Job–related determinants of gender participation in labour force of agricultural organizations in Cross River State, Nigeria.

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Abstract

The main thrust of this study was to examine the job-related determinants of gender participation in the labour force of agricultural organizations in Cross River State. The study covered selected public and private agricultural establishments in the state. The population of the study comprised 2216 staff of the organizations, while the sample consisted of 193 respondents purposively selected for the study. Data were collected with the aid of a validation structured questionnaire and interviews carried out by the researchers. Data obtained were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages and logistic regression model. The results of data analysis revealed that the participation of both men and women in the labour force was determined, among other variables, by staff wages, promotion, provision of incentives/allowance, working conditions/conditions of service, nature of job specification, retirement benefits and recruitment procedures. The study recommended that regular promotion should be carried out, prompt payment and upward review of salaries should be done as well as worker-friendly working conditions should be provided to staff.

Keywords: Agricultural organization, gender, job-related determinants, labour force.

Introduction

In recent years, gender and women issues have taken center stage in the international development debate. Since the first world conference on women, held in Mexico City in 1975, and similar conferences, conventions and protocols, including the declaration on the protection of women and children in emergency and armed conflicts, 1974 and convention on the elimination of all types of discrimination against women, 1979 among others, the international women's movement

and the donor community have sought to mobilize countries to establish state institutions specifically tasked with the promotion of the status of women.

Gender differentials in labour-related engagements have some historical antecedents. Traditionally, women were regarded as home makers, whose primary occupation was

domestic activities at home. In Africa, women were confined at home while the men (their husbands and sons) went to the farm to work. At home however, women were engaged in various forms of activities, including food processing, weaving and craft (Lee, Jang and Sarkar, 2008).

With the emergence of western education, civilization, industrialization and paid employment, the traditional perceptions of women as inferior sex group and the patriarchal sentiments which ascribed superiority to men have been severely challenged. According to Charlton (2010), the 20th century witnessed a male – dominated labour force as only a few women participated in the paid-work community due to cultural and religious inhibitions. Despite frequent expressions to the contrary, gender differentials are still very alarming in the labour sector, and women in particular are often faced with a complex network of unique challenges both in the process of entering the work arena and in effectively participating in it on equal grounds with men.

In the last couple of decades, many countries, including some traditionally religiously and culturally conservative ones have come under tremendous pressure from the international community to create equal access and opportunities for both men and women to participate in the labour force. A wide range of international efforts and initiatives such as the Cairo Conference on Population and Development (1994), the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995), the World Summit for Social Development (1995) and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) among others, have been geared towards establishing social, economic, political and labour force gender equality in order to enhance the contribution of men and women to development.

It has equally been acknowledged that despite the progress made globally in addressing gender issues in the labour force, gender disparities still exists and a lot is still required to achieve labour force gender equality. A number of narratives have been used to rationalize the gendered labour community which has historically been skewed in favour of men. Generally, women are subject to higher levels of social control within households and communities and are less likely to have their interest represented by local power hierarchies. In the same vein, experts believe that women, on average, have lower levels of literacy and education than men in many areas due to cultural barriers against them (Davis, 2007).

There is also the quiet notion that women are concentrated in a narrow range of activities with no sufficient resources for investment and this often make them more susceptible to social and economic problems. Their decision-making capabilities are frequently constrained by social prejudices with implication for passivity in the labour force participation (Agarwal, 2006; Sosin, 1999; Cohen and House, 2003).

The agricultural labour sector is varied, while the women dominate the rural farm sector, the men hold sway in the formal labour sector of agricultural organizations. It is estimated that 80% of the food consumed globally is produced by the women, and in Nigeria, it is believed that women supply 70-80% of farm labour and produce over 70% of the food supplied to the market,. Women participate in land preparation, planting, weeding, harvesting, processing and marketing of food commodities. To a very large extent, subsistent agriculture is women – driven, and, while in contemporary times men have become synonymous with white – color jobs, women have continued to sustain local food production and labour pool. In the agricultural establishments where policy decision are taken, the men have continued to cast numerical shadow on the women folk. This dynamic has severe implications for agricultural development and food production. Marginal research concern has usually been shown to addressing or accounting for the variables that underpin gender participation in the agricultural labour force. It is against this background that this study was carried out.

Objective of the study

The main thrust of this study was to examine Job-Related Determinants of Gender Participation in the Labour Force of Agricultural Organizations in Cross River State.

Research hypothesis

H_O: There is no significant relationship between job-related variables and gender participation in the labour force of agricultural organizations in Cross River State.

Materials and methods

This research was carried out in selected public and private agricultural organizations in Cross River State. The population of the study consisted of 2216 staff of the organizations selected. The sample comprised 193 respondents selected using purposive sampling procedure. The instrument used for data collection was a validated structured questionnaire and oral interview. The

reliability of the questionnaire was ascertained using a test retest technique with a coefficient of 0.94 representing 94% reliability. Data obtained were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages and the logistic regression model was used to test the research hypothesis. The logistic regression was specified as follows:

$Y = f(B_o + B_1X_1 + B_2X_2 + \ldots \ldots BnXn, U_1)$

Where:

Y= Dependent variable = participation in labour force
X_1- Xn=Independent variables
X_1= Incentives/allowance
X_2= Staff relations/conditions of service
X_3= Promotion
X_4= Nature of job specification
X_5= Presence of sex discrimination
X_6= Salary/income regime
X_7= Organization recruitment policy
X_8=Provision of training/staff development
X_9= Retirement benefit
U_1= Error term

Results and discussion

Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents according to job related determinants of labour force participation in agricultural organizations. The result revealed specifically that promotion (89.22%), wage (100%), working conditions (100%), retirement benefits (96.08%) staff relations (88.24%), nature of work (86.27%), incentives/allowance system (87.25), provision for staff development (80.39%) etc. were some of the most frequently cited determinants of male participation in labour force.

However, none of the male respondent's labour force participation was determined by child care/maternity leave (0.00%) and presence of sex discrimination (0.00). These findings confirms the views of Davis (2007) that male employees are hardly involved in direct childcare burden and sex discrimination affects the labour force participation of female than men. On the other hand, the result indicated that the labour force participation of female workers was determined by child care and maternity (98.90%), sex discrimination (97.80%), incentives/allowance (86.81%), influence of spouse (96.70%), working conditions (98.90%), wage (95.60%), and household responsibilities (91.21%) among others. The implication of this result is that women's labour force participation is determined by a wide range of factors, unlike men, although certain factors influenced both sexes.

The result supports the findings of Euwals*et al.* (2007) that women's truncated labour force participation can be associated with the nature of tasks they are assigned, the wage regime in the organization, working conditions as well as marriage related factors like influence of spouse, childcare, maternity leave and

domestic (household) obligations. Some husbands do stop their wives from working, while some women voluntarily withdraw from labour force to take care of their children, husband and aging relatives. Women can also be attracted to an organization because of the wage structure, working environment and other fringe benefits and allowances.

On a general note, the result also indicated that a wide range of variables determined the respondents' participation in the labour force. In particular, wage (199%), influence of spouse (98.45%) incentives/allowance (93.78%) and household responsibilities (82.90) among others were some of the determinants of the participation of male and female in the labour force of agricultural organizations in Cross River State.

The implication of this result is that the labour force participation of both male and female is determined by a combination of different variables, some of which the workers have no control over. For example, Agarwal (2006) argued that the wage regime of organization and working conditions are the two most important determinants of labour force participation. He noted that no employee is confortable working in bad conditions and workers often seek employment after taking into account the wage structure of the establishment.

The findings also agree with ILO (2007) that women's labour force participation is particularly influenced by childcare and maternity leave issue. Women have truncated labour force participation because of family related responsibilities such as caring for children and occasional withdrawal from work during childbirth. The findings are in line with Hartog *et al.,* (2007) that the influence of spouse, proximity of organization, wage, sex discrimination and ability to take part in decision-marking can determine a person's participation in the labour force.

Table 2 shows that the logistic model predicted the determinants of male and female participation in the labour force of agricultural organizations in Cross River State well with an accuracy of 75.6%.The MacFadden R-square of 0.18 implies that all the explanatory variables included in the model were able to explain 18% of the variation in determinants of male and female participation in the labour force of agricultural organizations in Cross River State.

The log-likelihood ratio (LR) test was significant at 5 percent, meaning that the

model was adequate in explaining the probability of the effect of the explanatory variables on determinants of male and female participation in labour force. The average marginal effect was 0.499; which implies that, on average, the probability of male and female participating in the labour force of agricultural organizations was 50%.

The model revealed a significant positive influence ($P<0.05$) between staff relations (X_2) and the probability of participating in agricultural organizations labour force, with a marginal effect value of 0.2337%, suggesting that staff relations will increase the participation of male and female in agricultural organization labour force. It was also observed that promotion (X_3) had a positive and significant influence ($P<0.05$) on the probability of participating in labour force, with a marginal effect value of 0.2376. This implies that if staff are promoted as at when due, it will increase their participation in agricultural organization labour force. Similarly, provision for training/staff development (X_8) had a positive and significant ($P<0.10$) influence on participation in labour force, with a marginal effect value of 0.1819, which implies that if training/staff development opportunities are provided, it will increase the participation in agricultural organization labour force, while nature of job specification (X_4) and presence of sex discrimination (X_5) had a negative but not significant influence on participation in agricultural labour force.

Economic determinants such as wages/salary, bonuses, allowances, promotion, grants and prizes can influence people participation in the labour force. The result also corroborates with Mamman (1996) who maintained that sex discrimination has negative influence on people participation in the labour force. The findings also support the submissions of Sackey (2005) and Sosin (1999) that when staff are constantly promoted and given opportunity for professional development through staff training, it will enhance their participation in the organization. Based on this result, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate proposition is that the labour force participation of males and females could be dependent on job-related variables.

Conclusion

Gender sentiments are reflected in every area of life, whether formal or informal, noticed or unnoticed, expressed or felt, acknowledged or denied. People's lives and activities are influenced by cultural and institutional sex-typing and gender codes that are often

encapsulated into labour relations. This study has revealed that being man or woman does not necessarily determine participation in the labour force but the job-related variables associated with the various establishments can significantly influence labour force participation.

Thus, encouraging both men and women to participate actively in the labour force and contribute to development and increase productivity requires improvement in the labour or workplace environment. Both men and women are affected, to a large extent, by the same conditions in the workplace, including staff welfare, working conditions or conditions of service, salary among others. It is important therefore, that adequate attention be paid to improving the work environment and conditions in order to enhance the participation and contribution of men and women to agricultural development, food security and increase national GDP from agricultural sector.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations that;

I. Agricultural establishments should improve the working conditions of staff regardless of sex.
II. Staff should be promoted regularly and their salaries paid when due. Staff wages should also be reviewed upward regularly.
III. Incentives/allowances such as sick-leave, leave grants, overtime and hazard allowances should be provided to staff.
IV. Recruitment procedures should be gender neutral and transparent.

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Table 1**.** Distribution of respondents according to job related determinants of labour force participation

Variables	Male Yes (%)	No (%)	Female Yes (%)	No (%)	Total Yes (%)	No (%)
Promotion	91(89.22)	11(10.78)	80(89.91)	11(12.09	171(89)	22(11)
Wage	102(100)	0(0.00)	87(95.60)	4(4.40)	189(98)	4(2)
Household responsibility	10(9.80)	92(90.20)	83(91.21)	8(8.79)	93(48)	100(52)
Organizations recruitment policy	41(40.20)	61(59.80)	70(76.92)	21(23.08)	111(58)	82(42)
Working conditions	100(98.04)	2(1.96)	90(98.90)	1(1.10)	190(98)	3(2)
Job security	79(77.45)	23(22.55)	69(75.82)	22(24.18)	148(77)	45(23)
Provision of training/staff development	82(80.39)	20(19.61)	50(54.95)	41(45.05)	132(68)	61(32)
Retirement benefit	98(96.08)	4(3.92)	49(53.85)	42(46.15)	91(47)	102(53)
Influence of husband/wife	9(8.82)	93(91.18)	88(96.70)	3(3.30)	97(53)	91(47)
Decision – making capacity	70(68.63)	32(31.37)	64(70.33)	27(30.26)	134(69.43)	59(30.57)
Incentives/allowance	89(87.25)	13(12.75)	79(86.81)	12(13.19)	168(87)	25(13)
Religious beliefs	2(1.96)	100(98.04)	10(10.99)	81(89.01)	12(6)	181(94)
Ethnicity	27(26.47)	75(73.53)	21(23.08)	70(76.92)	48(25)	145(75)
Level of skill acquired	0(0.00)	102(100)	89(97.80)	2(2.10)	89(46)	104(54)
Presence of sex discrimination	90(88.24)	12(11.76)	76(83.52)	15(16.48)	166(86)	27(14)
Staff relations	0(0.00)	102(100)	90(98.90)	1(1.10)	90(47)	103(53)
Childcare/maternity leave	88(86.27)	14(13.73)	87(95.60)	4(4.40)	175(91)	18(9)
Nature of work	51(50)	51(50)	68(74.73)	23(25.27)	119(62)	74(38)
Proximity of organizations to place of residence	60(58.84)	42(41.18)	82(90.11)	9(9.89)	142(74)	51(26)

Field survey, 2018

Table 2. Regression analysis of the job related determinants in the labour force of agricultural organizations in Cross River State

Variable	β	Z	Marginal effect
Const	0.4722(0.6856)	0.6889	
Incentives/allowance (X)	0.7709(0.4011)	1.9219	0.1903
Staff relations (X_2)	0.9466(0.4023)**	2.3533	0.2337
Promotion (X_3)	0.9625(0.3937**	2.4451	0.2376
Nature of job	-0.3913(0.4522)	-0.8654	-0.0966
Specification (X_4)			
Presence of sex	-0.2017(0.4755)	-0.4243	-0.0498
Discrimination (X_5)			
Wage (X_6)	0.4615(0.3921)	1.1769	0.1139
Organization recruitment	-0.4046(0.4080)	-0.9916	-0.0999
Policy (X_7)			
Training/staff	0.7368(0.4089)*	1.8019	0.1819
Development (X_8)			
Retirement benefit (X_9)	0.0037(0.4506)	0.0083	0.0009

Field survey data, 2018.