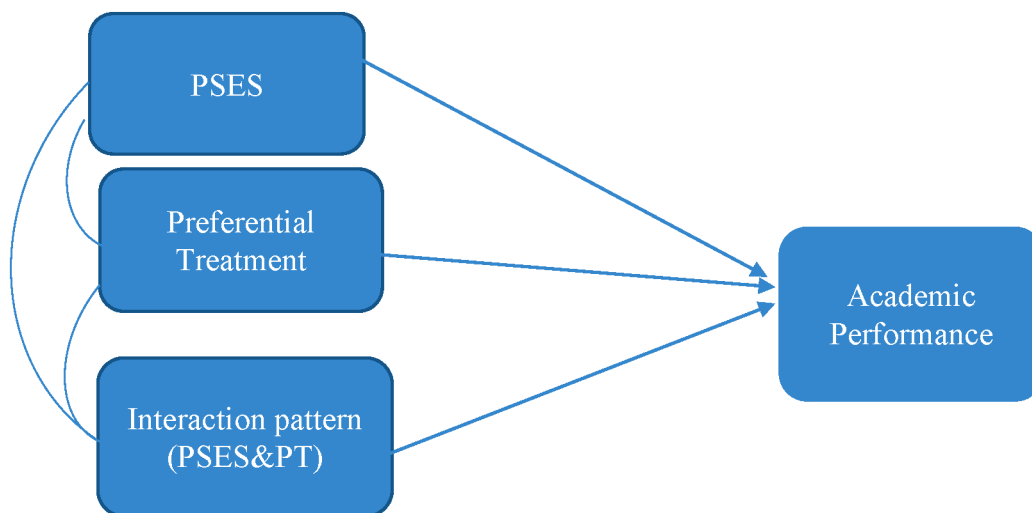


Figure 1 shows that by including the product of SES and preferential treatment as an additional predictor variable in a regression model, the interaction between the independent variable (PSES) and the moderator variable (preferential treatment) as predictors of the students' academic achievement can be assessed. The unidirectional arrows from the independent variable (PSES), moderator (preferential treatment), and the interaction term (PSES+ Preferential treatment) towards the dependent variable denote a regression model capable of predicting students' academic performance. The three predictors were correlated with each other to determine multicollinearity among them.

The following are the stages involved in determining a variable's moderating influence on a relationship between two variables:

- a. First, avoid multicollinearity by centering the independent variable, moderator, and the interaction term.
- b. Create the product terms for the predictor and moderator variables
- c. Fit a regression model predicting the outcome variable (Students' Academic performance) from both the predictor variable (PSES) and the moderator variable (preferential treatment). Both effects and the model in general (R<sup>2</sup>) should be significant to show the moderating effect

Check for a substantial R<sup>2</sup> change and a significant influence by the new interaction term after adding the interaction effect to the prior model. Moderation takes place if both are significant. Complete moderation has occurred if the predictor and moderator are no longer significant once the interaction term is included. Moderation also happens if the predictor and moderator are significant when the interaction term is included; nonetheless, the main effects are also substantial

### Population and Sample

The study population consist of all senior secondary school students from four Local Government in Ogun State. The local government areas are Abeokuta South, Abeokuta North, Ifo and Ewekoro. Multi-stage random sampling techniques was employed in selecting the sample for the study. five Senior Secondary Schools

are selected from each of the Local Government through random sampling technique, all the names of the schools in each of the Local Governments were written in pieces of paper, squeezed, dropped and shuffle in a bowl and four (4) pieces of the paper was selected one after the other for each of the Local Government. Thus twenty schools were selected while twenty (20) students were randomly selected from each of the school .This implies that one thousand (400) students were selected for the purpose of the study.

### Instrument

Three research instruments were used in the study. The instrumnts are parental Social economic Status Scale (PSESS), Preferential treatment scale and students Academic Perfroamnncse score pro forma. The PSESS is self developed questionnaire. It is a four points likert scale instrument with twenty items. The items are selected from past instrument in similar studies. The instrument has two setions, section elicited students parental bio data such as as Academic qualification,,Gender, Title (Mr, Mrs, Dr, Prof, Chief) while section B is further sub divided into A and B. The A aspect has 10 items that centers on economic status of the parent. Example of the items are :My parents own the house we live, I hawk during during holiday so my parent can pay my school fee. I have home teacher payed by my parents, I have been sent back home from school several time before bcause my parents cant provide some of my school needs. While the B aspect centres on questions that measures social aspect. Examples of the items are: My parents conveniently assist with my home, My parents avoid associating with school affairs etc. The preferential treat meant scale was adapted from Pepple (2020). It is a 25 item scale, consisting of two sections A and B. section A consists of the student bio-data while section B is a likert scale consisting of 25 items designed to elicit information on preferential treatment given to the students by their teachers. The SPTS<sub>1</sub> was validated and the reliability index was 0.87 Cronbach Alpha. However, for the purpose of the present study, the two instruments were validated with 0.77 and 0.82 reliability index using crombach alpha method. This implies that the two instrument are reliable for use. Students cumulative grade point in three compulsory subjects (Mathematics, English and Civic education) was obtained with a pro-formal designed by the researcher for the purpose of the study. The questionnaires were completed by students while students cummulative score was obtained from the schools. Mean score, simple percentage, multiple regression analysis were used for data analysis at 0.05 level of significance

### FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 Students Bio Data (Gender and Age)

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	148	37.7%
Female	244	62.2
Age		
14-16	279	71.1
17-19	133	33.9

Table 1 indicates that there are more female respondents with 62.2% compared with 37.7% for male respondents. The table as well indicated that majority of the respondents are with the age range of 14-16 years old.

Table 2 Parental Bio Data (Title, Academic Qualification and Parenthood type)

Title	Frequency	Percentage
Title Holders	85	21.6
Non Title holders	307	78.3
<b>Academic Qualification</b>		

Title	Frequency	Percentage
No formal education	57	14.5
Primary School	90	22.9
Secondary school Certificate	111	28.3
OND/NCE	35	8.9
Bsc/HND	68	17.3
Postgraduate	31	7.9
<b>Parental Type</b>		
Single	95	24.2
Couple	297	75.7

Table 2 indicated that 78.3% of the parents are non title holders while 21.6% are title holders (Dr., Chief, Barrister). The table also showed that majority of the parents are secondary school certificate holders (28.3) while only 7.9% are postgraduate certificate holder. In addition, the table indicated there are 24.2% single parents and 75.7 couple parents.

### Test of Hypotheses

Parental social economic status will not significantly impact students' Academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Ogun State, Nigeria.

Table 3: Regression model of PSES on Students Academic Performance

M o d e l ANOVA						
Summary	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
R = .555	Regression	18923.415	1	18923.415		
R <sup>2</sup> = .305	Residual	42479.473	390			
Adj. R <sup>2</sup> = .306	Total	61402.888	391	108.922	173.734	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Std Error = 10.436						

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Table 3 shows the result of the regression analysis of social economic status as predictor variable on students academic performance. The result shows significant outcome ( $F_{(1,390)} = 173.734$   $P < 0.05$ ). This implies that SES as a predictor variable contributes significantly to the variance in students' academic performance. The result further shows a multiple correlation coefficient of .555, R<sup>2</sup> value of .305 and adjusted R<sup>2</sup> value of .306. This means that SES variable accounted for 30.5% of the variance in students' academic performance. Thus there is significant impact of SES on students' academic performance

2. Preferential treatment will not significantly impact students' Academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Ogun State, Nigeria.

**Table 4: Regression model of preferential treatment on Students' Academic performance**

<b>M o d e l ANOVA</b>						
<b>Summary</b>	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
<b>R = .135</b>	Regression	1120.633	1	1120.633		
<b>R<sup>2</sup> = .018</b>	Residual	60282.255	390			
<b>Adj. R<sup>2</sup> = .016</b>	Total			154.570	7.250	.007 <sup>b</sup>
<b>Std Error = 12.432</b>		61402.888	391			

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Table 4 shows the result of the regression analysis of preferential treatment on students' academic performance. The result shows significant outcome ( $F_{(1,390)} = 7.250$   $P < 0.05$ ). This implies that preferential treatment contributes significantly to the variance in students' academic performance. The result further shows a multiple correlation coefficient of .135,  $R^2$  value of .018 and adjusted  $R^2$  value of .016. This means that preferential treatment accounted for 1.8% of the variance in students' academic performance. Thus there is significant impact of preferential treatment on students' academic performance

3. Preferential treatment will not moderate the impact of SES on students' Academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Ogun State, Nigeria.

**Table 5: Regression model of PSES and Preferential treatment on Students' Academic performance**

<b>M o d e l ANOVA</b>						
<b>Summary</b>	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
<b>R = .558</b>	Regression	19120.709	2	9560.354		
<b>R<sup>2</sup> = .311</b>	Residual	42282.179	389			
<b>Adj. R<sup>2</sup> = .308</b>	Total			108.695	87.956	.000 <sup>b</sup>
<b>Std Error = 10.425</b>		61402.888	391			

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Table 5 shows the result of the regression analysis of SES and preferential treatment on students' academic performance. The result shows significant outcome ( $F_{(1,389)} = 87.956$   $P < 0.05$ ). This implies that SES and preferential treatment contributes significantly to the variance in students' academic performance. The result further shows a multiple correlation coefficient of .558,  $R^2$  value of .311 and adjusted  $R^2$  value of .308. This means that SES and preferential treatment accounted for 31.1% of the variance in students' academic performance. Thus there is significant impact of SES and preferential treatment combined on students' academic performance.

To confirm the moderating effect of preferential; treatment, the product of SES and preferential treatment were added to the model. The output is shown in Table 6.



**Table 6. Moderating Influence of Preferential treatment on Impact of PSES on Students' Academic Performance**

Model	Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
	B	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		Std. Error	Beta			
(Constant)		-9.362	6.159		-1.520	.129
SES		1.593	.121	.555	13.181	.000
Preferential Treatment		-1.025	.439	-.108	-2.335	.020
Product of SES & PT		1.570	.122	.593	12.869	.000

Table 6 indicates that the independent variable (SES),  $t = 13.181$ ,  $p < 0.05$  and Preferential treatment which will moderate the variable of the study  $t = -2.335$ ,  $p < 0.05$  significantly impacted students' academic performance. The result further showed that the interaction effect of SES and preferential treatment (Product of SES and preferential treatment) also produced significant on impact students' academic performance,  $t = 12.869$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . By extensions, this implies that preferential treatment has significant moderating influence on the impact of SES on students' academic performance. Hence, the hypothesis that preferential treatment will not significantly moderate the impact of SES on students' academic performance in senior secondary school is rejected.

## Discussion of findings

This study investigated the impact of PSES on students' academic performance and also consider the role of preferential treatment as moderating variable in the study.

The finding of the study showed that PSES has significant impact on students' academic performance. This implies that students' parental social economic status has implication for how students perform academically. It has been argued that students from well-to-do background do perform academically, this can be attributed to the kind of support they receive from their parent. Such as provision of required academic materials to aid children learning at ease. It could also be associated to the extent to which they take education of their children serious either to fulfill their social economic status or fulfill the children dream. Here, the researcher is saying that most high economic social status parents will always want their children to do well academically in order to protect the parents' social status. This finding aligns with Salisu (2021) who found significant impact of income of parents on academic performance of students by making them stay out of school to complement in feeding the family, through poor nutritional provision by the parents, by not paying school fees as at when due, through inadequate provision of learning materials, and by not catering for extra-lessons to the children. The finding also have close relationship with study by Pang (2013) where it was reported that SES has a close connection with academic achievement of students. Suna and Tanberkan (2020) similarly reported that students studying in private schools, who were socioeconomically stronger, had significantly higher academic achievement levels in language, mathematics, and science tests, and was proved valid in all three systems It also aligns with the outcome of Juma (2016) who reported that parents' income, occupation and parental involvement in education influences students' academic performance. As well, Oyanca *et al* (2015) reported the parent's socio-economic status the higher the academic performance of the students. In other words, parents' socio-economic status was found to have a positive influence on the performance of the students. The finding is however contrary to the works of Adeyemo and Babajide (2012) who discovered that there is no significant relationship between socio economic disadvantage of students and their achievement in physics. Preferential treatment was reported to have significant impact on students' academic performance. Favouring some students against others for any



reason in the classroom brings about discrimination in the classroom setting. The outcome thus could as a result of teachers associating preference to some students for different reasons. This is corroborated by the report of Akorede and Salami (2012) who found that preferential treatment increased the academic benefit of effort from the students. They both stated that when preferential treatment if mild, it reduces the expected academic achievement of the disadvantaged (low and moderate students). However, the findings of Espenshade et al (2004) asserted that preferential treatment does not alter the marginal benefit of effort from the students.

Further analysis showed that preferential treatment significantly moderate impact of SES on students' academic performance. Having establish that SES has significant impact on students' academic performance. It is expedient to mention that when teachers give preferential treatment to students based on parent social economic status, it will have impact on students achievement. Thus, teachers referencing students with high social economic status by paying them special attention could further bring resentment in the classroom as a result of the change brought about in their academic performance. Students who feel neglected may see teachers as favoring some set of students and this can further bring about different level playing ground for the students. Another dangerous effect is that such students may begin to feel entitled and classify themselves as beign special or above others. Students perceive unfairness when they see students receiving preferential treatment (Trusz, 2017). Evidence accumulated over the past two decades has shown that a lack of fairness in the classroom can predict students' motivation to learn, the teacher-student relationship (Gogard,2012), and maladaptive behaviors such as bullying, Internet addiction, and leaving school before graduation (Peter, et al. 2012)

## Conclusion

SES is an important variable to considering in determining students' academic performance. Thus the investigation of this study had revealed the potency of SES impact on students' academic performance it was found to be significant. The study also consider the moderating effect of preferential treatment on the impact of SES on students' academic performance. The report was also found to be significant which implies that adding referencing to SES still produced significant impact on students' academic performance. The study recommends that students should be given equal treatment in classroom based on their academic needs and not based on parental social economic status.

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