GIRL-CHILD EDUCATION EFFECT ON WOMEN EMPOWERMENT THROUGH FEMALE LABORFORCE PARTICIPATION: THE ROLE OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING & DEVELOPMENT ECONOMIST

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Abstract- Education remains important for the empowerment of women through means such as participation in the labor market. Hence, this study investigates the effect of girl-child education captured by female primary school enrolment rate on female labor force participation, and the role guidance and counseling can play in improving girl child education. Time series data on primary education, female labor force participation alongside other variables spanning from 1990 to 2017 were used for estimations. The Fully Modified Ordinary Least Square estimation technique was used for estimations. The results showed that increase in female primary school enrolment significantly increases female laborforce participation rate. Furthermore, other variables in the model such as economic growth and inflation did not significantly affect women empowerment through labor force participation. However, government expenditures, that is, fiscal policy significantly increases women empowerment and labor market participation, while rising exchange rate and unemployment rate significantly reduced the labor force participation rate of women in Nigeria. Findings were duly discussed, and further policy recommendations were made accordingly.

Index Terms- Girl-Child Education, Women Empowerment, Female Laborforce Participation, Guidance and Counselling, Development Economist.

I. INTRODUCTION

The importance of women in the society at large has been extensively put forward socioeconomic as well as development discourse. This is basically because women play vital roles in the growth, development and functioning of societies, nations and regions of the world. Therefore, reform activists, researchers and international organization have always advocated for women's empowerment and gender equity as prerequisites of social reform and hence, development and progress. There has been therefore, an increase in the activities of World Bank on gender related issues particularly with respect to women empowerment. Women form an imprtant part of the powerful force throughout Africa as well as Nigeria which is the focus of this study, for growth and development by making large scale contributions as workers, business owners and entrepreneurs to the economy as well as to the welfare of their families (Ellis et al., 2007). The World Bank in realizing these important roles which women play significantly have sponsored economic and gender roles studies in countries such as Kenya (2007), and Tanzania (2007), and Uganda (2006) to assess the level of women incorporation into the economic spheres (Harriet, Opoku–Asare, & Anin, 2014).

While the role and importance of women in the society cannot be debatable, in Africa and developing countries they face a lot of challenges. Their contributions to development in the developing world are oftenly and largely underestimated, unrecognised, and/or unaccounted for in official statistics (World Bank, 2005). In the society, women generally perform several vital roles which can be categorized into productive or economic, reproductive, and community management, which are intertwined. And in all these spheres they face divers challenges which inhibits their abilities and capacities. Women are largely less empowered in developing countries which influences their state and status in society. Women typically according to ILO (2008), occupy low paid income jobs, the informal sector of the economy or work in the family enterprise. But despite this position in society, notwithstanding, women contribution to the economic transformation as well as their crucial role in social structure and functioning of every country remains crucial. However, women are continually restricted in their employment opportunities, property rights and social behaviour.

Indeed, for every nation to be able to meet its developmental and poverty reduction goals, it is crucial that women must also be at the spotlight. Several developmental programmes have put forth globally by the World Bank, the UN, the ILO and several governments, however, there is still more to be done in ensuring that women participation in the development of their communities are increased and improved (Ayikwei, 2005). Hence, it becomes necessary to unravel critical factors that are likely to affect the extent to which women can be empowered. Therefore, this study investigates the impact of girl child education on female labor force participation in Nigeria, and also discussing the role of guidance and counselling in ensuring girl child education.

Whether boy or girl, education remains important to any individual. It is a basic right for every individual and a major catalyst for human capital development and economic growth. In breaking the poverty barrier and cycle, education remains a crucial tool and an important means. To be more specific, primary education "is the critical enabler required to improve the economic and social scenario in many pockets of the nation" (Vadhera, 2015). Hence, denying girls the equal rights to education not only breaches their fundermental human rights but also impedes the human and economic progress one half of the population. Ahmed, & Yola (2021) noted that if more women are to become agents of change which they are, it is of neccessity that the attain better educational qualifications and have equal access to education. When women are literate as Ahmed, & Yola (2021) further notes, it serves as an important tool for improving their health status, nutrition and education in the family, and further empowers them in building, molding and sustaining future generations of skills and educated labor force in the society. Thus, investing in both formal

and non-formal education and training for women, has an exceptional high social, psychological and economic return.

Generally, the Unicef summarizes the benefits of educating the girl child. The short and long term benefits of education to girls and the society at large according to UNICEF (2003) include:

1. Educated girls develop essential life skills, such as: self-confidence, the ability to participate effectively in society and protect themselves from HIV/AIDS infection, sexual exploitation and pressure for early marriage and child birth.

2. Educated girls gain the skills and competencies for gainful employment, enabling them to be economically productive members of the society.

3. Educated mothers are more likely to send their children to school, thus promoting continued and lifelong learning.

4. Educated women marry later and have fewer children which they could manage and afford quality education and health.

5. Educated mothers nourish their children better, their children are therefore healthier and child mortality is reduced.

6. Educated women are less likely to die in child birth

However, despite the importance and benefits of educating the girl child, divers problems still ensues. In Nigeria particularly, research has revealed that millions of girls do not have access to education and school even with the concerted efforts to push the cause forward. Critical issues which have been identified as causes of these problems include child labour, bereavement, poverty and lack of sponsorship, truancy, quest for wealth, broken home, engagement of children as house helps, as factors bedeviling and impeding girl-children's access to education in the UNICEF A-Field which was made up of states in the Southern part of the country; Abia, Akwa Ibom, Anambra, Bayelsa, Cross River, Ebonyi, Enugu, Imo and River states, and Benue state from the Middle Belt of Nigeria (Okeke, Nzewi and Njoku 2008). Another problem that bedevil the education of the girl child is the rate of dropout and rentetion. Research findings have shown that the dropout rate of girls from school is much higher than that of the boys despite the obvious benefits of education to national development. Various reasons observed to be the cause of this dropout for Nigerian girls are bordering on religious, socio-economic, cultural, and school related factors, are not given a fair chance in the educational sector (Osakwe, Osagie, Madunagu and Usman 1995).

As at 2018 for instance, about 60% of out school were alluded to be girls. And further still, those who enroll tend to drop out early. This statistic is worst in the northeast and northwest of country where the perception for education is low and early marriages are high. While enrollment rates in the country has surgerd up to 70 recently, estimates still shows that there are over 10 million out-of-school children (UNICEF, 2018). This problem of lack of education for the girl child among many other problem we hypothesize is likely to affect their future empowerment and labor market outcomes. And as our results affirms, increasing primary school enrollment for girls signidficaty increases their labor market participation. The remainder of this paper includes a breif review of emprical literatures, methodology, results and conclusion.

II.   LITERATURE REVIEW

Ince (2010) studied the effects of education on the labor force status of women in Turkey. The dependent variable used was the female labor force participation rate, while literacy rate, and school enrollments rate served as the education variables. Other covariates in the model included GDP per capita growth rate, fertility rate, female unemployment rate and dummy variables used to prohibit the particular effects. The data used for estimations spanned from1980 –2004. Multiple regressions were conducted with the result showing that the level of education exerts a statistically significant positive effect on women in the country. Furthermore, there was an increasing trend in the labor force participation of females who are graduated from higher education. This revealed that higher education was correlated with better labor outcomes for women.

Kanjilal-Bhaduri & Pastore (2017) carried out a study in India on returns to education and female participation nexus. Data used for analysis were gotten from all the India quinquennial survey on Employment-Unemployment by National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), where probit estimation technique was used for estimations. The results of their analysis showed that "women's education had a U-shaped relationship with paid work participation. Education levels higher than compulsory secondary schooling causes an increase in propensity to take part in paid work. This is because the returns to education are insignificant and low for lower levels of education. The returns increase significantly along with the increase in educational levels." However the results showed significant differences from men education suggesting there might be problems of discrimination. However, Borah (2017) also carried out a study in India on the determinants of female labor supply with particular focus on education. The NSS 66th round unit level data(July 2009 – June 2010): 'Employment and Unemployment Situation in India" was used to examine the relationship, while the logistic regression was used for estimations. Unlike the later, he found that rising education significantly reduced the labor supply of women in India. This may have been due to proxies of variables used, and unit of analysis etc.

Bbaale & Mpuga (2011) in Uganda studied the relationship between female education, labor force participation and choice of employment type. The data used for estimations were sourced from the Uganda Demographic and Health Survey of 2006. The estimation techniques used included the probit and multinomial logit model. The results showed that female education (at post-secondary level) increased the probability of female labour force participation. Furthermore, female education, particularly at the secondary and post-secondary levels also increased significantly the likelihood of being engaged in wage employment. Sackey (2005) investigated the effect of education on labor force participation rate in Ghana. He made use of the probit and multinomial logit model to ascertain the effect of school completion on female labor force participation rate. The the 1998/99 Ghana Living Standards Survey (i.e., GLSS4) collected

by the Ghana Statistical Services served as the main source of data, was supplemented by the GLSS3, which was used majorly for comparative analysis purposes. The result showed women education (primary and post-primary) significantly increased the likelihood of labor force participation. Additionally, this effect also held when the analysis were carried out at both rural and urban levels.

Faridi, Malik & Basit (2009) studied the Impact of Education on Female Labour Force Participation in Pakistan using primary data from Bahawalpure district, the under-developed district of the Punjab. The sample consisted of One hundred and Sixty four Females and information collected centered on various educational levels, closed relative educational status and other education related variables. They made use of descriptive analysis and logistic regression to analyze the data generated. First, the results showed that there were trend associations between education and female labor force participation. The result showed all levels of education particularly the intermediate, tertiary and professional education all significantly increases labor force

participation with the exception of basic education up to middle level. However, parental education did not influence labor force participation significantly, while the spouse educational status had significant and positive impact on female labour force participation.

From the few literatures reviewed, the trend suggest that female education is a key determinant of their labor market status. Only one study by Borah (2017) showed a different result. However, from the literatures reviewed, it is evident that literatures pertaining to Nigeria are largely sparse, and also, most studies were done using observational data. Hence, this study adds significant value by first conducting analysis using times series data, secondly using primary education which gives a right picture for the education of the girl child, and lastly, this study focuses on Nigeria, and making recommendations on how guidance and counseling can come in to ensure better educational outcomes for the girl child.

III.   METHODOLOGY

A. The Model, Data, Estimation Technique and Procedures

The objective of this study is to investigate the effect of female education on women empowerment in Nigeria. Hence, the following models is fitted

Women Empowerment= f(Education, Government Expenditures, Gross Domestic Product (GDP), Unemployment Rate, Inflation Rate and Exchange Rate)

$$EMPOW_t = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 EDUC_t + \beta_2 GOVEXP_t + \beta_3 UNEMP_t + \beta_4 GDP_t + \beta_5 EXRATE_t + \beta_6 INF_t + \varepsilon_t$$

The data used for the analysis is sourced from the World Development Indicators (WDI) 2021, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) 2020 statistical bulletin, and Debt Management Office (2019). The data spans from the year 1990 to 2017. To examine the relationships between female education and empowerment, we make use of the Fully Modified Ordinary Least Squares (FMOLS) estimation technique. The steps and discussions of Agbutun (2021). The FMLOS is utilized especially becuase its advantage over the simpls OLS. The first procedure in this analysis is to conduct the stationarity tests for the variables which are used in the study. The ADF unit root test is used to ascertain the order of stationarity of the variables, after which the Johansen's cointegration test is used to ascertain if there is the existence of cointegration among the variables. And finally, the models are estimated using the FMOLS.

A. Stationarity Test

Table One: Unit Root Test Result

Variable	Stationarity
EDUCATION	I(1)
EMPOWERMENT	I(1)

IV.   PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

GOVERNMNENT EXPENDITURE	I(1)
EXCHANGE RATE	I(1)
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	I(1)
INFLATION RATE	I(1)
GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT	I(1)

Source: Author's computation from E-views 9

The results of the unit root (stationarity) test in table 1 shows that all the variables used in the study; women empowerment proxied by female labor force participation rate, education proxied primary school enrollment rate, inflation rate, government expenditures, gross domestic product (GDP), unemployment rate, and exchange rate were all stationary at first difference. This result further justifies the choice of the use of FMOLS approach for establishing the relationship between our variables in the models for the study.

B. Cointegration Test

Table 2: Cointegration Test For Model One
Unrestricted Cointegration Rank Test (Trace)

Hypothesized		Trace	0.05	
No. of CE(s)	Eigenvalue	Statistic	Critical Value	Prob.**
None *	0.706667	167.2259	125.6154	0.0000
At most 1 *	0.544795	100.9978	95.75366	0.0207
At most 2	0.387898	58.49939	69.81889	0.2843
At most 3	0.223060	31.99312	47.85613	0.6125
At most 4	0.193259	18.36398	29.79707	0.5393

Trace test indicates 2 cointegrating eqn(s) at the 0.05 level
* denotes rejection of the hypothesis at the 0.05 level
**MacKinnon-Haug-Michelis (1999) p-values

The result in table two shows that there is cointegretion among the variables used in the model. It shows that there were at least two cointegrating equations among the variables; women empowerment proxied by female labor force participation rate, education proxied primary school enrollment rate, inflation rate, government expenditures, gross domestic product (GDP), unemployment rate, and exchange rate, which also justifies the use of the FMOLS estimation technique for analysis.

C. Result of Estimations

Table 3: FMOLS results for Model One

Variable	Coefficient
EDUCATION	0.0869(0.0339)*
GOVERNMNENT EXPENDITURE	1.1177(0.389)**
EXCHANGE RATE	-0.0158(0.0067)*
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	-0.1700(0.0837)*
GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT	-1.1813(0.437)
INFLATION RATE	-0.0169(0.0127)
C	-90.900(15.074)

Source: Author's computation from E-views 9
Standard errors in parentheses
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Table three shows the fully modified OLS results estimated to ascertain the effect of female primary education on the likelihood of them being empowered as measured by their labor force participation rate. From the results it is evident that female primary education significantly increases their chances of been empowered and participating in the labor market. Furthermore, other variables in the model such as economic growth and inflation did not significantly affect women empowerment through labor force participation. However, government expenditures, that is, fiscal policy significantly increases women empowerment and labor market participation, while rising exchange rate and unemployment rate significantly reduced the labor force participation rate of women in Nigeria.

The results from the analysis showed that female primary school enrolment significantly increased the chances of women been empowered through participating in the labor market. There are few ways through which having primary education can be boost the future chances of women being better off in the search for jobs or participate in the labor market. First, primary education serves as a major incubator for innovation, leadership and critical thinking. Hence, women with quality primary education more likely to better off in the future in critical thinking, innovation and leadership which increases the likelihood of the securing employments than those who do not. Secondly, primary education helps in the proper and rapid development of children. That is, with primary education, the cognitive, emotional, cultural, social and physical skills of children are built which makes them better

off. Thirdly, primary education improves the communication and reading skills of individuals. Individuals with good and proper primary education are better communicators and self-confident. This self-confidence and effective communication is likely to improve their prospects when they search for jobs. Finally, with better primary education, the prospects of the individual performing better at high school or secondary, and tertiary level is also higher, hence the plausibility of our results the increasing primary school enrolment rate for women increases their labor market participation rate.

C(i). The Role of Guidance and Counseling

The major means through which guidance and counseling can aid in the advancement of girl child education is by ensuring that girls continue their education and make informed choices in terms of career paths. Counselors should not just focus on teaching but be made to engage actively school heads, teachers and students effectively in order to give proper counsels. The counselor has a major role to play both in the collation and interpretation of data in school based assessment especially in the affective and psychomotor domains. A key function of Counselling is its importance for the harmonization of the present, past and future of pupils. This is very important as it will girls to make informed choices about their education which will help empower them in the future through active participation in the labor market. Counseling "draws upon the past of an individual and brings it to bear on the present of the same individual in order to fashion a future that ensures self-realization and self-actualization of such individual" (Oko, 2010).

It is necessary to note that guidance and counseling is quite different from giving mere advices. While advices may just be inclusive of issues such as dependency syndrome, superiority complex, poor listening skill, generalization/sweeping statements, authoritarian, experience, subjective and directional, guidance and counseling deals with self-reliance/self-confidence, equalitarian, effective listening skills (prompts, clarification; verbal and non-verbal), specific and individualistic, authoritative, empirical, diagnostic, professional skills/knowledge (Ekennia, 1998). Hence it is important counselor be given the due and necessary in terms helping the girl child in making informed decisions regarding career and education. That is, counseling can help the girl child in critical areas such as building self-reliance/self-confidence, and effective listening skills etc. One the tools used by counselors which differentiate them from mere advisors are the use of psychological tests in our practice. "Psychological tests are scientific tools or exercises used to elicit a sample of behaviour for analysis and generalization" (Ugwuegbulam: 1997). It is the application of instruments that distinguishes the counselor from a good advisor. "The instrument need not be a standard test or inventory, it could be an improvised checklist or idea presented in a professional way" (Ekennia, 1998).

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

When women are literate, it serves as an important tool for improving their health status, nutrition and education in the family, and further empowers them in building, molding and

sustaining future generations of skills and educated labor force in the society. This benefit women bring can only be harnessed if they empowered. While literatures have shown that education is largely important for the participation of women in the labor market, only few studies have looked at primary education, with most them focusing on primary and observational data. Using time series data in primary education spanning from 1990 to 2017, the effect of female primary school enrollment on female labor market participation was investigated using the FMOLS estimation technique. The results showed that increase in female primary school enrolment significantly increases female labor participation rate. Finally, the study links guidance and counseling to this relation. Therefore, it is recommended that governments at all levels should invest in education generally and ensure that girls be made to go to school. Stringent measures should be taken against root causes of low enrolment rate for girls such as child labor, religion, drop out, culture etc. Also, the participation of counselors in the day to day running of schools at all levels should be improved, and the necessary resources they need be made available to them, so that they can utilized for the improvement of students, teachers and school administrators' relationships.

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