



The Effects of Religious Beliefs on Labour Force Participation

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Abstract: *This study provides response and important basis to the effects of religious belief and labour force participation, using trends, journals and existing literature reviews as a capstone in the overview of the study. The study reveals that religious belief has an influence on labour force participation, which established that religion has a significant effect on labour force participation indicating indices of a low labour force especially women participation and some religious bigot that resulted to inequality and low economic activities participation from women viewpoint, thus creating diverse responses among scholars. Several components were discovered as militating factors in the discourse of religious belief on labour participation. The study concludes that increase in women labour force participation will liberate women from the use of low or non-participation in social and economic activities whilst aid them in the participation on decision making, management and contribution to labour force meaningfully.*

Keywords: *Religious Belief, Economic Participation, Labour Force Participation, Traditions Belief, Culture.*

Introduction

Over the years several measures have been put in place all over the world to enhance labour force participation and ensure access to labour market despite people's belief, especially women participation in the labour market has not been commensurate with wages, job stability and social protection, as well as wage discrimination. Beit-Hallahmi (1997) connotes that many religions oppose women working to earn a living, family planning, women to stay outside longer and treat women as inferior to men. The result is that women are kept out of the formal labor market, with adverse consequences for development. Religious and other social norms are passed from generation to generation. As a result of these differences in economic outcomes due to religious can be expected to persist over time. Nevertheless, the female labor force participation rate of many country has been stagnant for the past 30 years (Schaner and Das, 2016).

Addressing this debilitating factor of labour force participation on economic disparity due to the religious belief of some individuals remains unalloyed focus of researchers and governments in most countries of the world. Hence, these barriers which alienate some people due to their religious belief from participating significantly in economic activities are deeply rooted in traditional beliefs, customs and low level of involvement in decision making

This action has contributed enormously to the prolongation of robust disparity among developing countries. Meanwhile, religious belief has been identified as an obstruct in the wheel of development which hampers social cohesion, trust and also marginalize the poor mindset individuals. Religious belief in the labour force input is created by the traditions, culture, norms or colonial systems of education which was designed to meet the manpower needs that estranged especially women from economic and educational opportunities. In the same vein, a previous study has posited that men are better than women in the economic arena, as a result of women's segregation from access to education and wealth creating assets. This elimination is borne out of the fact that women lack required capital to participate in large scale economic activities.

Women has been deeply hook into these vicious circle, practices and is common in virtually all sectors of developing countries economy. It has also been established that unequal participation in labour force costs women nearly twice the total GDP of Africa and the Middle East. The religious belief syndrome in the labour force has also been argued to be responsible for the gap in the growth disparities of different counties in the world. The restriction of women access to job opportunities slow economic development and their capability in decision making as obtainable in developing countries like Nigeria and other Africa countries. In the Middle East and North African countries (MENA) region, class, gender and the state are the principal determinants of women's work and women's lives (Moghadam, 1990). It was also revealed that religious belief has debar people especially women in the case of standing up against their husbands, civic partners and in-laws. This does not allow them to assert their rights on issues relating to child bearing, child spacing, sexual matters and to resist intimate partner violence, this also has effect on the wider economy.

Furthermore, several questions has been asked by scholars either religious belief influence women inequality in labour force and perhaps are there any regional differences in women labour force participation, are there any occupational differences among religious women, the answer is unweaving as religious belief is a crucial factor that discourages women from labour force participation in the labor market and regular performance of religious rituals have the greatest negative effect on labor force participation.

Purpose of the study

The aim of this study is to examine the influence of religious belief on labour force participation. Identify various components militating against labour force participation in business environment and the components of religious belief that influence labour force participation. The study will be beneficial to researchers, religious people, business practitioners and academia's. In addition, the study tends to suggest concrete ways on how to reduce low labour force participation among women and religious bigot. The study will also highlight extensive literature review for considerable review.

Literature review

Several studies have claimed that religion is an important factor of labor market involvement (Caris and Hayo, 2012). In these study various factors, nevertheless, limit people's employment opportunities as women are mostly involved and affected. Labour force participation is influenced by several factors, including education and cultural norms. Certainly it is significant to understand all of the barriers to people employment, given the critical role of human in labor force participation in the economy (H'madoun, 2010). In the same vein H'madoun (2010) stated that religion is a significant factor in women's low labor market participation. While, Inglehart and Norris (2003) found that gender equality and religious heritage have a negative relationship.

Following the Beijing Declaration, equal involvement for men and women in all spheres of society, including the economy, has gained significance. Despite the fact that numerous policies have been put in place globally to support women's employment and guarantee their access to the workforce, women's involvement in the workforce has not kept pace with pay, job security, or social protection. Concern has been expressed over the continued impact of wage discrimination and occupational apartheid on women, who are more frequently than males subjected to the whims of unpaid labor (United Nation 2010).

In the meantime, religious and cultural beliefs, practices, and the low participation rate of women in decision-making all play a major role in creating these barriers that prevent women from engaging significantly in economic activities. The restriction of women access to job opportunities slow economic development and their capability in decision making as obtainable in developing countries. Lim (2012) reveals that the nature of women empowerment depends on the income employment away from the home, particularly in non-familial enterprises, fruitful and remunerative jobs in the formal rather than in the informal economy and regular and full-time jobs that are permanent and secure. While it is not only entry into labour force but true economic empowerment that is linked with household decision making.

While studies have shown the effect of religion on labour force participation in different countries among Muslim and Christian countries, there are no significant studies on Christian women regarding labour participation in predominant Christian countries. Unfortunately, available studies on religion and female labour force have often lumped all the countries together and have not been able to specify the effect of different religious group on the labour force participation in each of the countries (Ghazal & Sylwester, 2013 H'madoun 2010, Pastore and Tenaglia 2013, Maciej Kus 2011). The study tend to examine the effect of religious belief on labour force participation, it was observe from previous studies that women are mostly affected by religious belief on labour participation, thus has led to low participation especially in developing and Muslim countries. Also religious belief where not only the mitigating factor affecting labour force participation, other factors such as, custom, norms and tradition etc.

Relationship between religious belief and labour force participation

Based on different studies, Fernández (2013) examined the evolution of female labor force participation over a century due to culture change and examined the role of disparities in culture in creating the histrionic growth in labor force participation over the last century. This study

examined that these beliefs had infuse through a process of learning across generations. In the same vein Diwan and Vartanova (2017) studied the effect of patriarchal culture on the participation of women in the labor force. Females were supposed to learn regarding the payouts of working in the market in the elongated run by identifying private and public pointers. Using Christian, Muslim, Others, or none and measured religiosity by using the dual factor, indicating that if religious faith was chosen as the desired quality for women and this study finally used a measure of relative household income at the individual level. Nnoromele (2017) examined the effects of religion and patriarchal norms on female labor force participation. This study proposed an empirical study assessing the effect of religion, religiosity, and patriarchal norms on the behavior of females to join the labor force across 40 countries.

This study modeled female labor participation as a dummy dependent variable of religion, religiosity, patriarchal norms and values, legal discrimination, and many demographic variables. This study estimated the elements to examine the impact of religion, religiosity, and patriarchal norms on female labor participation. This investigation supported the supposition that the more religious women and had conventional mentality too probably less participated in paid employment, which affect the female participation in the labor force when the study controlled for national and environmental cultural factors. Reimer (1995) also acknowledged how cultural differences among people belonging to different ethnicities impacted the employment prospect of married women. It was resolute that the underlying culture defines an ideal wife's role, which eventually impacted entering the workforce as well.

Labour Force Participation

Labour force participation is a number of employees in workforce. Labour force can boost the world GDP if properly manager based on research, if it's imperative is realized. The labour force participation is a measure of the proportion of a country's working-age population that engages actively in the labour market, either by working or looking for work, it provides an indication of the size of the supply of labour available to engage in the production of goods and services, relative to the population at working age. A labour force based on their gender does not allow the best individual to work at the job most suited for them. The simplest explanation for labor force participation is the income-leisure model. As described by Psacharopoulos & Tzannatos (1989), "the decision to work and, if so, for how long depends on the remuneration from work (wage rate), other (non-labor) income, and tastes" (p. 190). A higher wage rate has two opposing effects, a substitution effect, which makes the opportunity cost of not working more costly, and an income effect which allows workers the ability to take more time off from work. "Other income", an example of which may be the wages of a spouse, will make entering the labor force less attractive. Tastes are preferences that individuals hold when it comes to leisure or work. Throughout the world this household division of labor is largely based on gender, with women almost universally being responsible for household production while men focus on earning income.

For example Indonesia boomed economically in the 1980s. Women's labor force participation increased significantly during this period and continued to increase thereafter. Although the

female labor force participation rate has increased, it is currently at 51 percent, which is low compared to many other Southeast Asian countries; Cambodia's is 79 percent, Myanmar's is 75 percent, and Vietnam's is 72 percent (World Bank 2015). Perhaps the labor force participation rate of women in Indonesia is low compared to other Southeast Asian Nations, it is very high compared to other Muslim-majority countries; it is 16 percent in Jordan, 20 percent in Saudi Arabia, 25 percent in Pakistan, 29 percent in Turkey, and 44 percent in nearby Malaysia (World Bank 2015).

However, as economic development progresses there is an increase in jobs where physical attributes are no longer important. Most jobs in the service industry can be used as an example. In these types of jobs there is no clear reason to divide labor based on gender.

Challenges of religious belief on labour force participation

One of the biggest challenges militating against labour market mostly in developing countries is religious belief, as a salient features of the labor market in developing countries, the low share of women holding or looking for jobs, as of 2009, this share was 26 percent as compared to an average of 62 percent in OECD countries and to an average of 33 percent in a group of selected comparison countries with similar levels of economic development (SPO and World Bank, 2009).

Over the last 50 years, women's labor force participation rates in Turkey have been declining (Goksel, 2010). According Marshall (2005), explain the attitudes of feminist and Islamist women in Turkey toward working. While there is nothing in Islam which forbids women from working, the author found that orthodox Islamist women believed that women should not engage in paid work unless it was a necessity (Marshall, 2005). The author connote that men and women each have special abilities that are granted by god and that for women those abilities center on care of children and home (Marshall, 2005). Perhaps most significant among the findings was the result that the frequent performance of religious rituals has the greatest negative effect on the labour market participation of educated women, who are the most productive human resource in the economy. This contradicts the common assumption that education is the most effective solution to countering women's low labor force participation rate in Turkey. Without doubt this is a complicated issue with a number of factors, as they largely ignored factor in women's economic decision making. Variances in economic outcomes due to religion can be expected to persevere over time. Persistent alterations in economic outcomes are not only symptomatic of lost potential output, but can also principal to social conflict.

However, East and North Africa, religious and conservative socio-political values decrease the probability of female employment. Dildar (2015) finds that patriarchal norms and religiosity decreases women's labor supply in Turkey.

Variation on religious belief and labour force participation between countries

The level and effect of religious belief on labour force participation is determined by several factors which have linger over time. Several studies in different countries have claimed that the

strong influence of religion is among the most significant factors that discourage individuals especially women from either participating in the labour market or pursuing a career in societies present in Asian, Eastern African, and Middle Eastern regions (Maton, Dodgen, Sto. Domingo, & Larson, 2005; Tausch & Heshmati, 2016). Spierings and Smits (2007) analyzed Women's participation in the labor market of Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Syria & Tunisia. The study used representative data covering over 50,000 women and over 65 districts by including five MENA countries (Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Syria, and Tunisia). The study claimed that religious belief, desires, opportunities, and attitudes played a vital role at different levels in the decision of females to join the formal labor market or restrict them to join the labor market. In the same vein Spierings (2014) explores the determining for the role of Islam in non-farm paid employment of women who work in provinces from Indonesian and Nigerian, and how religion affect labour force participation. For example a study, using data from Indonesia's 2010 Census, studied Muslim, Catholic, Buddhist, Hindu and Confucian women married rural women, married urban women, single rural women, and single urban women. They find out that holding other factors equal, married Hindu women in urban areas are as much as 31 percentage points more likely to work than married Muslim urban women, while married Confucian women in rural areas are as much as 31 percentage points less likely to work than married Muslim rural women. Multilevel multinomial logic models reflected that Islam (religious belief) played a significant role in determining non-farm paid employment for women, thus the labor market in Turkey is characterized by very low female labor force participation rates. At 30.2 percent, Turkey has the lowest female LFPR among the OECD countries in 2010. While Yonay, Yaish, and Kraus (2015) discussed the heterogeneity in culture and religion, where the researchers considered the effect of Christian on Muslim neighbor's labor force participation for the case study of Israel's economy. Abdelhadi (2019) studied panel data for employment of Muslim women in the USA and explored its link to religiosity. It was determined that the majority of religiosity variables have no significant role in determining employment levels. Other factors such as level of education, ethnic background, and motherhood were relatively strong in predicting women labour force participation for Muslim women in the United States.

However, while the last few decades have seen a rise in religious belief effect on labour force participation for several countries, a considerable variation in the labour force participation rate remains among the various countries and regions. Hence, understanding the determinants of these differences among regions or countries is a fundamental problem in global economics. These and other results are robust across different specifications and are both economically and statistically significant.

How religious belief is significantly affect labour force participation

The effect of religion on women's labor force participation has been examined for developed and developing countries (see for example, Lehrer (1995), Murphy (1995), Grossbard-Shechtman and Neuman (1998), Read (2002), and Heineck (2004)). Findings connote that religion does affect women's labor force participation, particularly for married women. Researchers have only recently examined the issue for developing countries. The earliest known paper using individual-level data is by Amin and Alam (2008). Using the second Malaysian Family Life Survey of 1988,

they find that religion influences rural married women's full-time employment status, but does not significantly affect urban married or single women's full-time employment status.

Similarly, the findings of this study expressed the significance of the ideology of religion for the understanding of persistent gender inequality in the labor market. At the macro-level, an attitudinal factor was significantly associated with the independent variable of religious belief and labour force participation as a dependent variable. As Whites were concerned, conventional denominations declined women's labor supply due to a marriage or a marital birth, while conventional spiritual beliefs had more significant impacts on the choice of occupation and wages. Conversely, as Blacks were concerned, conventional religious affiliation enlarged women's labor supply due to marital births, but both denomination and belief did not affect occupation and wage growth. As religious belief directly correlates with the existing literature on labour force participation with marginal effect (Kortt, Dollery, & Grant, 2013). Religious believe tend to discourage women from taking employment and it implies that women who tend to hold a predominantly religious view of the world or belong to a more religious enclave are less likely to participate in labour force .This also shows that people tend to behave as per their religious values, as labour force participation in Nigeria increased from 39.3% in 1990 to 48.1% in 2011. The logistic models established that religion has a positive significant effect on female labour force participation. Overall findings were that labour force participation significantly influenced by religious belief.

Empirical Facts on Labour Force Participation (Women)

Kardam and Toksoz, (2004) opined that women's labor force participation rates and the percentage of women with paid work are decided lower in the developing world. In many countries women's labor force participation rates are much lower than men's. Globally, between 1980 and 2008, women's labor force participation rate (LFPR) increased from 50.2 to 51.7 percent while the rate for men decreased slightly from 82.0 to 77.7 percent. As a result, the gender gap in labor force participation rates has narrowed slightly from 32 to 26 percentage points (ILO, 2010). This is due largely to increases in female labor force participation in developed countries. In most OECD countries over the past few decades, the labor force participation of women has sharply increased. For instance, in Italy, Spain, Greece, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Belgium, Austria, Portugal, Germany, and France, the women's labor force participation rates increased significantly between 1981 and 2001 (OECD, 2004). In developed countries, women's labor force participation rates range from anywhere from 43 to 75 percent. In another study, the effect of religion on women's labor force participation has been examined for developed countries (see for example, Lehrer (1995), Murphy (1995), Grossbard-Shechtman and Neuman (1998), Read (2002), and Heineck (2004). Broadly speaking, they find that religion does affect women's labor force participation, particularly for married women. Researchers have only recently examined the issue for developing countries.

Furthermore, it is argued that, in many countries, religion and cultural factors also affect the working decisions of women. As the OECD reports, the differences among countries are to some extent rooted in culture and social norms, as well as reflecting economic incentives (OECD, 2004).

In particular, the rates for women are significantly lower than in developed countries (Bilgin and Kilicarslan, 2008). In detail, one of the crucial structures of labor markets in Middle East and North African countries (MENA) countries is the extremely low rates of women's labor force participation in non-agricultural activities and in paid work overall (Karshenas, 1997).

Methodology

This study is founded on qualitative review relatively on the basis of past and present knowledge based, literature review and previous research work. From the existing literature review, several related components to the study were identified, these are religion, level of education, regions, culture, custom, ethics and traditions, as diverse combinations of factors on religion and labour force participation was examined in paths. Other secondary data used are the employment, unemployment and labour force participation degree that were obtained from journals and the internet archive.

Discussion

The objective of this study is to examine the effect of religious belief on labour force participations, which is obtainable in business environment. From the research, women and some religious bigot where the shortfall of labour force participations as different factors instigate them from not engaging in some jobs and decline to work in the case of women which some scholars connote to be inequality between men and women in labour force participation. The low labour force participations on women employment position reduces their ability over income, funds and gives them modest voice in family decision making. Studies established that women who do not earn wages or little have no negotiating power within the household because their earnings affect their well-being at their risk point. As the economic position of the family head may also determine female participation in the labour market and which would affect their participation in the economic activities.

Conclusion

There are number of factors affecting people's low labor force participation rates, from the outcome of various research, it is asserted that women especially in developing countries experience a number of disadvantages in their working lives in comparison to their counterparts in more developed countries (Auer and Fortuny, 2000), using women, tradition and culture as a standpoint in religious belief influence on labour force participation. Moreover, gender equality in labor force participation has been identified as an unequivocal preamble to more comprehensive societal benefit for all participants (Besamusca, Tijdens, Keune, & Steinmetz, 2015). Global workforce participation rates among women are positively correlated with GDP growth and economic expansion. However, belief systems affect people's ability to enter the workforce and encourage occupational inequalities, particularly for women. Even in developing nations where labor force participation rates are low, disparities persist between women from

various locations. Nevertheless, there is a need to support female education, particularly among Muslims, as this will help to free them from the cycle of deprivation and give them the ability to make decisions. Higher earning women may decide against going into paid work since they are more likely to stay at home with their children when the number of youngsters in need of care increases. As studies suggest that religious belief is a crucial factor in discouraging women from participating in the labor market.

Recommendation

Base on the study, the effect of religious belief and labour force participation, women are more affected in these scenario according to existing studies and statistics. Therefore, the following recommendations are stated below;

- There should be policy framework tandem to women labour force participation despite their gender variation, since women are essential to the growth and development of nation's economy.
- There should be effort to boost women labour force participation since equality in participation for women could increase organizations value preposition and national GDP.
- Since religion and social norms have persisted over time with loss of potential economic output, there should be review on the policies regularly underlying set boundaries by religions.
- There should be frequent and contextual check-up on labour force participation index, thus on women to review circumstances and banes, as to enhance the emancipation of women trap in poverty.
- By advocating women participation in labour force, tends to improve their voice in decision making, managerial and at apex level which can increase their role and participation inclusively.
- Religious leaders and clerics should join hands in championing the increase of women participation in labour force by educating and enlightening them from occupational apartheid, wage discrimination and erroneous belief.

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