



## Addressing Socioeconomic Disparities in Developing Student-Centred Learning Environments

M. A. Adeoye<sup>1\*</sup>, O. P. Akinnubi<sup>1</sup>, A. K. Lasisi<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Educational Management, Faculty of Education, Al-Hikmah University Ilorin-Nigeria

Correspondence: E-mail: [princeadelekm@gmail.com](mailto:princeadelekm@gmail.com)

### ABSTRACTS

This theoretical study explores the crucial problem of overcoming socioeconomic inequalities in education while promoting student-centred learning settings. Socioeconomic disparities in education refer to the unequal distribution of resources and opportunities based on socioeconomic status which presents substantial difficulties for students from poor backgrounds. To reduce these inequities and improve educational outcomes, the paper highlights the significance of student-centred learning environments that give individual needs and involvement priority. To overcome socioeconomic gaps, the article examines a variety of approaches, such as policy interventions, culturally competent instruction and parent-community involvement. Drawing on case studies and best practices, the paper provides successful initiatives and cutting-edge strategies that have successfully closed the gap between underprivileged and privileged listeners. The report emphasizes the need of tackling socioeconomic gaps in education, not just for academic accomplishment but also for the advancement of social justice and equity. In conclusion, addressing socioeconomic disparities in education and developing student-centred learning environments is crucial for promoting educational equity and improving outcomes for students from disadvantaged backgrounds should be a top priority by educators and other stakeholders.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Socioeconomic disparities in education are characterized by the unequal distribution of educational resources, opportunities and results based on socioeconomic position. These differences may have a considerable negative effect on pupils from low-income households, reducing their access to high-quality instruction and widening the performance gap. Promoting educational equality and making sure all students have an equal chance to achieve requires addressing these inequalities and developing learning environments that are centred on the needs of the students. Socioeconomic differences in education have frequently been shown to exist and have negative effects. Children from low-income homes consistently perform better academically than their wealthier counterparts, according to Reardon (2011)'s analysis of data from several different nations. The potential to enhance educational results and foster social mobility makes addressing socioeconomic inequities in education significant. Students from underprivileged families frequently encounter numerous obstacles, such as a lack of finances, limited access to technology, and weak support networks. We can improve educational experiences and close the achievement gap by designing learning environments that are centred on the needs of the individual students and place a high value on participation and individualized instruction.

Addressing socioeconomic inequities in education also supports the larger objectives of social justice and equity. We can build a more inclusive and equitable society by giving all pupils the same chances, regardless of their socioeconomic status. This is in keeping with the Sustainable Development Goal of the United Nations, which aspires to guarantee inclusive and equitable quality education for all. Promoting educational fairness is one of the most important implications of addressing socioeconomic differences in education. Regardless of their financial status, all students should have an equal chance to excel in the classroom. By addressing these differences, we may work toward a more equitable educational system that gives every kid equal access to resources, opportunities and support.

Student needs, interests and goals are the main focus of learning environments that are centred on the students. These settings encourage students' intrinsic motivation by encouraging active learning and involvement. Educational outcomes can be improved by addressing socioeconomic inequities and developing learning environments that are centred on the needs of the students. Students from underprivileged backgrounds typically perform less well academically than their more fortunate counterparts, which contributes to chronic achievement discrepancies. By providing targeted support and resources to children in need, eliminating these inequalities and levelling the playing field for all learners, student-centred learning techniques can help close the achievement gap. Social mobility and ending the poverty cycle can both be achieved through education. We can give kids from low-income families the knowledge, skills and opportunities necessary to overcome economic obstacles and build a better future for themselves and their communities by addressing socioeconomic inequities in education and encouraging student-centred learning environments.

## 2. METHODS

The method used in this research is a Systematic Literature Review of the problem and area studied. The theory draws on existing literature and research on socioeconomic inequalities in education while promoting student-centred learning settings. The Researcher collected journal articles from Google Scholar, Research Gate, SINTA, Scopus and Web of Science.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Impact of socioeconomic disparities on Education

Social mobility and economic advancement are viewed as being fundamentally dependent on education. The unfortunate reality is that socioeconomic inequities still exist in educational institutions all across the world. These discrepancies are the unequal distribution of resources, opportunities, and results based on socioeconomic characteristics including income, wealth and social standing. Inequality in income is one of the main reasons why there are socioeconomic differences in schooling. Higher-income families have easier access to high-quality educational resources including private schools, tutors and extracurricular activities that can improve their children's academic results. The National Center for Education Statistics indicates that children from low-income families are more likely to attend schools with fewer resources and less qualified teachers. Disparities are greatly influenced by parents' educational backgrounds as well. Higher-educated parents can offer better academic support at home and typically have higher expectations for their children's academic performance. Reardon et al (2011) discovered that parental education is a significant predictor of children's academic success.

The academic performance gap is mostly a result of socioeconomic differences; children from less advantaged families routinely perform worse on standardized tests and graduate at a lower rate than their more advantaged peers. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) emphasizes that as pupils go through the educational system, the achievement gap develops. When it comes to getting into higher education, disadvantaged students frequently confront obstacles. Common difficulties include a lack of financial resources, confusion about the college application process and poor standardized exam preparation. Inequalities in socioeconomic status can lead to discrepancies in educational possibilities. It may be more common for students from underprivileged households to attend underfunded schools with few resources like textbooks, technology and extracurricular activities. This may make their schooling less effective overall and reduce their access to a wide range of options.

Students from underprivileged families frequently experience issues associated with poverty, such as poor nutrition, a lack of permanent housing, and restricted resources. According to Reardon (2011), there is a significant link between household income and academic success. Low-income families frequently lack the money necessary to give their kids access to extracurricular activities, educational materials, or tutoring. Schools in less affluent areas frequently get less funding than schools in wealthier places. This includes insufficient money, subpar infrastructure, and constrained access to qualified educators and learning resources. Education outcomes are significantly impacted by socioeconomic differences, which feeds the cycle of inequality. A meta-analysis by Sirin (2005) revealed that students from low-income homes typically score lower on academic measures than their more affluent peers.

With one of the largest wealth gaps between the rich and the poor, Nigeria has one of the worst levels of income inequality in the world. Because lower-income families find it more difficult to provide their children with the opportunity and resources they need, this economic imbalance has a direct impact on access to high-quality education. Rural communities suffer as a result of the concentration of educational resources in urban areas. Socioeconomic inequities in education are further exacerbated by the lack of adequate schools, competent teachers, and supportive educational infrastructure. In Nigeria, there are still gender-based

educational inequities, and girls have it even harder to enrol in and complete their education. Gender discrepancies are caused by ingrained cultural beliefs, early marriage and social standards which restrict educational chances for girls from underprivileged families. Socioeconomic inequities in education are a result of inadequate government financing and poor management of educational resources. Students from underprivileged backgrounds are disproportionately impacted by inadequate investment in infrastructure, teacher preparation, and curriculum development.

The socioeconomic differences in educational attainment in Nigeria have a profound impact on educational achievements, feeding a cycle of inequality and poverty. Access to high-quality education is frequently restricted for students from underprivileged families. Their capacity to learn successfully is hampered by inadequate infrastructure, a shortage of instructional materials, and packed classrooms. High dropout rates are a result of socioeconomic differences, especially for children from underprivileged homes. These kids frequently have to drop out of school due to financial hardships, the necessity to work to support their families, and insufficient educational support systems. Education for underprivileged students frequently falls short of expectations. The educational gap between various socioeconomic levels is further widened by a shortage of qualified teachers, outmoded curricula and few extracurricular options. Employment chances for individuals are directly impacted by socioeconomic gaps in schooling. Their inability to obtain the skills and information essential for better career possibilities is hampered by a lack of access to excellent education which keeps them in low-paying jobs.

Students from underprivileged homes struggle greatly with poverty. Access to education is hampered by the cost of transportation, clothing, books, and school fees. The prevalence of malnutrition among pupils from underprivileged homes has an impact on their cognitive growth and capacity for sustained attention in the classroom. Insufficient nutrition makes educational gaps worse. Poorly developed support networks are frequently absent from the homes and communities of students from underprivileged origins. Little parental participation, no mentoring, and inadequate guidance. Many kids from underprivileged homes find it difficult to pay for school fees, textbooks, uniforms, and other necessary educational supplies. They frequently struggle to stay up with their schoolwork as a result, and they are more likely to drop out of school. According to Adeyemo and Akinmade (2019), essential amenities like libraries, laboratories, and adequate classroom space are frequently absent from schools in low-income neighbourhoods. Due to the lack of infrastructure, students have fewer possibilities to engage in practical and hands-on learning. According to Odgers (2015) research, peers and teachers frequently have unfavourable assumptions about kids from low-income homes and treat them differently. Low self-esteem, a lack of enthusiasm to learn, and eventually subpar academic achievement might result from this discrimination.

According to World Bank (2018), in many Nigerian rural and low-income communities, there is a teacher shortage. Due to the increased class sizes and reduced teacher-student connection caused by the shortage, it is challenging for children to obtain individualized attention and support. Yusuf (2016) emphasized that pupils from poor backgrounds are mostly ignored by the curriculum which primarily emphasizes experiences from the urban and middle classes. Disengagement and a sense that their education isn't relevant can result from this gap between the curriculum and the students' real-world experiences.

## Principles of Student-Centered Learning

An educational strategy known as "student-centred learning" centres the learning process around the learner. It replaces the conventional teacher-centred approach with one that is student-centred and focuses on their needs, interests, and skills. Students actively participate in their learning and take ownership of their educational path in a student-centred learning environment. Three guiding principles—cognitive development, social interaction, and personal relevance—are at the heart of student-centred learning, according to Bransford et al. (2000). The construction of knowledge by students is promoted through inquiry, critical analysis, and problem-solving. Deep understanding and long-term memory are fostered by this method. In learning environments that are focused on the needs of the students, collaboration and communication are essential. Cooperative learning and the exchange of ideas are made possible via peer-to-peer interaction. Learning that is student-centred emphasizes the significance of tying academic material to personal experiences and passions. Students are motivated and interested in their studies when learning is personal and relevant to them.

In Nigeria, adopting student-centred learning strategies can help both students and teachers in several ways. Students are more interested and motivated to actively participate in the educational process when they have a voice in what they are learning. This drive might result in improved performance and a passion for learning. Student-centred instruction promotes independent problem-solving, critical thinking, and information analysis. Success in both higher education and the workforce depends on having these abilities. Students learn how to collaborate and communicate effectively by working together in student-centred learning environments. Success in today's globally connected and interconnected world depends on having these abilities. Individualized instruction that caters to each student's particular requirements and learning preferences is made possible through student-centred learning. This tailored approach ensures that no kid is left behind and fosters academic success. Certain traits are especially crucial for developing successful student-centred learning environments in Nigeria. Students actively participate in the learning process in environments that are focused on them as learners. Instead of being passive knowledge consumers, they actively participate and take responsibility for their education. Active participation, according to Ogunleye (2016), motivates pupils to think critically, pose queries and look for solutions. As a result, they gain a deeper knowledge of the material and have a better learning experience overall.

Flexible and adaptable learning environments are prioritized for students. The educational opportunities are customized to each student's unique requirements and interests. According to Odunaike and Akinbobola (2019), flexibility supports a variety of learning styles and preferences and enables tailored instruction. This makes it easier to maintain students' motivation and engagement throughout the learning process. Aduwa-Ogiegbaen and Iyamu (2020) claim that integrating technology fosters active learning, teamwork, and problem-solving. The demands of a technologically evolved society are also prepared for by it. The teacher's function in student-centred learning environments changes from that of the main information provider to that of a facilitator. Teachers encourage students' learning, direct their inquiries, and offer prompt feedback. According to Iyamu and Odeyemi (2018), a teacher's job is to assist learning by building independent learning abilities, reflection, and critical thinking. Student-centred learning requires a safe and welcoming learning environment. Without worrying about criticism, students should feel free to communicate their ideas, opinions and thoughts.

## Promoting Inclusivity in Establishing Partnerships with Parents and Community Organizations

To reduce socioeconomic inequities in education and create student-centred learning environments in Nigeria, parent and community engagement is essential. The involvement of parents and neighbourhood groups can significantly influence educational results and close the achievement gap among learners. Partnerships between schools, parents, and community organizations are crucial for addressing socioeconomic inequalities in education. These collaborations ensure that all parties are involved in the educational process and develop a collaborative environment that supports student success. According to research, parents who participate in their children's education see improvements in their children's behaviour, academic performance and motivation ([Henderson & Mapp, 2002](#)). By including parents in decision-making procedures, schools can learn a great deal about the unique needs and difficulties that their pupils are facing.

In Nigeria, the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) is a well-known organization that promotes family involvement in educational institutions. Parental involvement in school events, policy formation, and support of children's learning are all made possible by the PTA. Schools can work with local organizations and governmental organizations to provide support services like counselling, tutoring, and mentorship programs to lessen these difficulties. Students who use these services are more likely to succeed academically, gain valuable life skills, and increase their resilience. Numerous initiatives to assist education and offer resources to underprivileged families have been put in place in Nigeria by organizations like the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The main objectives of these initiatives are to increase access to high-quality education while also offering financial aid and chances for vocational training. Schools can encourage parents to take an active role in their child's education by building good connections. Regular communication, parent-teacher conferences, and participation in decision-making processes can all help with this. Schools can also work with neighbourhood organizations to offer assistance and services to families who are struggling financially.

For tackling socioeconomic inequalities and establishing student-centred learning environments, community involvement in education is essential. Communities that actively support education become invested in the success of their kids and the overall growth of their neighbourhoods. Schools can encourage community involvement by hosting activities like career fairs, parent workshops and public forums. Parents, community leaders and educators can interact and exchange ideas at these gatherings to improve educational outcomes. These partnerships give students access to practical experiences and aid in bridging the gap between school and employment. Additionally, schools might persuade local businesses to fund student scholarships, internships, or employment opportunities. Students may gain practical experience from this partnership, which may also pave the way for their future success. Schools may build a network of support that empowers students and overcomes socioeconomic gaps by actively incorporating the community into education. Schools may develop an inclusive learning environment that promotes equity and boosts student achievement through forming partnerships with parents and community organizations, offering support services and resources for families, and generating opportunities for community involvement in education. Promoting socioeconomic justice in school requires strong connections with parents and neighbourhood groups.

Ogundiran and Ayodo ([2018](#)) assert that cooperative efforts among schools, parents, and community organizations can boost students' academic results. They discovered that schools' performance as a whole and student accomplishment are improved when parents and the

community are actively involved in decision-making and educational efforts. In addition, reducing socioeconomic inequities requires offering resources and support services to families. Onifade et al (2020) claim that schools that provide academic support, counselling and mentorship to kids and their families help lessen the consequences of socioeconomic disadvantage. The availability of these services enables pupils to overcome background-related learning obstacles and levels the playing field. Additionally, fostering possibilities for community participation in Attah and Bankole (2021) examined the impact of community participation on the quality of teaching and learning in primary schools in Nigeria. They found that communities that actively engage in school activities and provide social support contribute to improved student performance and increased access to educational resources. This community involvement helps bridge the gap between disadvantaged students and educational opportunities.

### **Successful Initiatives Addressing Socioeconomic Disparities**

To alleviate the socioeconomic differences in educational attainment, several effective programs have been put into place in Nigeria. These activities have been concentrated on reducing the achievement gap and increasing access to high-quality education for underprivileged children. The importance of focused interventions, creative strategies and a cooperative effort from diverse stakeholders are highlighted by these case studies and best practices to alleviate socioeconomic gaps in student-centred learning environments in Nigeria. By studying these case studies, we can draw important lessons and critical takeaways for enhancing educational results in Nigeria. To guarantee that all students have fair access to high-quality education, they emphasize the need for targeted interventions, inclusive practices and stakeholder participation.

A network of low-cost private schools called The Bridge International Academies has put creative solutions to the problem of socioeconomic inequalities in education into practice. In low-income areas, they have set up schools that offer high-quality instruction at reasonable prices. To improve learning outcomes, they employ standardized curriculum, technology, and teacher training programs. Lessons discovered Especially in distant locations, investing in technology can increase access to high-quality education. Consistency in learning results across schools is ensured by standardized curricula. Programs that prepare teachers effectively are essential for raising standards of instruction.

The Nigerian Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) program aims to lessen poverty and provide educational access for children from low-income families. Families participating in this program are given cash transfers in exchange for their children attending school regularly. This program has increased school enrolment and decreased dropout rates, both of which are encouraging signs. Lessons learned Financial rewards can encourage families to give their children's education top priority. The program must be regularly monitored and evaluated to maintain its efficacy. Successful implementation of these programs depends on cooperation between government organizations, non-governmental organizations, and local communities.

The "Girls' Education Project" in Kano State is another significant case study. With the help of scholarships, better school facilities, and the adoption of gender-responsive teaching strategies, this project aimed to raise the enrolment and retention rates for females. To create a more fair educational system, the project successfully boosted the enrollment of girls and enhanced learning outcomes. The "School Feeding Program" which is in place in numerous Nigerian states, is another effective program. By giving children from low-income homes free meals, this program hopes to increase attendance and academic achievement. According to

studies, the initiative has increased school enrolment, decreased dropout rates and improved student nutrition.

Several best practices can be applied in addition to the case studies to create student-centred learning environments in Nigeria. These procedures are meant to guarantee that each student has an equal chance to learn and develop personally. To suit the varied needs of their students, teachers should adapt their teaching strategies and resources. This method acknowledges that every student has different learning preferences, skills, and interests. The promotion of critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity among students occurs when active participation and engagement in the learning process are encouraged. Group work, conversations, practical exercises and project-based learning can all help with this.

Technology integration in the classroom can improve educational opportunities and give students access to information outside of the school's walls. This covers using laptops, tablets, learning apps, and online resources. To keep up with the most recent pedagogical approaches and instructional tactics, instructors must engage in ongoing professional development. Workshops, seminars and peer cooperation can all be used for this. Fostering solid relationships with parents and the neighbourhood community helps create a welcoming and inclusive learning environment. Encouragement of community and family participation in school events can have a favourable effect on student achievement.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The study focused on the problem of socioeconomic inequalities in education and the importance of creating learning environments that are student-centred in overcoming these inequalities. The negative effects of socioeconomic inequalities on academic performance highlighted the significance of putting students' needs and involvement first through student-centred methods. Policymakers, educators and stakeholders must work together to address socioeconomic inequalities in education. Prioritizing equitable financing and resource distribution will ensure that children from underprivileged backgrounds have access to the tools they need for quality education. Recognizing and embracing the different backgrounds of their pupils, educators must adopt culturally responsive approaches and curricula. The creation of strong assessment frameworks and uniform criteria will aid in determining the efficacy of initiatives and pinpointing areas in need of development.

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