We are IntechOpen, the world's leading publisher of Open Access books Built by scientists, for scientists

6,300

Open access books available

172,000

International authors and editors

190M

Downloads

Our authors are among the

154

Countries delivered to

TOP 1%

most cited scientists

12.2%

Contributors from top 500 universities

WEB OF SCIENCE™

Selection of our books indexed in the Book Citation Index
in Web of Science™ Core Collection (BKCI)

Interested in publishing with us?
Contact book.department@intechopen.com

Numbers displayed above are based on latest data collected.
For more information visit www.intechopen.com

Institutional Structures and Women Sustainability in the Labour Market for Developing Economies

Oluwabunmi O. Adejumo

Abstract

The peculiarity of women in developing economies, through changing status (marriage, widowhood, divorce, separation) and in some cases occasioned by locational vicissitudes, have continually challenged the sustainability of women in the labour market. Again, some of these challenges women face via social structures such as patriarchy, customs and traditions and unpaid household chores have particularly resulted in labour somersault, underemployment and forced unemployment which in certain cases could be temporary or of a permanent nature. Owing to this growing vulnerability of women, this chapter examine models and structures that have shaped (promoted or otherwise) women's participation in the labour market. In turn, this chapter advances alternative institutional and organizational structures that can check some bewilderment of women in participating in the labour market, as well as foster the sustainability of women in the labour market.

Keywords: women, sustainability, labour market, institutions, inequality

1. Introduction

The economic inequality and social segregation faced by women in the labour market have racial, religious, cultural and residential dimensions. For instance, by examining the differences in employment and economic activity among women in Israel (Muslim-Arabs, Christian-Arabs and Druze-Arabs), Khattab [1] observed that ethnic differences affected the outcomes of women activities in the labour market.

Despite these differences, the participation of women in the labour force has been growing over the years. The *World Employment Social Outlook* [2]¹, noted that on the global scene, as at 2018, women's participation rates in developed countries hit 52.4 percent, and are gradually closed in on men with 15.6 percentage points; while the case of developing economies is even more with a female labour participation (FLP) rate of 69 percent and a gender gap rate closing in at 11.8 percentage points. Of this statistics, sub-Saharan African countries recorded a FLP rate of 64.7 percent and a record low gender gap of 9.3 percentage points. According to the report of the

¹ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_619577.pdf

International Labour Organization [3], while the rising trend of female participation and reduction in gender gaps in developed economies can be largely attributed to increases in human capital; the experience of developing economies are as a result of socio-economic necessities to include poverty and lack of social protection. This implies that the drive towards women labour participation in developed economies is more of *pull* factors as against developing economies which tilt towards *push* factors². For instance, Chaykowski & Powell [5] noted that the participation of women in the labour market is increasing and even closing in on the men; and this is largely explained by educational attainment of these women; whereas, Keck and Saraceno [6] using *motherhood penalty hypothesis* argues that education has no bearing with women's employment. Therefore, the flexibility in workplace or upheavals from work stress vis-a-vis domestic chores goes along way to determine the continual involvement of women within the labour market.

Meanwhile, in an era where the quest for sustainable development is focal, and in consonance with global goals on women empowerment, the concern of this chapter mediates beyond the participation of women in labour markets to how well women are sustained in these markets. In addressing sustainability in labour market, pertinent issues of concern include the sector of employment (formal or informal), nature of employments (skilled or unskilled), the type of wages (discriminatory or non-discriminatory), as well as work-life balance. Therefore, by examining different models of fostering women participation, this chapter takes a clue to suggest adaptive institutions for women sustainability in the labour market.

This chapter is further reviews studies that have examined women participation in the labour market. Sequel to this, is the section that identifies and infer suitable models that can foster the women sustainability in the labour market. The last section concludes this chapter.

2. Review of women participation in the labour market

Reflections on the flexibility of women experiences via their participation in labour market have been lopsided vis-à-vis their family life. For instance, human capital which is a major input to production has been continuously affected in terms of human health, especially with regard to black African women [7–9]. The World Bank Report in 2006 revealed that women have more likelihood of contacting ailments compared to men [10]. This is because of the certain demographic impacts and congenital peculiarities; thus, making women more vulnerable.

Women engagement in economic activities in sub-Saharan Africa have been shaped by certain socio-economic phenomena like culture, discrimination, crude methods or approaches to production, herculean means of sourcing finance, exposure to harassment both at family and societal levels and marketing strategies [11]. Koopmans [12] utilized the Eurislam' survey of four immigrant ethnic groups of predominantly Muslim belief—Turks, Moroccans, former Yugoslav Muslims and Pakistani—and native ethnics. Koopman noted that once socio-economic variables such as language proficiency, interethnic social ties and gender values are accounted for between natives and immigrants, the differences in the rates of labour market participation and unemployment between native ethnics and immigrants reduce and become insignificant statistically. In the meantime, Anxo *et al.* [13] examines the patterns of labour market integration in the course of life of men and women in seven European countries. By utilizing certain household characteristics such

² see Akinyemi and Adejumo [4]

as parenting and non-parenting, married or cohabiting as well as retired workers across different phases in life's course- Nordic '*universal breadwinner*' model, the '*modified breadwinner*' model, the Mediterranean '*exit or full-time*' model and the '*Maternal part-time work*' - Anxo et al. [13] noted that the Nordic model offers important insights for EU employment policy. This is because it offers opportunities for life-long employment is a gendered-friendly model which not only reduces inequality in time allocation to employment but is also designed to encourage the participation of aging workers.

The case of migrant women workers appears more challenging. Koopmans [12] notes that most foreign-born immigrants and their successors or offspring are worse off on the labour market than natives within European immigration countries. This is because the rate of labour force participation of these migrants are lower as they are either unemployed, underemployed, discriminated against, or poorly paid. Similarly, in an assessment, Haberfeld, Semyonov and Cohen [14] utilizes the immigrants' assimilation hypothesis and ethnic-based stratification to examine the economic performance of immigrants of the former Soviet Union in Israel. They found that gender and ethnicity are crucial in integrating immigrants within the labour market in their country of destination. Assimilation into the Israeli labour market. Unlike men, this goes a long way to affect women wage bargaining powers, earnings and available opportunities. They also noted that European women prefer to participate in the labour force than Asian women in high-status occupations and to earn more than withdrawing totally from the labour market.

3. Models explaining the participation of women in the labour market

3.1 State-based vs. liberal feminism model

The state-based model encourages the participation of women in the labour market based on equal opportunities, individualism and freedom of choice. The liberals opine that the state cannot suffice to actualize the desired equality for men and women in the labour market; therefore, the point of convergence between the liberals and the state will be to institute policies that can promote equal playing field for men and women alike; as well as still enact state policies and interventions that addresses the peculiarities of women [15]. Also, Langley and Mellor [16] added that given certain structural constraints of the neoliberal ideologies, nascent global systems have begun to embrace transformative sites and spaces via state institutions and global civil society as complements or alternatives to existing structures for actualizing women sustainability in market. Meanwhile, the neoliberal feminism model added the need to promote the benefits of labour flexibility, entrepreneurship and empowerment opportunities among women, which represents market-based solutions to women in the labour market [17].

3.2 Individualist vs. collectivist model

As against the individual approach to seeking redress or advocacy within organizations or in the labour market, the collectivist approach is such that interest or homogeneous groups (such as women) within the labour market can integrate in order to tackle common challenges or advance positive courses of actions. For instance, Whitehouse [15] noted that thriving industrial relations network, high level of public employment and sustained expenditure on active labour programmes have greater prospects of yielding outputs for women.

3.3 Formal and informal models

Unlike informal systems, Ramani et al. [18] argued that formal systems are largely characterized by rigidities such that emerging and even existing women entrepreneurs often require training and re-training to master certain business capabilities. As laudable as the formal systems appear, the informal systems have their place of suitability in the labour markets in creating jobs especially for less-skilled persons as well as complementing jobs within the formal systems. As a result, hinging on the principle of social justice and equity, intermediary institutions such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and women-centered institutions relevant to women in the informal systems could gradually capture the women in the informal markets to re-establish themselves in what is referred to as the Base of Pyramid (BoP) markets especially in developing countries.

3.4 Cultural vs. enclave model

Cultural Model: used to describe the behavior of women in different set-ups such as politics, family life, labour market, etc. Basically, the model explains how socio-cultural phenomena shapes individuals. Khattab [1] noted that the patriarchal system in developing societies limit or outrightly prevent women from participating in activities other than martial duties. For instance, institutional mechanisms within the Arab communities are structured to engage women more in domestic chores rather than participate in public activities; which also hold sway for Pakistan and Bangladesh.

These are economies that evolve as a result of marginalization of certain groups or persons. The enclave model is a response of a homogenous group (persons with similar conditions) such as immigrants, intra-ethnic segregants, and war-torn persons to segregation structures or activities within the labour market. By carving a niche for themselves, they evolve measures to participate in the labour market irrespective of their seeming limitations. Through their peculiar crafting or skills, the enclave model evolves a process where minority groups find their place and contribute to the labour market. Khattab [1] noted the occupational success of the Arab enclave economy which grew because of the discrimination of the Arabs within the Israeli community. However, the enclave system is limited in opportunities and expansion owing to the specialization phenomenon. As a result, people attempt to get jobs outside the enclave community and this which easier for the men than women due to social and structural barriers [1].

3.5 Dual-earner vs. dual-carer model

This is a model that evolved in Sweden in the early 1990s as a response to negative economic growth, budget deficits and unemployment [19]. Therefore, as part of policy instruments, the Swedish government reduced public expenditures and fostered policies that encouraged the integration of men and women alike in the labour market. Through instruments such as parental leave and allowances, both men and women were opportune to work as well take leave at varying times, and still be entitled to allowances especially when it comes to catering for the home front. This pattern encouraged planning for women and men to take their turns in deciding work times and when to take leave to cater for their homes.

3.6 Nordic vs. modified Nordic model

The Nordic model is also known as the universal bread winner's model. It is a lifelong form of employment sector. Apart from the continuity or long-term nature of this form of employment, it also accommodates a high number of the labour force

[13]. The Nordic model presents high employment sustainability possibilities in the course of a workers' life as well as a very high incidence of earning opportunities for both men and women alike; apparently indicating low gender disparities in labour market integration. This model is typical of the Nordic economies such as Sweden. Some of the characteristics of the Nordic model exemplified with the Swedish economy include female part-time work, discouragement of dual-earners with either excessive work hours, low wage differentials between men and women, marginal tax system, insurance, and unemployment benefits. Anxo et al. [13] equally noted several opportunities to balance work time over the life course for periods of extended leave with employment protection. This leave could include maternity leave, leave to cater for sick children, dependents and relatives as well as flexible retirement options. For example, in cases of maternity leave, there are options for a period of full-time absence or reduced working hours reinforced with high-earnings replacement ratio. Thus, owing to the wholistic approach of the Nordic model, it has been passed as being an efficient tool for the integration and sustainability of women in the labour market.

The Modified Nordic model is linked with complete or partial (negotiated/reduced work hours) withdrawal of women from the labour market usually to gain time to cater for their children. This model is exemplified in France where mothers have access to low public child care facilities and a high coverage from the government. However, unlike the Nordic model, unemployment rate within the French economy is still high among women compared to men; also, the feasibility of being in through one's life is very low for women as well as the aged [13].

Following these models within the European economies, whether the Nordic or modified Nordic model, according to Anxo et al. [13], building families and parenting are baseline causes of women withdrawal from the labour market. Therefore, developing economies may have to still have to factor the peculiarity of women in their economies to come up with suitable and functional policies that will sustain women in the labour market.

3.7 Mediterranean vs. maternal part-time model

The mediterranean labour market model is a classic case of a rigid labour system that disorient and disintegrate women from the labour market. It is typified by an exit of women/mothers from the labour market. In economies where the Mediterranean model holds sway, female employment is at its lowest ebb, while the rate of male workers are higher. The Mediterranean model is prevalent in Italy and Spain. It appears less flexible with restricted leave opportunities for women; and where women are seen to be employed, they usually work full-time and there are little or no provisions for child-care and pre-school facilities. As a result, women in these economies defy motherhood until they can gin grounds in career paths or employments. Meanwhile, the maternal part-time model is slightly different from the mediterranean model because the exit of women from the labour market offer mothers opportunities for part-time work, hourly pay and limited child-care facilities; thereby, causing withdrawal of women from the labour market less pronounced. These models are common sights in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Germany. According to Anxo et al. [13], the maternal part-time model includes financial options such as transfers and tax splitting, in order to encourage short-work periods.

4. Institutions for women sustainability in the labour market: posers for developing economies

Following the reviews conducted, several models and hypothesis have advanced courses to foster the participation and integration of women in the labour market.

Following some of these tenets, a course for the sustainability of women in the labour market is advanced via institutional mechanisms for developing economies.

There are myriads of institutions that could cater or ensure the sustainability of women within the labour market in developing economies. The identified institutions in **Figure 1** above are suggestive but not exhaustive. For instance, educational institutions such as child care centers or preschool facilities can help women to plan their work-life and still participate in gainful employment. The conduct of corporate organizations and financing institutions has a great deal with stimulating women participation in the labour market. For instance, Grosser [20] noted that a corporate social responsibility targeted at women can be a policy instrument to check gender equality as well as foster women. Also, Barea & Cesana [21] added that social protection for women via health provisions and other dimensions as another instrument for extending and sustaining women in the labour market.

Meanwhile, the role government institutions that are women-focused in shaping and channeling mediations for women sustainability in the labour markets remains cardinal. As noted earlier, some women may decide to work formal or informal systems. Therefore, owing to the thriving market systems prevalent in organizations, the role of government in mediating and mainstreaming organizational policies to foster women participation and sustainability cannot be overemphasized. Again, owing to the prevalence of informal systems that permeates developing economies [18], women-centered government institutions that seeks to integrate women for sustainable participation in the labour market is equally critical in the process of development. Although, Ramani *et al* [18] cautioned against the existing labour

Figure 1.
Institutional framework for women sustainability in the labour market. Source: Author.

recommendations of *formalizing the informal economies* as the viable or best course for the sustainability of women in the labour market; rather, they propose that the sustainability of women within the informal sector depends on forms of agreements with other persons in business as well as the availability of women-centered mediators in different market arrangements.

In all, some other institutions could be in form of industrial relations such as cooperatives and unions; as well private and public empowerment institutions where the peculiarities of women especially as dual earners and carers are considered for sustainable labour outcomes.

Author details

Oluwabunmi O. Adejumo
Institute for Entrepreneurship and Development Studies, Obafemi Awolowo
University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria

*Address all correspondence to: jumobum@gmail.com;
adejumobum@oauife.edu.ng

IntechOpen

© 2020 The Author(s). Licensee IntechOpen. This chapter is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

References

- [1] Khattab, N. (2002). Ethnicity and Female Labour Market Participation: a New Look at the Palestinian Enclave in Israel. *Work, Employment and Society*, 16(1), 91-110. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09500170222119263>
- [2] Kuhn S, Milasi S, Yoon S. World Employment Social Outlook: Trends 2018. Geneva: ILO; 2018
- [3] International Labour Office. World employment and social outlook: trends for women 2017. International Labour Office; 2017
- [4] Akinyemi F, Adejumo O. Entrepreneurial motives and challenges of SMEs owners in emerging economies: Nigeria & South Africa. *Small. 2017*;10:50. DOI: 10.13189/aeb.2017.051105
- [5] Chaykowski, R. P., & Powell, L. M. (1999). Women and the labour market: Recent trends and policy issues. *Canadian Public Policy/Analyse de Politiques*, S1-S25.
- [6] Keck, W., & Saraceno, C. (2013). The impact of different social-policy frameworks on social inequalities among women in the European Union: The labour-market participation of mothers. *Social Politics*, 20(3), 297-328.
- [7] Asongu, S. A., & Odhiambo, N. M., (2018). "ICT, Financial Access and Gender Inclusion in the Formal Economic Sector: Evidence from Africa", *African Finance Journal*, 20(2), pp. 45-65.
- [8] Asongu, S. A., & Odhiambo, N. M., (2019a). "Inequality and the Economic Participation of Women in Sub-Saharan Africa: An Empirical Investigation", *African Journal of Economic and Management Studies*. DOI: 10.1108/AJEMS-01-2019-0016.
- [9] Asongu, S. A., & Odhiambo, N. M., (2019b). "Inequality thresholds, governance and gender economic inclusion in sub-Saharan Africa", *International Review of Applied Economics*, DOI: 10.1080/02692171.2019.1645817
- [10] Dunga, S. H. (2019). Analysis of the Demand for Private Healthcare in South Africa. *Studia Universitatis Babes Bolyai-Oeconomica*, 64(1), 59-70.
- [11] Eboiyehi FA, Adeyemi MO, Adejumo OO. Barriers and Constraints to Women Entrepreneurship in Ile-Ife of South-Western Nigeria. *Ife Journal of Entrepreneurship and Business Management*, Maiden Issue Vol. 1(1); 2015
- [12] Koopmans, R. (2016). Does assimilation work? Sociocultural determinants of labour market participation of European Muslims. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 42(2), 197-216.
- [13] Anxo Dominique, Colette Fagan, Inmaculada Cebrian, Gloria Moreno (2007). Patterns of labour market integration in Europe—a life course perspective on time policies, *Socio-Economic Review*, Volume 5, Issue 2, Pages 233-260, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ser/mwl019>
- [14] Haberfeld, Y., Semyonov, M., & Cohen, Y. (2000). Ethnicity and labour market performance among recent immigrants from the former Soviet Union to Israel. *European Sociological Review*, 16(3), 287-299.
- [15] Whitehouse, G. (1992). Legislation and labour market gender inequality: an analysis of OECD countries. *Work, employment and society*, 6(1), 65-86.
- [16] Langley, P., & Mellor, M. (2002). 'Economy', sustainability and sites of

transformative space. *New Political Economy*, 7(1), 49-65.

[17] Shade, L. R. (2018). Hop to it in the gig economy: The sharing economy and neo-liberal feminism. *International Journal of Media & Cultural Politics*, 14(1), 35-54.

[18] Ramani, S. V., Thutupalli, A., Medovarszki, T., Chattopadhyay, S., & Ravichandran, V. (2013). Women entrepreneurs in the informal economy: Is formalization the only solution for business sustainability?.

[19] Nyberg, A. (2003). Economic Crisis and the Sustainability of the Dual Earner, Dual Carer Model: Working Paper, ESRC seminar series 'Work, Life and Time in the New Economy.

[20] Grosser, K. (2009). Corporate social responsibility and gender equality: women as stakeholders and the European Union sustainability strategy. *Business Ethics: A European Review*, 18(3), 290-307.

[21] Barea, M., & Cesana, G. (2006). Social protection sustainability, prolongation of working life and greater participation of women in the labour market. *La Medicina del lavoro*, 97(2), 148.