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**ANALYSIS OF THE DETERMINANTS OF FEMALE
EMPLOYABILITY IN COTE D'IVOIRE**

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ABSTRACT

This research plans to identify the determinant of female employability in Côte d'Ivoire. Results, based on econometric estimations show that the most salient factors that influence positively women capacities to find a job with a contract of undetermined duration, to be able to change jobs and to have higher wages are years of schooling, training and knowledge and capacities to make use of ICT, while the number of small children (child bearing and child care impact negatively on this outcome. More generally, the propensity to get a job for female (labor supply) is positively correlated to schooling, investment in informal education versus formal education, age, being married, the head of the household's income, being Muslim or Christian.

Efforts should be devoted to reinforce women human capital (schooling, training) as well as their knowledge and capacities of making use of ICT in view of increasing their employability and reducing the low employment rates of women, but also gender disparities in Côte d'Ivoire.

1. Introduction

As a matter of fact, woman has always been over the years, man's partner in the use of resources and she is undeniably his fellow-worker in the production of goods and services. In the traditional society, where self-subsistence was the characteristics of domestic life, the notion of intensive accumulation of goods was practically unknown. Duties were relatively allocated in proportional manner according to sex and age. With the emergence of commercial capitalism, the notion of accumulation appeared as well. Owing to the hardness of work in the division by gender, the less "capitalizing" activity was left to woman. Female participation to the labor market has therefore been reduced to certain types of works (household works, food crops growing, craft industry, social and administrative jobs...). Heavy industry, log cutting, mineral extraction, all jobs requiring physical energy was destined to man.

Moreover, different types of law (traditional, modern and religious laws) coexist in a large number of African countries and bring about a legal vagueness, which is responsible for discrimination towards women. Among the

several situations, we can quote the long-standing cultural bias of schooling boys first comparatively to girls, the existence of professional discrimination on the basis of gender and uneven salaries allocation profitable to men.

Today, women facing the enormous diversity of needs and the development of new production methods, wish to be not only active but also have better employment's opportunities in all the production sectors of the economy. This seems to serve a greater fulfillment desire, a financial emancipation in relation to man, and the hope for a greater part in the development of the society as a whole. The nature of female's employability as well as that of male, is shaped by the changing nature of work environment. The changes in the production systems, trade liberalization and the processes of economic restructuring are associated with a greater flexibility of the labor market (Eyck, 2003).

In Côte d'Ivoire, tremendous disparities appear between male and female on the labor market, notably for that concerns the contribution to unemployment and to informal jobs. According to the Poverty Eradication Plan Document (*Document de Stratégie de Relance du Développement et de*

Réduction de la Pauvreté, DSRP, 2009), female unemployment rate is 19.8% against 12.1% for male in 2008. Among active women, 30.9% are underemployed compared with 18.6% for male. Workers on the modern labor market are mostly men, since women represent only 12.7% of modern sector's employees in 2005 (DSRP, 2009). Among full time workers in private firms, we have 29.0% of women in 2009 and they represent only 3.9% of permanent full-time non-production workers.

To achieve the goal of gender equality and women empowerment, Ivorian authorities plan to enhance a national environment that includes gender issues in all public as well as private sectors of activities. At the level of the labor market, the main challenge is to favor an increase of female employability, that is, development of women's capacities in view of helping them to find a job or to maintain themselves in an existent job or to have a greater mobility in labor market (Mansfield, 2001; Brown and Hesketh, 2004).

A successful achievement of these objectives needs a clear understanding of the phenomena that affect significantly female's employability. This paper aims therefore to contribute to this goal by highlighting women characteristics that

influence their likelihood to find a long-term employment and that make them more efficient on the internal as well as the external labor markets. We focus especially on the impact of human capital (education, training) and on women's use of the information and communication technology (ICT). This latter variable helps to appraise the effect of the ICT on female's employability. Besides the highly recognized role of human capital on employment and employability, we hypothesize that the access to ICT (ownership of a computer and use of internet) shall increase women's employability. This holds because of greater opportunities to accede to information for job search and finding, knowledge update and fulfillment of firms' needs on competencies in an environment of rapid technological changes. The results will enable us to make policies recommendations that may lead to the improvement of the insertion of women into the economic activities of the country and provide them with a better chance to play a greater role in the nation's socio-economic development.

The next section refers to the literature review, section three bears on the method of analysis, while section four helps to analyze the main results before concluding.

2. Literature Review

Cain Glen (1966) developed the economic theory where the household is considered as a basic unit of analysis. The family is assumed to allocate its members' time between four activities: remunerative work, domestic work, leisure and subsistence. This allocation is limited by the household's resources (or wealth), the price of these resources and the natural limits of time. Two characteristics of time allocation's decisions by woman create a big difference with that of man. Firstly, woman is traditionally the main producer of domestic services such as the minding and education of children. Secondly, she has less choice concerning remunerated employment. It therefore appears that she must make a trade-off between remunerated work, domestic work and leisure for an optimum and balanced allocation of her time. The market's hourly rate of salary makes it possible to assess the domestic's one associated with the marginal hour of domestic work. There is thus a trade-off between these two salary rates that gives rise to the woman's decision to participate into the labor market.

For Joll and al. (1983), the basic neo-classical function has as argument only the quantities of goods and the leisure which

are separately consumed and have always been substitutable. Thus, they bring out the possibility, ignored in the basic model, of interdependence between the labor supply's decisions of the household's members. They emphasize that a married woman's labor supply, or her decision to participate in market production, is a function of the wage rate received by her husband and of the share of income not related to work. In addition, Hamermesh (1984) indicates that the earning power of other members of the family will affect the reservation wage of each individual of the household as well as their choice to supply or not their labor force on the market. The specific effect thus depends on how the decisions are made in the household (collectively or individually).

Mincer (1962) carried out the earlier empirical studies on female labor supply in the US. According to his study, the main factor determining a married woman's labor supply is her desire to complement the husband's income. This will make up for an increase in the purchasing power. Other factors include the rise in women's schooling level, the move to tertiary activities in the industrial work, technological innovations in household appliances reducing the time devoted to domestic work, the social changes such as anti-discriminator regulation in favor of

women and the development of children's day nurseries.

In Africa, the ILO (1994) highlights three kinds of factors that determine women's access to job. The first one comprises the traditional factors such as the access to production factors, to credit, to technology, information, training and market. The second concerns the world economic environment that underwent three phenomena such as economic recession, the induced restructuring measures, the introduction of new technologies and economic globalization. The last one refers to the changes in the social and political landscape, such as democracy, women's sensitive progress in the field of education and formation, the demographic pressure on urbanization and the socio-cultural evolution.

Lachaud (1994) indicates that, for married women, the decision to participate into the labor market, comparative to leisure or to domestic work, is positively related to age and schooling level. However, that decision is negatively related to the household other members' income, if leisure is normal good, due to positive income elasticity. They conducted a comparative study based on a sample of six sub-Saharan African countries: Burkina

Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Madagascar and Mali. For them, the employment's type of the head of the household is an important determinant of the social relationships that shape the labor's environment, in particular the process of access to employment. They conclude that in Africa, female labor supply is much lower than that of men, notably in countries where the incidence of traditional structures is high.

In line with Lachaud (1994), Maglad (1998) focusing on Sudan, found that female participation and labor supply decisions are positively correlated to education and her own-wage while these decisions are discouraged by the spouse's wage and small children. Sackey (2005), using Ghana living standard surveys stresses that both primary and post-primary schooling levels exert significant positive impact on women's labor market participation, and have an opposite effect on fertility.

If women's accessibility to job still being a crucial problem in most of African countries, the changing economic structures due to technological changes has induced the need for employed workers, especially women, to look for behaviors and strategies that may ensure and increase their employability. Fugate, Kinicki and Blake

(2004) defines the concept of employability as a form of work specific (pro) active adaptability that consists of three dimensions - career identity, personal adaptability, and social and human capital.

Datta and Pellissery (2007), referring to the multiple phases of development of the concept of employability, formulate an operational definition of being employed as having a job, and employable as *having the qualities to maintain employment, progress in workplace and being able to be employed in different workplaces*. From the point of view of the individual, employability skills are the career capital that a person needs to get a job and acquire job specific skills, while on the job. At the employers' level, employability skills are the generic skills, attitudes and behaviors that they require in all their employees (Bloom and Kitagawa, 1999).

According to Lefresne (1999), the linkage between human capital theories and economic performance lies at the core of the employability discourse in a framework of "*price for quality*" principle in the labor market. Lindbeck and Snower (1996) point out the need for complementarities, with the help of interactive environment like ICT across the task for an effective use of multi-skilling as a work strategy.

However, skill creation does not necessarily ensure employable workforce, rather a person becomes employable by acquiring the skills of learning how to learn in a dynamic work environment. As Atkins (1999) has pointed out, *transfer* of learning and skills is a more critical issue than gaining skills and knowledge itself. There is a tendency to group together a number of soft-skills (problem solving, initiative, self-awareness, personal values etc.) under the label of "employability skills", and to present it as necessary skill set (though not sufficient) for prospering at workplace irrespective of the technical skills specific to the job.

At the empirical level, a recent work by van der Klink, Boon and van der Heijden (2009) on the employability of academic staff members employed at the Open University of the Netherlands, highlights the importance of informal learning activities, such as networking, while formal training is non significant. In a study based on youth employability in France, Besson (2008) indicates that apprentices have greater chance to be employed than high-school graduates. The employment rate increases with the diploma and depends on the field of study. He underlines that the employment rate is lower for female compared with male regardless the diploma

and the field of study.

Jos Sanders and De Grip (2004) analyze whether the training participation and task flexibility of low-skilled workers contribute to their firm-internal and external mobility. They find that both workers' training participation and task flexibility merely contribute to workers' firm-internal employability. However, the workers' participation in training plays a much more explicit role in workers' firm-internal careers than their task flexibility.

Rothwell, Jewell and Hardie (2009) examine the expectations and self-perceptions of employability of business students at post-graduate level. They found good perceptions of employability by these students who place high values on the brand and reputation of the university. Suriyani (2008) shows in addition the importance of transferable skills for graduates' employability, specifically in producing "sustainable workers". Thomsen (2008) analyzes the determinants of employability differences between short-term and long-term unemployed persons. Differences in job finding chances of these groups are decomposed into a part due to differences in attributes and a part due to differences in valuing the attributes. The estimates clarify that the health of the job

seekers, limitations in the working ability and obstacles to employment comprising substance abuse, financial debts as well as care obligations for children or frail elderly play a significant role for successful placement.

Wittekind, Raeder and Grote (2010), based on longitudinal study in Switzerland, show that education, support for career and skill development, current level of job-related skills, and willingness to change jobs were significant predictors of perceived employability. For Tome (2007), the determinants of employability in Portugal are high skills, i.e., high levels of education and high levels of tenure. He finds however, that low skills also generate employability, indicating that Portugal has a very dual labor market. Training's investments that are publicly financed generate more employability, while privately funded investments tend to be a way of substituting untrained workers with trained ones.

Hofferth and Collins (2000) examine the linkages between child care availability (measured as the number of providers per 1,000 children) and mothers' employment exits. They show that all mothers face higher labor force exit probabilities associated with child care disruption and that the availability of substitute

arrangements is important. Similarly, Crittenden (2001) describes in detail the incompatibility of conventional career patterns with motherhood, and Hewlett et al. (2005) underline the effect of family responsibilities on a woman's entire lifetime career trajectory. Child care problems play a major role in the work and family conflict. They are responsible for lost work days or job loss and induce a temporarily give up of paid work or job loss and consequently a reduction in mothers' wages. Because of intermittent work, females experience restricted real wage growth throughout their working careers compared with males (Kaufman & Hotchkiss, 2003). Periods out of the labor force may decrease females' employability and wages because of skill depreciation, loss of seniority, and less post-leave on-the-job training.

These different papers highlight some theories and empirical results on female labor supply and workers' employability. It comes out that obstacles to employment, human capital, skills, especially ICT skills in an environment of rapid technological and production processes changes, do play important roles in workers' employability. For women specifically, the literature points out the role of child care and family responsibilities on careers and lifetime employment.

Different measures of employability and methods of analysis are used in the existing literature dominated by psychology and human resources management scholars. Among others, employability is measured by individual's perceptions of own employability, term of unemployment or generic competences (anticipation and optimization, personal flexibility, corporate sense and balance). Several statistic or econometric tools have been used to derive the observed empirical results that bear mostly on developed (such as Switzerland, Portugal, USA) or emerging (India, Malaysia) countries. In this paper, we focus especially on the employability of women in Côte d'Ivoire, a sub-Saharan African country, by putting emphasis on the roles of education, training and use of ICT. The employability is measured at the employees' level by *the duration of employment's contract, number of occupied jobs and current wages. The next section presents the method of analysis.*

3. Method of Analysis

We make use of the 2002 living standards survey in Côte d'Ivoire, conducted by the National Institute of Statistics (INS). This institute carries surveys from time to time on the situation of poverty level and poverty alleviation.

The last survey on households' standard living has been done in 2008, and has served as base document for the DSRP, 2009. Due to difficulties to acquire this more recent data base, our investigation is based on the 2002 survey. It provides detailed information on some socio-economic characteristics of surveyed individuals such as age, ethnic group, education level, participation into training, use of computer and internet, religion, marital status, as well as information on main and secondary jobs.

In our analysis, we consider women who are 15 to 65 years' old, employed in the modern sector (i.e. agricultural and informal sectors are excluded) or unemployed. Three variables are taken into account to measure the employability. Firstly, we have the type of employment contract, more specifically a written contract with undetermined duration. It helps to assess the quality of the employment relationship. It is a dichotomous variable that takes value 1 if the woman is engaged in a professional activity under this type of contract and 0 otherwise. We wish to apprehend the factors that influence significantly woman's likelihood to find a secured job.

The second explained variable is the number of occupied activities in the

respondent's career. Our objective is to determine the factors that have greater explanatory powers on females' mobility in the external labor market.

The last dependent variable is the monthly remuneration from jobs. Since, remuneration for workers with same socio-economic characteristics determines the level of productivity (neo-classical analysis) or a firm policy to keep more productive workers (efficiency wages theory, Akerlof and Yellen, 1986; Weiss, 1991); it is used to appraise women capacities to maintain themselves in current jobs or to easily move in the internal labor market.

The most salient explanatory variables we retain are years schooling, vocational versus general education, professional experience, on the job training, use of information and communication technology (computer's ownership and use of internet), age, marital status and number of children under seven years' old. The last variable is used as proxy for child care.

Our sample consists on 8332 women, with 11.8% having worked at least for one hour in the modern sector during the last week that preceded the survey. Table 1 displays the statistics on the main variables.

Among workers, only 27.9% are under a long-term employment contract. Most of workers are with their first employers (the mean for the variable concerning the number of occupied activities is 1.119). The average monthly salary is 87 358 CFA Franc¹, i.e. 133.18 Euros. It ranges between 1 500 CFA Franc (2.30 Euros) and 1 519 380 CFA Franc (2316.28 Euros). Women in our sample are in average young (28 years old) and the average number of schooling's years is four. Among them, only 3.4% have studied in a vocational school. Married women (traditional marriage or civil marriage) represent 48.3% of the sample. The average number of young children (0 to 6 years' old) is 0, but 26.1% of total women have one child under seven years' old and 4.2%, two young kids. We denote that only about 0.7% of the total sample have at least three young children. The data show that about 8% of women have invested in acquisition of skill through an informal educational system. The table brings out that only 2.9% of women in the sample have a computer or use internet, and 2.2% make use of both ICT supporting materials (computer's ownership and use of internet).

We make use of different econometric tools (Heckman selection model, Probit

¹ 1 Euro=655,956 CFA Franc (fixed exchange rate), 1 US Dollar ≈ 450 CFA Franc in March 2009 (flexible exchange rate).

with sample selection, simple Probit, ordered Probit) to derive our results.

4. Results and Discussion

We aim in this paper to determine the extent to which human capital measured by schooling and training and ICT accessibility do affect female's employability. We focus firstly on employment term's contract, secondly on the number of occupied jobs during the career's path and finally on the wages that are signal of productivity and better career's opportunities in the internal labor market.

The results show that women's decision to be employed in the modern sector versus being unemployed is positively correlated to years of schooling, investment in informal education, the head of the household's income, being Christian or Muslim (versus other religions) and age (but at a decreasing rate). However, the probability to be employed in the modern sector decreases with the fact of being married and the number of young children (0 to six years old).

These results on female's labor supply are in line with those of Mincer (1962), Lachaud (1994), Maglad (1998) and Sackey (2005) who highlighted the positive effect of

schooling. Maglad (1998) found also a negative impact of small children in women's decision to work in Sudan. Our results add to the literature the importance of the religion. We note that 33.5% and 50.4% of women in our sample are respectively Muslim and Christian. The higher probability of these women to have a job in the modern sector should be related to their social capital, since a major part of the population in Côte d'Ivoire belongs to these two religions. According to Yao (2008) and based on the 2008 survey on job search strategies in Abidjan (Capital city of Côte d'Ivoire), a large proportion of modern sector's employees have found job through social or personal relationships (34.6%) or personal initiatives (45.3%). The figure is respectively 40.8% (personal relationships) and 36.2% (personal initiatives) for male. For female, personal relationships and personal initiatives are motives of job findings for respectively 27.6% and 55.4% of a sample of 2120 persons.

It appears that schooling, training, use of ICT backup materials and age increases the probability for women who are working, to be in a long-term employment. An additional year of schooling raises the likelihood to be engaged under an undetermined contract by 1.6%. The probability to be in a long-term

employment contract is of 12.5% higher for women who have received training in their job. Having a computer and making use of internet, increases the likelihood of a long-term employment contract by 17.2%. An additional year in the age leads to 0.4% increase in the probability of having a long term employment contract, *ceteris paribus*. We find however that an additional little child decreases woman's opportunity to be under a long-term employment contract by 9.2%.

In line with Hoffert and Collins (2000), we find additionally that child care does affect negatively not only female's labor supply in Côte d'Ivoire but also their employability. Being married affects negatively job's finding but has not a significant impact on female's employability. Though, working ladies may have greater possibility to hire domestic staff, the low average salaries seem to impede on this opportunity, leading to a negative impact of the number of small kids on their employability.

There is evidence that the number of occupied activities is positively correlated to being graduated from a vocational school, having received training and having a computer and using internet. Women's opportunities to change jobs or move in the

external labor market are supported by human capital and ICT knowledge. Estimation of the selection equation of work gives similar results as above.

The last considered variable of employability is monthly salaries. Estimation's results of the sample selection model confirm the selection bias and show that monthly salaries of working women increase with schooling, graduation from a vocational training, use of ICT, tenure and being married, controlling for professional categories. A 1 point increase in years of schooling will conduct to 3.5% increase in monthly salaries. The effect is largely greater for workers who received a vocational training; they gain in average 22% additional salaries compared with those who did not graduate from vocational school. Having received training offered by the employer leads to about 7.2% rise in wages. Owning a computer is important for salaries increase. The estimated coefficient is 0.19 and significant at 10% level. Moreover, having a computer and making use of internet play a crucial role on remuneration from employment in the modern sector. Workers who have these characteristics receive in average 70.2% greater salaries than similar ones who have not a computer and don't make use of internet.

We note that compared to foreigners (African countries citizen but also European and others) Ivorians earn less in the labor market. That should be related to the fact that our investigation bears on the modern sector where expatriates from European or Lebanon are usually paid more than their counterparts from Côte d'Ivoire. It should be emphasized that wages increase with tenure but not at a decreasing rate (the estimated value for the square of tenure is not significant) as found in previous researches.

The different estimations highlight the crucial role of investment in human capital development through education, training and the use of ICT items in women's employability, i.e., their likelihood to find a job, maintain themselves in this job with greater opportunities of promotion or to be mobile in the external labor market.

Conclusion

This research has intended to identify the factors that determine female employability in Côte d'Ivoire. We put higher emphasis on human capital variables (schooling and training) and use of information and communication technology. The estimations of Heckman or Probit model with selections, simple or

ordered Probit models by maximum likelihood method show firstly that the propensity to get a job for a woman (selection models) is positively correlated to schooling, investment in informal education versus formal education, age, being married, the income of household's head, being Muslim or Christian (versus other religions). Human capital (schooling and investment in informal education) is as noticed in the literature a key factor for job findings for female in Côte d'Ivoire. However, the number of small children or childbearing and child care affects negatively the employability of women in Côte d'Ivoire.

Secondly, there is evidence that women capacities to find a job with a contract of long term duration, to be able to change jobs and to have higher wages are positively correlated to *years of schooling, training and use of ICT*. However, the number of small children (under seven years' old has a negative effect on this outcome.

Through robust econometric methods, this research highlights the crucial role of human capital investment (schooling, vocational school, training, tenure) on female's comparative advantages vis-à-vis employment, job's security, mobility in the labor market and productivity in the

internal labor market.

It comes out that, in the environment of post-conflict recovery, the Ivorian decision-makers should devote enough efforts to strengthen women human capital (schooling, training). Indeed, though the formal education appears to be important, there is need to pay high attention to vocational training for higher mobility and productivity of women in their career. Information and Communication Technology (ICT)'s knowledge or female's capacities of making use of ICT backups must be improved in view of increasing their employability and reducing the low employment rates of women, but also gender disparities in Côte d'Ivoire.

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