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Female Political Participation and Economic Growth in Nigeria

Bonmwa Tontu Gukat[1], Dinchi Esther Jonathan[2] & Dom Orshak Yilkes[3]
[1,2&3]Department of Economics
Faculty of Social Sciences
University of Jos, Nigeria
Corresponding Email: bonmwa88@gmail.com

Abstract
This research examined the effects of female political participation and education on economic growth in Nigeria. The research made use of secondary data for the period 1999–2019 sourced from Central Bank of Nigeria statistical bulletin, NBS Annual Independent national Electoral Commission reports and World Bank database. Employing ADF test, Co integration and Error Correction Mechanism (ECM), the study found out that female political participation, female school enrolment, gender parity index and economic growth have a long run relationship. Also, the result of the Error Correction mechanism showed that the RGDP parameter is correctly signed with a 114.15% speed of adjustment in the short run to reach equilibrium level in the long run. The study also found that Female School Enrolment rate has a negative and insignificant effect on Real GDP in Nigeria (P>0.1878), female political participation has a positive insignificant relationship with economic growth (p>0.6296) and finally gender parity index was found to have a negative relationship with economic growth (p>0.6166). Based on the findings the paper recommended that Female school enrolment should be promoted by investing in education and empowerment of females, more inclusive participation in politics for women and efforts should be made to bridge the gap and avoid discrimination against women.

Keywords: Female, Political Participation, Economic Growth, Education, Gender

1. Introduction

The contribution of women towards national development cannot be overemphasized. Women are the fundamental human reservoir of every society as they control most of the non-monetary economy (subsistence, agriculture, bearing children, domestic and labour) and play an important role in the monetary (training wage labour and employment). Women in most

societies, whether developed or developing are regarded as currency with which political and economic alliances are cemented (Ogunjemilua & Familugba, 2015).

Nigerian women's political participation can impact on the economic growth of Nigeria. Female political participation can increase economic growth through making legislations that increases female education enrolment. The girl-child can produce the highest possible return on investment in Nigeria which enhances development and reduce poverty. If more girls are allowed to go to school, high-quality girls will replace low-quality boys, leading to the overall improvement of human capital and positive impacts on economic growth. Educated women have fewer children; provide better nutrition, health and education for their families; experience significantly lower child mortality which is beneficial to economic growth. Receiving more education means generating more income (Xu, 2015). In India, for instance, greater women's representation has corresponded with a more equitable distribution of community resources, including more gender-sensitive spending on programs related to health, nutrition, and education and hence economic growth (Otunba, 2019). Another mechanism, through which female participation in politics leads to economic growth, is with regard to female labour participation. Gender equality will increase the overall ability of workforce, therefore may foster economic growth. An inspiring idea is that high female labour participation may give women more power in family. This negotiating power can in some way enhance economic growth, since women have higher saving behaviours and more efficient way of using credit.

Women in Nigeria like other developing countries of the world suffer from undue marginalization, discrimination and Exploitation by the men folk through the implementation of their religions and cultural beliefs, traditional prejudices which placed men as super human beings, women on their part do not often see themselves as viable instruments of political participation and economic growth. The complacency of women in several aspects of national life not only reduces their capacity for task in a male dominated society but helps in perpetuating the culture of reducing women to positions and roles of second fiddle (Ogunjemilua & Familugba, 2015). In spite of the remarkable achievements of the Nigerians women, there is severe constrained in their efforts to play a major and decisive role in socio-political and economic development of the nation. In the traditional African society the roles of women are revolving around child rearing and general domestic care of the family. This situation creates a culture of male supremacy, superiority and dominance with little consideration given to the thoughts and feelings of women in larger scheme of things. Again, there remains a plethora of issues to

be addressed urgently; a major one is the greater involvement of women in political and decision making processes. There is, therefore, a clear need to re-think the approach to women's empowerment and gender equality, especially in the area of increasing women's political participation for sustained economic growth (Orisadare, 2019).

It is against the above background that this paper seeks to examine female political participation and economic growth in Nigeria with the hope of contributing to existing literature on the issue of female political precipitation and economic growth in Nigeria and the concept is also relevant for policy making towards increasing female political participation which is based on equality. This study seeks to answer the following questions; what is the impact of female political participation on economic growth in Nigeria? What is the impact of female school enrolment on economic growth? The main objective of this study is to examine female political participation and economic growth in Nigeria.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual and Theoretical Issues

2.1.1 Concept of Political Participation

Political participation according to the Handbook of the Economics of International Migration (2014), involves several forms of engaging in politics, such as voting and engagement in political parties and associations, taking part in public debate and civil disobedience. It is the involvement of groups and individuals at various levels in the political system. This refers to activities that are designed to have an impact on governmental actions and decisions. By these attitudes, people's efforts are geared towards influencing authorities in a society. That is to say it includes the role of interest groups which play huge roles in influencing policies. The principle of political participation holds that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in decision making process.

2.1.2 Concept of Economic Growth

Economic growth is the increase in the inflation- adjusted market value of goods and services produced in an economy. It is conventionally measured as the percentage rate of increase in real gross domestic product (IMF, 2012). According to Ogundipe and Oluwatobi (2013), economic growth must be sustained for a developing economy to break the cycle of poverty. This means growth must be all inclusive; spread around areas of the economy. This includes investment in females, their education, empowerment and general welfare as their contribution to growth cannot be

neglected. It is worthwhile to note that growth is concerned solely with quantitative and measurable attributes (Ogboru, 2006). Since female contributions can be seen and even measured, it is only reasonable to allow fair representation of females in a nation where their labour is engaged and significant in building the nation.

2.1.3 Theoretical Issues

This study lies on the principle that promoting women's participation in political dispensation is desirable based on equity, equality, and economic growth. This idea is supported by Feminist empowerment approach which combines both Feminist theory and empowerment approach and Modernization theory. According to feminist theory, inferior status delegated to women is due to societal inequality, which is shaped by political economic and social power relations, and women should have equal access to all forms of power (Turner & Maschi, 2014). Similarly, feminist analysis helps women to understand how they are oppressed and dominated and often inspires them to engage in efforts to bring about broader social change. Empowerment theories have appeared based upon feminist publications and theories. "Women's empowerment approach," according to Razmi, Abbasian and Broghani (2018), is one of the most important theories proposed in recent years among both those theoretical and empirical. According to this approach, the women's share of parliamentary seats is one of the most important indicators for measuring Women's Empowerment. It has been argued by scholars that an increase in the average level of human capital is preceded by an increase in inclusive incentives and policies for women in the labour force and enrolment in higher education (Stolt, 2013). Essentially, therefore, the ultimate goal of women's empowerment, which is a political process, is not just to change hierarchical gender relations but also to change all hierarchical relations in the society (Cook, 1997).

The modernization theory reckons that economic growth inevitably leads to social development and gender equality; authors dealing with conflict and with institutional design suggest that economic growth by itself does not follow an exclusive path. According to this view there is a bidirectional relationship between economic development and women's empowerment, defined as improving the ability of women to access the constituents of development, in particular health, education, earning opportunities, rights, and political participation (Duflo & Bertrand, 2016).

2.3 Empirical Literature

Baskaran, Bhalotra, Min and Uppal (2018) attempted a study on women legislators and economic performance. The study used data on competitive elections to India's state assemblies, leveraging close elections to isolate causal effects. The study found significantly higher growth in economic activity in constituencies that elect women and no evidence of negative spillovers to neighbouring male-led constituencies, consistent with net growth. Probing mechanisms, it was found that women legislators are less likely to be criminal and corrupt, more efficacious, and less vulnerable to political opportunism.

Xu (2015) investigated the effects of female political participation on economic growth. Using cross-country and panel regressions to investigate whether gender gaps in political participation affect economic growth during the period 1991-2013 used data up to 30 countries in Asia. The result shows that female political participation fosters economic growth in Asia. The study recommended that Asian countries can choose multi-member electoral districts, multi-party systems and stipulate fixed quotas, since there are findings that "countries with multi-member electoral districts, multi-party systems and strict quotas had more female MPs than those with flexible quotas and only one or two major political parties.

Suleiman (2017) examined the factors that limit women's participation in Nigeria's politics using case study period between 1999 and 2015. The study employs secondary source as a method of data collection. The study reveals that the patriarchal system and male domination of the society, which relegates women to subordinate role, has created women's inferiority complex and alienated them from the mainstream politics in Nigeria. The stud recommended that there should be reformation of all religious, statutory and customary laws and practices that perpetuate women's subordination in the country and the explicit specifications and modalities of affirmative actions on women's political participation and clear guidelines for implementations in the Nigeria constitution.

Cabeza-García, Del Brio and Oscanoa-Victorio (2018) studied gender factors and inclusive economic growth. The study used a sample of 127 countries and using dynamic models applied to panel data while accounting for endogeneity. It was found that high fertility in women has negative effects on economic growth. However, when women have greater access to secondary education and the labor market in conditions of equality, the effects are positive. Overall, this study helps identify which gender factors may promote inclusive economic growth, which is economic growth achieved when both men and women are incorporated in equal conditions.

Tsani, Paroussos, Fragkiadakis and Charalambidis (2013) studied the relationship between female labour participation and economic growth in the Mediterranean countries. They used a two-step econometric approach and employed general equilibrium modeling. The conclusion they obtained is that higher female labour force participation contributes to economic growth, which matches the global phenomenon.

Orisadare (2019) carried out a study to assess the role of women's groups in politics, identified their challenges and also explores its implication for economic development in Osun State, Nigeria. The study was carried out using primary data from forums and dialogues within women's groups, consisting of an average of thirty (30) members from ten (10) local government areas (LGAs) in Osun state, Nigeria. Findings from the study indicated that there exists a high illiteracy rate among the members of the women's groups. The study therefore recommended that more empowerment programs, especially in the area of decision making and participation in politics, should be targeted at women's groups at the grassroots levels by the governments and all stakeholders as a matter of priority.

Teignier and Cuberes (2014) examined the quantitative effects of gender gaps in entrepreneurship and labour force participation on aggregate productivity and income per capita. Their model showed that gender gaps in entrepreneurship and in female workers pay affect aggregate productivity negatively while gender gaps in labour force participation reduce income per capita. In summary gender gaps bring about income losses.

Croke, Grossman, Larreguy and Marshall (2016) found out that education reduces political participation in Zimbabwe. Using regression analysis, their study showed that educated voters have the likelihood to deliberately disengage from political activities that is, that education reduces political participation since they have better economic outcomes and very high tendencies to criticize the government and support opposition parties.

Given the above works on female political participation and economic growth, there are gaps in the study that this research work provides solutions within its context. Both works fail to provide empirical relationship between political participation and economic growth in Nigeria and show the degree of discrepancies so that proper solution can be proffered to encouraging female participation in politics. Another gap associated with the review work is it geographical broadness. Most of them cover global economic and political scene. This research work will build on these empirical works to eliminate these gaps in the context of Nigerian economy. Despite these gaps in the reviewed works, they have credit for being works that approach female political participation and economic growth.

3. Methodology

3.1 Model Specification

From the study by Eterovic and Eterovic (2012), the following model in its modified form is specified. The variables of interest are gender parity index (GPI), Female school enrolment rate (FER) and Female political participation (FPP-the percentage of women at the national assembly) which is adopted from the study by Xu (2015) who used the proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments (%) to represent female political participation. Economic growth is proxied by Real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for the period 1999 - 2019.The study period is chosen to reflect the period of uninterrupted democracy in Nigeria. However, the choice of these regressors in the model was based on theory/literature review.
The mathematical form of the model is:

$$RGDP = f(GPI, FER, FPP) \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots (1)$$

Where:
GDP = Gross Domestic Product
GPI = Gender Parity Index
FER = Female Enrolment
FPP = Female Political Participation
While the econometric model is represented as follows:

$$RGDP = \beta_0 + \beta_1 GPI + \beta_2 FER + \beta_3 FPP + \mu \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots . (2)$$

Where:
μ=Error term
$\beta_0, \beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3$, are the coefficients of the model
Apriori Expectations: $\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3 > 0$,
In a more explicit form, the models can be written in a log-linear form to transform the variables into the same unit and base. Thus

$$lnRGDP = \beta_0 + \beta_1 GPI + \beta_2 FER + \beta_3 FPP + \mu \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots . (3)$$

Secondary annual time series data covering the period of 1999 – 2019 is used for this study. This data is sourced from CBN statistical bulletin and World Bank indicators (2019). The variables of interest are RGDP, FER, GPI and FPP. The long-run and short-run dynamic relationship between female political participation and economic growth was estimated using the ECM.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of the Variables

	RGDP	FER	FPP	GPI
Mean	11.82253	41.80757	5.780952	85.76952
Median	11.15353	42.32110	6.600000	85.56000
Maximum	13.63429	48.80270	7.200000	95.87000
Minimum	6.577834	36.88070	3.200000	75.74000
Std. Dev.	1.586690	3.485103	1.459321	6.532354
Skewness	-1.595523	0.018808	-0.884599	0.076725
Kurtosis	6.590599	1.957958	2.299240	1.750328
Jarque-Bera	20.19078	0.951359	3.168484	1.387074
Probability	0.000041	0.621463	0.205103	0.499805
Sum	248.2732	877.9590	121.4000	1801.160
Sum Sq. Dev.	50.35173	242.9189	42.59238	853.4329

Source: Author's Computation, 2021

The result of descriptive statistics shows approximate normality in the data distribution of each variable in terms of skewness and kurtosis. The coefficient of skewness for FPP and log of RGDP is low and negatively skewed, while FER and GPI were positively skewed. The figure for kurtosis in each variable is below its benchmark of 3 for a normal distribution except for RGDP which has 6.6. Female enrolment rate (FER) had a mean average of 41.80 with median and standard deviation 42.32 and 3.48 respectively. The minimum and maximum values recorded for FER were 36.88 and 48.80. This means that the mean and median of FER falls within the minimum and maximum values. Similarly, the mean average, median and standard deviation of female political participation (FPP) recorded is 5.7, 6.60 and 1.46. The mean and median values falls within the minimum and maximum range values 3.20 and 7.20. Gender parity index (GPI) recorded 85.76, 85.6 and 6.53 as mean average, median and standard deviation respectively. More so, the natural log of real gross domestic product (RGDP) had mean value of 11.82, median value of 11.15 and standard deviation of 1.58 which ranges between minimum and maximum values 11.82 and 0.38. The standard deviation is quite low compared to the mean, showing a small coefficient of variation among the variables. An observation of the table shows that given the acceptance/rejection criteria, FER, FPP and GPI are normality distributed since the probability values computed for Jacque Bera is greater than the conventional levels of statistical significance of 5% and 10% (0.621463, 0.205103 and 0.499805) respectively while RGDP is not normally distributed given the probability value less than 5% level of significance (0.000041) over the period in the study.

4.2 Correlation Matrix

Table 2: Result of the Correlation Matrix

	RGDP	FER	FPP	GPI
RGDP	1	-0.2838	-0.4948	-0.54149
FER	-0.2838	1	0.4962	0.33608
FPP	-0.4948	0.4962	1	0.60714
GPI	-0.5414	0.3360	0.6071	1

Source: **Author's Computation (2021)**

From the correlation matrix table, none of the variables have correlation coefficient in excess of 0.8. Therefore given the rule of thumb as specified by Gujarati (2004), there is no multicollinearity or there is no serious problem of multicollinearity among the variables under study.

4.3 Unit Root Test Result

The result of the Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) test result is reported in table 3.

Table 3: Results of Unit Root Test

Variable	Level 5%	T-Statistic (1^{st} Diff)	Probability Value	Decision	Stationarity
lnRGDP	-3.029970	-3.772770	0.0113	1(1)	Stationary
FER	-3.052169	-3.289515	0.0320	1(1)	Stationary
FPP	-3.029970	-4.459583	0.0027	1(1)	Stationary
GPI	-3.029970	-3.958847	0.0077	1(1)	Stationary

Source: Author's Computation, 2021

The result of the unit root test in Table 3 shows that RGDP, FER, FPP and GPI were stationary at first differencing with intercept at 5 percent level of significance and probability value (p-value) of 0.0113, 0.0320, 0.0027 and 0.0077 less than 0.05 levels respectively. The results exhibit stationary at first differencing, it is therefore, necessary to carry out co-integration test to ascertain whether the variables have long-run equilibrium relationship in the model by using the Johansen Co-integration test.

4.4 Co-integration Test

Table 4: Unrestricted Cointegration Rank Test (Maximum Eigenvalue)

Hypothesized No. of CE(s)	Eigenvalue	Trace Statistic	0.05 Critical Value	Prob.**
None *	0.910462	76.39976	47.85613	0.0000
At most 1 *	0.595425	30.55094	29.79707	0.0409
At most 2	0.354845	13.35748	15.49471	0.1023
At most 3 *	0.232610	5.030454	3.841466	0.0249

Trace test indicates 2 cointegratingeqn(s) at the 0.05 level

Source: Author's Computation, 2021

From this model lnRGDP = f(FER, FPP, GPI), the co-integration test result reported in Table 4 shows that there is a long run relationship between the variables in the study (RGDP, FER, FPP, GPI). The trace Eigenvalue test shows evidence of two co-integrating equations. The test was carried out at 5% level of significance.

4.5 Error Correction Model (ECM)

Given that the variables of the model are cointegrated, the next step was the estimation of the short run dynamics within the error correction models (ECM) in order to capture the speed of adjustment to equilibrium in the case of any shock to any of the independent variables. An error correction model was estimated and the results are presented in table 5.

Table 5: Error Correction Model Result

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
C	-0.065342	0.302184	-0.216233	0.8317
D(FPP)	0.235147	0.477648	0.492301	0.6296
D(GPI)	-0.036710	0.071791	-0.511348	0.6166
D(FER)	-0.163873	0.118739	-1.380116	0.1878
ECT(-1)	-11.41522	2.327615	-4.904254	0.0002
R-squared	0.619183	Durbin-Watson stat	2.568619	
Adjusted R-squared 0.517632		Prob(F-statistic) 0.004045		

Source: Author's Computation, 2021

The ECM is an error correction term in the model to restore equilibrium and validate that there exists a long-run equilibrium relationship between the variables. This means that the system corrects to equilibrium in the following year at a speed of -114.2%. This implies that the speed of adjustment (Error Correction Mechanism) to the long run is high at -114.2% and is significant at the 5% level of significance as expected. This shows that the speed of adjustment is fast and sufficient in driving economic growth in the longrun in Nigeria.

From table 5, the estimated coefficient of female enrolment is negatively related to economic growth and insignificant. The sign is inconsistent with a priori expectation, implying that a 1% increase in female enrolment rate would result into decrease of -0.16% in real GDP in Nigeria. Therefore, FER has insignificant effect on real GDP in Nigeria. This is confirmed by the t-statistic and probability value of 1.87270 and 0.39 respectively. The result further shows that female political participation has positive and insignificant effect on real GDP in Nigeria over the study period.

The coefficient is consistent with a priori expectation of a positive sign, which means that, all things being equal; a 1% increase in female political participation would trigger an increase in real GDP by 0.235% in Nigeria. The evaluation of the positive and insignificant effect is revealed by the t-statistic and probability value of 0.4923 and 0.6296 respectively. Female political participation, though positive has insignificant effect on real GDP in Nigeria.

Furthermore, the estimated coefficient of gender parity index is negative and statistically insignificant. The sign is inconsistent with a priori expectation, indicating that, if all things remain the same, an increase of 1% in gender parity index would result into a decrease of 0.036710% in real GDP in Nigeria. This is affirmed by the t-statistic and probability value of 0.071791 and 0.6166 respectively. This implies that gender parity index has negative insignificant effect on real gross domestic product in Nigeria within the period under study.

The regression result shows that there exists a positive and a significant relationship between female political participation and economic growth in Nigeria. This is indicated by the goodness of fit of 62% growth in real GDP, which is the result of change in the independent variables while the remaining 38% is by the disturbance variables which are not captured in this model. The overall significance is measured by the value of the F-statistic probability which is 0.004045 less than 0.05 significance level indicating a significant relationship between female political participation and economic growth. The result shows that real gross domestic product can be measured as a result of an increase in female political participation by given room for more women to be in power.

4.6 Discussion of Findings

From the analysis and results of the study, it revealed that female enrolment is negatively related to in economic growth in Nigeria within the study period. This is not in line with a priori expectation, implying that female enrolment rate in Nigeria contributes negatively to economic growth in Nigeria. This finding is inconsistent with Xu (2015) where it was found that female school enrolment rate contributes significantly to economic growth in Nigeria. This phenomenon may result from the fact that the marginal return of female education may be gradually decreasing thereby contributing less to human capital and slow down economic growth in Nigeria.

The findings of the study also revealed that female political participation has positive though insignificant effect on economic growth in Nigeria. This indicated that female political participation contributes positively to economic growth in Nigeria. The insignificance could emanate

from the fact that few women participated in the political scene in the country which may have made their minority voice insignificant in economic decision in the country. More so, less interest in political decision may have been dominated by the male counterpart in the country due to patrilineal dominance in Nigeria and the African continent as a whole. However, female political participation is not an economic activity and free of any economic gains. People who spend more of their time in politics mismanage their valuable economic time which would have been put into more gainful uses (Arowolo & Aluko, 2010). This consequently results into the loss of the time value of money thereby contributing insignificantly to the growth of the Nigeria economy. The insignificant coefficient of seats held by women in parliament in this case can be explained that the impact of female political participation on economic growth may be not linear, which means that the number of women in parliaments needs to reach up to a certain level so that female representation in parliaments can influence national economy (Xu, 2015).

In addition, the coefficient of gender parity index indicated a inverse and insignificant relationship with economic growth which is contrary to apriori expectation, implying that an increase in the gender parity index would lead to a reduction in economic growth in Nigeria. This may be attributed, in part, to the biased nature of child development in many parts of Nigeria which favours the education/political participation of the male children at the expense of female children (Suleiman, 2017). This brings to the fore the need for adequate investment in female education and empowerment for better economic growth and development in Nigeria.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study focused on female political participation and economic growth in Nigeria. From the analysis of the study, female enrolment rate and gender parity index indicated a negative and insignificant relationship with economic growth while female political participation indicated positive and direct relationships with economic growth in Nigeria. Based on the results from this study the following recommendations were put forward. Female school enrolment and empowerment of females should be promoted. Also, there should be more inclusive participation in politics for women and the 35% affirmative representation should be implemented. Finally, efforts should be made to bridge the gap in gender inequality and avoid discrimination against women.

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