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SCOPE

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All contributions should be wordprocessed on A4 paper, double-spaced and limited to twenty pages.

Acknowledgement Format

Citations should be within the text with a list of reference at the back.

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Abstract

This paper examines the pattern and the major determinants of labour force participation of urban women in Nigeria, using Lagos as a case study. The major determinants of labour force participation that were identified by the study are: age, marital status, education, husband's employment status, income of wife and husband, religious beliefs and number of children.

Introduction

There is a long history of women participation in productive labour in Nigeria. In traditional communities, women like their male counterparts, hold farmlands and assist their husbands in all farming activities. Besides working on the farms, women of Nigeria as elsewhere in West Africa, actively participate in non-agricultural activities such as craft and dyeing, weaving and spinning and of course, retail trade, including food processing.

By the same token, the participation of women in the urban sector, generally defined to include wage earning in capitalist establishments had been an important feature of the post independence era and has been on the upward trend ever since then.

In Nigeria today, women are largely excluded from certain occupational categories because of formal barriers as well as informal barriers to entry. The formal barriers which prevent
women from entering some of these occupations include: lack of educational or technical training, labour laws and training customs, while the informal barriers include customs and religious practices, difficulties in combining domestic and labour market activities, management and worker attitudes. Few Nigerian women are engaged in top management cadre of formal sector establishments simply because majority of them lack the educational qualifications necessary for such positions. For instance, only about 6.2% of those who were employed as either General Managers or Managing Directors in 1986 were women (Ojo, 1997 p.377), while 32.6% of those who participated in the 1995/96 National Youth Service Corps Programme were females (Ojo, 1997 p.382). This gives a rough estimate of the number of women who are either University graduates and/or HND holders. Also a very little proportion of women are involved in the intermediate level artisans and technicians simply because only a very little proportion of women choose to attend technical schools or trade centres to acquire the necessary skills.

Many women are engaged in the informal sector probably because the rigidity of the working hours and conditions of service in the formal sector make employment in the formal sector inaccessible to them. For example, in 1976, the number of females that were in the informal sector were said to be about 76% of the total number of females employed in the economy at that time while only about 24% were engaged in the formal sector (Ojo, 1997 p.371).

However, the economic situation of the country today has made a lot of women to change their attitudes towards participation in the labour force. Women are now employed in almost every sphere of the economy. They are found doing jobs that were once reserved exclusively for men. Even in the police force and the military the proportion of women in the service has increased significantly.

Inspite of the fact that there is an increasing number of
females engaged in the labour force in Nigeria, their problems still remain largely unattended to. These problems include limited education, bias in evaluation of efficiency, child-care burden which impede efficient performance of duties and a socio-cultural setting which accords little status to women.

It is the intention of this paper to identify the major determinants and pattern of labour force participation of urban women in Nigeria using Lagos as a case study.

**Theoretical Framework**

The theory that has been used in recent times to explain female labour force participation is the "new household economics". In this approach, the household is located within a market economy which performs both productive and reproductive functions according to some division of labour. Reproduction is the outcome of the demand for a certain quantity of children, or for a given child quality (for example, college educated), and there are quantity/quality trade-offs, since children pose costs and household resources are limited (T. P. Schultz 1981; T. W. Shultz 1974). Families produce some goods within the home and purchase others in the market with income from earnings. These activities require investments in specific skills which have both direct costs and opportunity costs resulting from time forgone in a job or other market or non-market activity. Since incomes are pooled, the whole family gains when individual members practice their specific skills (Becker, 1973)

According to Nerlove (1974), the essential elements of the 'new home economics' are summarised as follows:

- The first element is the utility function to be maximised. Its form and its arguments are obviously crucial in determining the choices, which result from its maximisation. The theoretical underpinnings of this utility function rest on what he called the "Chicago model".

- The Chicago utility function according to him has the following characteristics:

  First, it does not involve non-market goods or physical commodities and purchaseable services, but its' arguments are
abstract goods composed of a number of attributes which must themselves be produced within the household (Becker, 1965 p. 506). The importance of this characteristic of the utility function is that it leads directly to the key questions of household technology and the composition of different types of market goods and services and physical commodities in terms of attributes contributing to satisfaction.

The second characteristic of the Chicago utility function is that the welfare of the children and other members of the family is assumed to enter the utility function of a single decision maker thus obviating the assumption of a "family utility function" with all the concomitant problems of social utility functions in general.

The third element concerns the assumption about the way in which household resources especially time are transformed into market-purchasable commodities to be used in the household production process. Emphasis is on the terms on which the household members can enter the market.

The final element is that the household is faced by resource constraints in its production and optimizing decisions. These constraints are divided into time (of husband and wife) and other non-wage income (Okojie, 1983:40). These elements in themselves are incapable of yielding a series of well-defined implications about the main problems of household behaviour with which we are concerned. It is only a framework within which to think about these problems as many special additional assumptions must be added to the framework to arrive at empirically refutable propositions.

If certain assumptions are added to the new home economics, various implications of the theory for female labour force participation will emerge. These assumptions include the following:-

Young children are highly intensive of the mother's time in comparison with other activities within the home and older children are less intensive, the comparative advantage of the male partner in the acquisition of market - purchasable commodities significantly exceeds that of the female partner (Okojie, 1983 :40).
Some implications of the new home economics for female labour force participation are noteworthy. First, the composition of a woman's family is strongly associated with her labour force participation. Typically, the number of a family's children under the age of 18 and the age of the youngest child are both strong predictions of a woman's labour force participation. Also, highly educated women tend to have higher rates of labour force participation than women who are not highly educated.

This theory provides two fundamental explanations for the division of labour by sex, which is for the empirical fact of specialisation of women in household production and men in market production. One explanation is that women have an inherent comparative advantage in reproductive labour and are at a disadvantage to men in the labour market. Becker (1981) cites both this biological determinant and secondly efficiency, arguing that a division of labour between employment and home is more efficient than sharing such roles. Feminists, while conceding that in the past biology might have determined that women would bear the greater labour and risks of child production, have strongly criticised the assumption that a natural sex differential persists today, noting that in industrial societies child-spacing, infant formula feeding and advances in child health care which lower the total number of births, have all reduced the total time that women spend in child care. Thus, technology is rapidly narrowing the male-female gap in reproductive works.

**Empirical Findings**

**Data Sources:**

The empirical analysis of this study is based on data collected in a survey conducted between April and October 1997. The survey was titled "Personal data of Nigerian women in the Labour Force". One thousand (1,000) questionnaires were administered among women, both single and married in their homes and work places. Out of these, only 650 questionnaires were properly completed, resulting in a response rate of 65
percent.

The major objective of the survey was to investigate the determinants of labour force participation of women in Nigeria using Lagos as a case study. A second objective was to identify the constraints under which women work and to also discover what could motivate women to devote more time to their work.

Results:

Out of the 650 respondents, 563 or 86.6% were employed while 85 or 13.1% were unemployed.

Out of the 85 people who were unemployed, 30 or 35.3% of them were unemployed because of the economic situation in the country (that is, lack of employment opportunities) which has resulted in high unemployment, 10 or 11.8% were unemployed because of the difficulty of combining domestic and labour market activities, 2 or 2.4% were unemployed because of their religious beliefs while about 4 or 4.8% were unemployed because their husbands were gainfully employed and earn good income. Eleven (11) or 13% of them were unemployed because their husband disapproved of wage employment while 9 or 10.6% were employed because of the low average wage level in the economy. The remaining had other reasons for being unemployed.

Various reasons were advanced by the 563 respondents for their being employed. About 21 or 3.7% were in employment because they wanted to get out and meet people and a change of environment, 95 or 16.9% of them were in employment in order to have some money of their own to use as they please. About 413 or 73.4% were in employment because they wanted their family to maintain a reasonable standard of living while 21 or 3.7% were in employment in order to have an element of security should something happen to their husband, while about 13 of them had other reasons for being employed.

Age Distribution: Only women who were above 18 years old were included in the survey. Just 6 or 0.9% of the respondents were between 18-21 years. About 523 or 80% were between 21-40 years while about 105 or 16% were between 41-60 years old.
**Educational Qualification:** Only three (3) or 0.5% of the respondents had no formal education at all, another 0.5% were primary school dropouts. About 28 or 4.3% of the respondents had primary school education, 120 or 18.5% had secondary school education, 161 or 24.8% had OND or NCE while 219 or 33.7% had HND, B.Sc or B.A degrees, 55 or 8.5% had M.Sc, M.A., M.Phil or Ph.D while about 30 or 4.6% had other professional qualifications.

**Marital Status:** Out of the 650 respondents, 90 or 13.8% were single and never married, 525 or 80.8% were married and living with their husbands, 21 or 3.2% were either divorced or separated while 13 or 2% was widowed.

**Wage Rate (Annual Income):** Fifty (50) or 7.7% of the respondents receive an annual income of below N10,000, 174 or 26.8% receive between N10,001 - N25,000, 128 or 19.7% receive between N25,001 and N50,000, 66 or 10.2% receive between N50,001 - N75,000. Thirty-six (36) or 5.5% receive between N75,001 - N100,000, 24 or 3.7% receive between N100,001 and N150,000 while 14 or 2.2% receive between N150,001 and N200,000. Only about 23 or 3.5% receive above N200,000 per annum.

**Occupation:** Out of the 563 respondents who were employed, 85 or 15.1% were either traders, caterers or self-employed, 104 or 18.5% were employed as clerks, office assistants, typists, cleaners etc. 187 or 33.2% were employed as teachers, research assistants, nurses or military and police officers while 116 or 20.6% were employed as Bank managers, accountants, lecturers, legal or medical practitioners, engineers or architects. Only 8 or 1.4% were employed as chairmen, managing directors, or executive directors while about 51 or 9.1% were employed in other areas.

**Husband's Occupation:** Out of the 525 respondents who said they were married, 63 or 12% had husbands who were self
employed, 30 or 5.7% had husbands who were employed as clerks, drivers, technicians or office assistants while 43 or 8.2% had husbands who were employed as teachers, research assistants, nurses, military or police officers. One hundred and ninety five (195) or 37.1% had husbands who were employed as Bank managers, accountants, University professors, lecturers, legal or medical practitioners, engineers or architects. Sixty (60) or 11.4% had husbands who were employed as chairmen of companies, managing directors, or executive directors while about 21 or 4% had spouses who were employed in other occupations not specified and some others did not indicate their spouses’ occupation.

**Husband’s Income:** Only 4 or 0.8% of the respondents husbands’ gross annual income was below N10,000. Three (3) or 0.6% of the respondents’ husbands received between N10,001 - N25,000 per annum. Thirty-six (36) or 6.9% had husbands whose gross income was between N25,001 and N50,000, 19 or 3.6% had husbands whose gross income was between N50,001 and N75,000 while 23 or 4.4% had husbands who received between N75,001 and N100,000. Fifty-four (54) or 10.3% of the respondents husbands received between N100,001 and N150,000. Twenty-three (23) or 4.4% had husbands who received between N150,001 and N200,000 while 79 or 15.1% had husbands whose gross income was above N200,000.

**Number of Children:** One hundred and thirty (130) or 20% of the respondents had no children, 304 or 46.8% had between 1 - 3 children, 167 or 25.7% said they had between 4-6 children while 7 or 1.1% had 7 or more children.

**Model for the Study**
This model is formulated using the multiple regression analysis and the aim is to find the correlation that exists between the factors that determine the participation of women in the labour force. Such factors as age, educational qualification, gross annual income (wage rate), husband’s gross income and number of children.
The specification of the model is as follows:

\[ Lr = B_0 + B_1 A + B_2 E + B_3 W + B_4 H + B_5 N \]

where

- \( Lr \) = Labour Force Participation rate
- \( B_0 \) = A Constant
- \( A \) = Age of the respondent
- \( E \) = Educational Qualification
- \( W \) = Wage Rate (Annual Income)
- \( H \) = Husband's income
- \( N \) = Number of children

Expected Signs of Regression Coefficients.
The table below shows the expected signs of regression coefficient.

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\( A \) = Age of respondent
\( E \) = Educational Qualification
\( W \) = Wage Rate (Annual Income)
\( H \) = Husband's income
\( N \) = Number of children

**Age:** The relationship between age and labour force participation rate depends on the type of employment available, age at marriage, number and ages of children, etc. Generally speaking, the labour force participation rate is expected to rise with age up to a certain age, and then begin to fall (Okojie 1983:45).

**Educational Qualification:** The more highly educated a woman
is, the higher the probability of participating in the labour force. 

**Wage Rate:** Generally speaking and given the economic situation in Nigeria, it is expected that the higher the wage rate being offered to women in the labour market, the higher the labour force participation rate will be.

**Husband’s Income:** Where the income of the husband is relatively high, the labour force participation of the wife may be relatively low, since the income of the husband is high enough to sustain the family.

**Number of Children:** It is generally known, that the higher the number of children a woman has, the lower the probability of being engaged in the labour force. This is more so when the children are also below the age of 10.

**Result of Regression Analysis**


\[ Seb (8.816566) (3.101103) (0.878131) (0.228990) \]

\( R^2 = 0.67 \)

\( R^2 = 0.66 \)

\( F^* = 98.50246 \)

\( Sig F = .000 \quad n = 650 \quad DW = 1.98828 \)

**Interpretation of Result**

The Regression estimates obtained show that the independent variable accounted for 67% of the variations in the labour force participation rate when adjustments are made. Thus, a 33% unexplained variation informed the residual component computed but these residuals were not statistically significant as the F-Statistic was greater than the tabular values.

The standard error test confirmed that only two explanatory variables included in the analysis, namely, Gross Annual Income(W) and the number of children(N) significantly explained the rate of labour force participation of urban women in
Lagos. Since the beta estimates of these determinants are positive, we can say that an increase in them would positively influence labour force participation rate of women while a decrease in them will adversely affect the rate of women’s participation. Thus, labour force participation of women is income elastic as well as child elastic. The Durbin – Watson test confirmed that there is no evidence of autocorrelation.

Implications of the study:
Contrary to the well known notion that the place of a woman is in the kitchen, this study has been able to prove that women are not only interested in the kitchen but are also interested in participating actively in the labour force. They have however, been constrained by some factors.

Policy makers and government have a lot to do in encouraging more women to be actively involved in the labour force. This study has been able to identify a few factors that influence the participation of urban women in the labour force, but there are quite a number of other factors, which influence them that were not highlighted in the study.

Thus there is need for more research to examine both economic as well as socio-cultural factors that affect women’s labour force participation in this country.

The importance of education in the life of any citizen of a nation particularly the women cannot be over-emphasised. It has been said that “if you educate a man, you educate an individual, but if you educate a woman, you educate a family, a nation” (Dr Emmanuel Aggrey). There is a need to enhance female education in the country. More girls should be encouraged to participate in both primary and secondary school education as well as tertiary education in Nigeria. When the female population is very well educated, there will be no limit to their career development and growth.

The Nigerian economy also needs to be diversified and made to grow substantially. Economic growth will enhance growth in real income which will in turn encourage women to enter the labour force and be more actively involved.
General Discussion:

Out of the total population of the respondents, about 13.1% were unemployed, even though a few had been employed before. This finding shows that the rate of unemployment among women is not really as high as one would have imagined given this sample size. One of the reasons that could have contributed to this low unemployment rate among the respondents could be that they were underemployed. Underemployment has been defined as underutilized workers whose productivity is below the realizable potential. It is a measure of the degree to which people's gainful activities fail to make the maximum use of their productive capacity (Ojo, 1997:235). A large number of women attributed their unemployment to the difficulty of combining domestic and labour market activities.

We can infer from this finding that most women are actually interested in being engaged in the labour force but they have a lot of constraints militating against them.

Quite a number of the women were either self-employed or employed as clerks, office assistants, typists and cleaners. Majority of them were found to be employed as teachers, research assistants, nurses, military or police officers, while just a handful of them were employed as bank managers, accountants, lecturers, legal or medical personnel, company chairmen, managing directors and executive directors.

The reason for this kind of disparity could be attributed to the fact that most of the jobs where there aren't many women are jobs that require a lot of time, which most women, particularly married women are not able to afford because of their family -life commitments. The few women who are engaged in these jobs are mostly unmarried or women who are separated or divorced from their husbands.

It was discovered that a very high percentage of the women that were employed attributed their involvement in the labour force to their families. They were working in order to enable their families maintain a reasonable standard of living. Quite a number of them were in employment in order to have some money of their
own to use as they please while a few others had other reasons for being employed. We can infer from these findings that women, especially married women are very particular and interested in taking proper care of their husbands and children.

Majority of the respondents were found to fall between the N10,000 –N50,000 per annum wage bracket. This corroborates the fact that most of them are employed as middle or low level workers in their various professions.

It was discovered that many of the respondents’ spouses fall between the N100,000-N200,000+ wage bracket. Quite a number of them did not indicate their spouses’ annual income, which suggests that they did not know their husband’s annual income.

More than half of the respondents had educational qualifications below HND while about one third of them had educational qualifications above HND. This implies that a lot of Nigerian women lack the educational qualifications they need in order to move up the career ladder. A lot still needs to be done to encourage more women to study more and acquire more education especially at the higher level.

About one-third of the respondents claimed to have no children while about 40% had between 1-3 children. This probably explains why there was a positive relationship between LFP and number of children.

Conclusion:

This study has tried to identify the major household factors that determine the labour force participation of women in Nigeria’s urban areas, using Lagos as a case study.

Though the model explained only a small percentage variation in the decision to work, some key variables, which influence this decision, have been identified.

It was noted that a lot of research still need to be carried out on the economic activities of women and that government needs to take positive steps in order to get more women to actively participate in the labour force and to contribute meaningfully to the economic development of the nation.
References


Becker, Gary and Lewis Gregg (1973) “On the interaction between the Quantity and Quality of Children”. *Journal of Political Economy* 81(2) Supplementary March/April pp S279-88


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Patterns of Female Labour