Women's Economic Empowerment and Management of Household Food Security in Kogi State

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Abstract

The objective of this work was to determine women's economic empowerment and management of household food security in Kogi State. Primary data was used for the study, which was collected through the administration of a specially designed questionnaire. A survey design was adopted for the study where the population consist of women in Kogi State. A sample size of 384 was determined using Cochran sampling formulae which were increased to 422 to cover non-responses. A purposive sampling technique was used in the study. Data collected were analysed using frequency distribution, Pearson correlation, OLS regression and ANOVA to test the model fitness. Results from the study show that women's economic empowerment exerts a significant relationship with the management of household food security. Furthermore, the study recommended among other issues that to achieve more women's economic empowerment; the government, support more women with adequate agricultural assets that will aid in necessitating management of household food security in their homes and beyond and women should be enlightened on how to make use of credit facilities to prove their ability to manage household food security.

Key word: Economic Empowerment, Food Security, Household, Management

JEL Classification Code: D10

1. Introduction

Globally, women's empowerment in economic activities is critically sacrosanct to every existing and functional human society as their engagement is the root of concrete nation-building, development and sustainability. Women's economic empowerment could be classified as the transformative progression that helps women of all categories to change from the control of limited power, voice, and choice at home and in the economy to having the skills, resources, and opportunities needed to compete equitably with others in markets as well as the agency to control and benefit from economic improvements and values in the society. Women's development can also be seen from another perspective as the act of involving women to participate in entrepreneurial/economic activities by taking all the risks associated with venture creation and management of the household including food security (Agu, Mohammed & Paul, 2020). It entails training and exposing women to skill acquisition, opportunity identification and developing them

to be able to combine available human and natural resources at their disposal to coordinate, manage, and produce goods and services for the betterment of themselves and the human society at large (Ferdousi & Mahmud, 2019).

Women empowered economically, are also regarded as women entrepreneurs and they are visibly contributing substantially to their respective homes, economies in Nigeria, Africa and the world at large, and their level of engagement and engrossment in entrepreneurial management of economic activities are increasingly at a faster pace. (Richardson, Howarth, & Finnegan, 2004; Spring, 2009; Niethammer, 2013; Kelly, Brush, Green, Herrington & Penny, 2015 in Agu, Mohammed & Paul, 2020). food security has ignited a debate that has drawn reasonable conclusions on gender equality as an effective tool to support agricultural and economic growth and enhance food security in respective societies of the world Duflo (2012); Asian Development Bank (ADB, 2013) – a trend that particularly resonates with increasing patterns of male out-migration and the feminization of agriculture. Studies have shown a strong linkage between gender inequality and food insecurity, particularly in the case of poor and marginalized women who have little access to critical resources for agricultural livelihoods (Quisumbing & Pandolfelli, 2010) or how women's disempowerment has gruesomely affected maternal and child nutrition (Malapit et al., 2015; Malapit & Quisumbing, 2015a; Sraboni, Malapit, Quisumbing, & Ahmed, 2014).

The food security debate also envisages that if women have similar access to productive resources as men, agricultural productivity will increase, thereby contributing to enhanced food security, for instance, increasing women's access to land, livestock, education, financial services, extension, technology and rural employment would always boost their productivity and generate gains in terms of agricultural production, food security, economic growth and their social welfare (FAO, 2011). Empowerment is important because the empowered women serve as a social multiplier, providing a voice to other women who are not privileged to be empowered in their respective communities in society (Akter & Chindarkar, 2020). It also has intrinsic value in increasing women's life satisfaction (Hossain et al., 2019). However, research shows that women in developing countries like Nigeria are about twice as disempowered as men. Lack of group membership and the inability to speak in public continue to remain key sources of dis-empowerment for women. This help visualizes the sequential linkages between women's empowerment and food security.

The world has witnessed the upsurge of the women empowerment movement universally (Rakesh, 2010). It is an undeniable fact that the development of women has to go much ahead globally and in the Nigerian context. As matter of fact, out of the 13.7 billion poor in the world, three forth are women and out of the 872 million illiterates in the world, two-thirds are women besides, the number continues to increase every day (Muraleedharan, 2005). In accordance with conducted research in developing countries particularly in Nigeria, women play a pivotal role in rural communities. Ignorance of the magnitude and importance of women's economic contributions has led to their exclusion from the benefits of economic development efforts. Moreover, women have very limited access to equal opportunities such as employment, credit, technical assistance, capital, education and job satisfaction (Eftekhari, 2006). Also, rural women are a great human resource and their role in society is vital for its progress. The involvement and engagement of women in the present-day Information society on an equal footing with men would directly contribute to improving the livelihood of people, making it more sustainable and thereby promoting the social and economic advancement of societies.

In the context of empowerment studies have found that when women earn an income in the household, child and household nutrition are more likely to improve than when men earn an income

(Smith et al., 2003 & United Nations Children's Fund, 2011). However, the mechanisms through which women's empowerment affects household food security are complex and not fully understood. For example, a study in Ghana found that women's empowerment was positively associated with the quality of child feeding practices, but only weakly positively associated with child nutrition status (Malapit & Quisumbing, 2015). A study in South Africa found that only certain domains of women's empowerment were influenced by socio-cultural factors that directly hindered agricultural production and had an effect on food security (Sharaunga, Mudhara & Bogale, 2016). Empowerment is among the most frequently applied variables in research that seeks to address women's economic development. Women empowerment is a critical component of regional development and fostering women empowerment is one of the principal measures to accelerate economic and social development. To promote empowerment, society needs to know the barriers that affect Women's economic empowerment to overcome the barriers and promote new policies and measures to create new ventures. In spite of the beautifully sounded programmes by the government and her agencies connecting to women's empowerment through access to productive resources to increased fair management of food security could not deliver on its promises, both in terms of actual investments dedicated to women's empowerment, and resulting outcomes on gender equality and enhanced food security (Galie & Kantor, 2016). Opiyo and Agong (2020) affirmed that women produce 70% of food grown for consumption, and the asymmetries in ownership of, access to and control of livelihood assets negatively affect their role in food production therefore, it brings about food insecurity. Masuku and Garutsa (2021) observed that women are still vulnerable to food insecurity due to a lack of access and control over their household assets such as land and other progressive valuable factors. It is remarkable to note that policy discourse as mentioned by some scholars only promotes a narrow and apolitical vision of women's empowerment but in reality, most women are left with the serious challenges of being the ones feeding the family without good support from the appropriate quarter. On this note, this study found it demanding to examine women's economic empowerment and management of household food security as a priority to liberate the affected in Kogi state, Nigeria.

2. Literature Review

This section provides an avenue for reviewing specific studies relevant to the problem area in which this study, it looks at women's economic empowerment, household food security, practical (empirical) studies conducted and the theory underpinning this study.

2.1 Women's Economic Empowerment

Women's economic empowerment is classified as the ability of women to participate equally in existing competitive markets; their access to and control over productive resources and the output, access to decent work, control over personal time, lives and bodies; and increased voice, agency and meaningful involvement in economic decision-making at all levels of human activities in the general society (UN Women, 2018).

It is indeed common truth that women's empowerment has become a key item on both national and international policy agendas as the national and global community moves toward sustainable development goals (SDGs) to ensure good and affordable living for humankind. Maigida, Saba and Namkere (2013) defined women empowerment as a structural, attitudinal, and

cultural process through which women gain the ability to make their own employment changes and decisions a reality. Thus, from these definitions, it is clear that embarking on empowerment programmes will not only help Nigeria in reducing women's unemployment but also in securing its future mass and coordinated prosperity (Ibrahim, 2013).

The empowerment of women increasingly is seen by researchers as a strategy to enhance household food security and nutrition (Sraboni et al., 2014 & Verhart, Wijngaart, Van Den, Dhamankar & Danielsen, 2015). Scholars and development practitioners continue to strive to understand what determines such capacity for self-determination and to identify the key domains of empowerment to allow for its assessment. The choice of which domains to focus on (e.g., psychological, economic, political) may depend, for example, on the local context or on the topic of analysis (Bayissa, Smits & Ruben, 2018). Batool, Anwar Asghar and Rehman (2020) averred that empowerment of women is a mechanism that gives women equal access to services, privileges and opportunities to enrich their living standard and voice in society. It also takes into cognizance the fiscal, socio-cultural, inter-personal, legal-policy and psychological aspects of their lives through the economic component that gives them the right to management over their wealth for liberation.

2.2 Household Food Security

Household food security refers to the physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food, at all times, to meet dietary needs and food preferences for active and healthy life (World Food Summit 1996). Johnson-Welch, et al (2000). Classified food security as a variable that is dependent on agricultural production, food imports and donations, employment opportunities and income earnings, intra-household decision-making and resource allocation, health care utilization and caring practices by individual persons in their different communities.

Food security is defined as a situation that exists when secure access to an appropriately nutritious diet is coupled in a sanitary environment with adequate health care services to ensure a healthy, active and productive life for all household members requires not only food but also adequate health status, hygiene and appropriate care practices (FAO, 2012). At the household level, food security involves: (a) food production through farming (b) allocation of income to food and (c) ensuring adequate protein, energy and micronutrients for all household members as expected (Herforth 2013). Food security is a key component of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the Post-2015 Development Agenda. SDG 2 emphasizes the interlinkages between supporting sustainable agriculture, empowering small farmers, ensuring healthy lifestyles and promoting gender equality (P´erez-Escamilla 2017)).

Women's contribution to food security does not involve only their contribution to production but also the decisions they make with regard to the distribution and consumption of food within household settings. Globally, it is believed that women have traditionally been in charge of food preparation, procurement, processing and allocation within the household (Doss, Meinzen-Dick, Quisumbing & Theis, 2018). This has meant that they are able to influence how food is distributed across household members as well as improve food quality and composition.

2.3 Women and the Management of Household Food Security

Women influence their families' food security using managerial skills in a multitude of ways such as by investing their incomes into their children's health and food; growing crops that increase dietary diversity; and performing unpaid domestic chores such as collecting water and firewood cooking. Given the many links between women and food security, development agents have referred to women as the key to food security (World Bank 2012, Gates, 2016) and have called for

women and gender justice to be the centre of all food and nutrition interventions (Rao, Pradhan & Roy, 2017). Additionally, development agencies have increasingly recognized the inherent link between gender equality and other development goals (World Bank, 2001; World Bank,2011; Rao, Pradhan & Roy, 2017). Kruse (2019) avowed that equality for women in all areas of life in our dear communities is not only a fundamental human right, but it is also and must be considered a crucial prerequisite for achieving human development goals as their style of management in terms of household food security is a strong force that cannot be taken for granted.

It is a known fact that when women in their respective homes have influence over decisions i.e about income and the management of other resources, their families will certainly have higher household food security. Women can influence their families' food security in many more ways besides earning an income. The time women spend with their children as well as their education level is strongly associated with higher food security (Ukwuani & Suchindran, 2003; Choudhary & Parthasarathy, 2007; Alaofè, Zhu, Burney, Naylor & Douglas, 2017).

2.4 Women's Economic Empowerment and Household Development

Many policies seek to improve food security by targeting women as beneficiaries of programs aimed to increase their decision-making because, when given the freedom to choose, women will spend more on their families' food security, education, and health (Quisumbing, Haddad, Meinzen-Dick & Brown, 1998; Kadiyala et al. 2014; Rao, Pradhan & Roy, 2017). Zavaleta (2019) asserted that women are indeed vital to food security and can affect it in many ways, including the direct purchase of food and influencing decisions about how income is spent. Given that women will invest more in their families when given the opportunity, many programs are becoming increasingly oriented to encouraging women to participate in the formal workforce and earn incomes. Women's economic empowerment may have the potential to transform societies to be more wealthy, equitable, and sustainable. However, women's economic empowerment encompasses both the ability to earn income and having control over how to spend it. These two distinct ideas are often conflated in economic empowerment initiatives. The assumption is that when women join the workforce, they will become more empowered or have more influence over decisions within the household (Zavaleta, 2019).

Women can impact food security by growing crops, tending to livestock, and purchasing and preparing food (Galie, Mulema, Benard, Onzere & Colverson, 2015; Tisboe, Zereyesus, Popp & Osei, 2018). Women can also indirectly influence food security by making decisions about resource allocation or how to spend incomes (Begum & Sen, 2009; Kadiyala, Harris, Headey, Yosef & Gillespie, 2014; Malapit et al., 2015). How women allocate their time affects food security as well. Zavaleta (2019), opined those women engaged in economic empowerment activities can influence their families' food security through earning a higher income, making decisions over how the income is properly spent, through the time they devote doing unpaid labour, serving community councils which done through their education background and potentiality.

2.5 Empirical Review

Sharaunga, Mudhara and Bogale (2016) investigated the effects of 'women's empowerment on household food security using the Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS) to identify the food security status of 300 primary female-headed households in Msinga, South Africa. Principal Component Analysis was used to identify the various dimensions along which the rural

women sampled were empowered. The ordered Logit model was used to identify the dimensions of women's empowerment that influence their household food security status. It was found that households headed by women with higher levels of economic agency, physical capital empowerment, psychological empowerment and farm financial management skills empowerment were more likely to be food secured.

Naughton, Deubel and Mihelcic (2017) investigated the household food security, economic empowerment, and the social capital of women's shea butter production in Mali. It highlights the vital social value of shea butter in cooperative labour for production, gifting customs among women, and traditional and religious ceremonies in Mali. The study employed the mixed methods ethnographic approach employed in Mali from 2009 to 2014, this study included participant observations, interviews, surveys, and focus group discussions as well as shea tree mapping and weighing of shea and firewood were considered. It was revealed that there are promising opportunities for the shea market with the extensive shea tree distribution, growth of consumer support for environmentally and socially conscious products, and capacity-building efforts of rural shea nut collectors and butter producers by the Global Shea Alliance.

Clement, et al., (2019) investigated a causal linkage between women's empowerment and food availability and access using household survey data from Bangladesh, Nepal and Tajikistan and Nepal. A sample of 672 households was used were mixed methods of data analysis that involve both ordinary least square regression and logit regression were employed. Finding from the study call for informing standardized measures of empowerment with an assessment of local meanings and values to women.

Asadullah and Kambhampati (2021). Examined the effect of feminization of farming, food security, female empowerment and access trends in the female share of the economically active population in agriculture. The study extracted secondary data ranging from 1980 – 2010 via the FAO database. It was highlighted those empowered women improve household food security. In the context of these two findings, the study concluded that if the feminization of farming is to improve female empowerment and also household food security, it will require critical policy interventions in the agricultural sector and beyond and that employment in farming has not yet brought about a transformation in female lives and therefore does not seem to serve as a pathway to empowerment. However, the study failed to explain a concrete method of data analysis apart from mere data use from secondary sources.

Wei, Sarker, Roy, Sarkar and Ghulam (2021) Women's empowerment and their experience to food security in rural Bangladesh. The study was conducted to examine the relationship of six domains of women's empowerment with their food security using a partial least square structural equation modelling approach. The empirical analysis indicates that women's accesses to their legal and familial rights and decision-making roles in households increase their bargaining power over the utilization of resources and choices of food which significantly and negatively decreases their food insecurity. Moreover, information and communication technologies and infrastructure facilities are also negatively and significantly associated with women's food insecurity. However, women's leadership has a negative but not significant effect on their food insecurity, as low self-esteem rural women feel no ease in publicly addressing their inequalities. By understanding family composition from women's perceptions, the results from the study can assist policymakers to develop more standard as well as suitable strategies and templates that will enhance the empowerment status of rural women and reduce food insecurity among them.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the theory of empowerment. The theory originated from American community psychology and was propounded by social scientist Julian Rappaport in 1981. The roots of theory extended into history and are linked to Marxist sociological theory. This theory was first used by Zimmerman (1995). It was further developed and publicized by Zimmerman (2000) and later, modified by Sazama and Young (2006) and Reischl et al. (2011). The theory stated that empowerment and women's development relies heavily on a series of actions that make them participate fully in empowerment activities, improve their quality decisions, and bring about circumstances/opportunities where learning, practice, and skills could be enhanced (Zimmerman, 1995, 2000). The theory further posits that making women engage in worthwhile, and community-based activities will enable them to acquire important skills, abilities, and confidence that would help them to be more productive, healthy, and independent in their respective homes and beyond (Reischl et al., 2011).

The empowerment theory forms the theoretical foundation of this study as it has very strong implications for the study. This is so, it could be understood that creating and implementing empowerment programs with regard to economic empowerment of women would enhance development and raise their entrepreneurial skills, assets, and motivate them to effectively apply the skills and knowledge so acquired to become positive agents of change in their communities and country at large (Ledford & Lucas, 2013). This would make Nigerian women build more assets through their entrepreneurial activities and as such engage in community development services that lead to speedy growth and development of the Nigerian economy.

3. Methodology

The study employed the use of a survey research method to collect data from the targeted sample the study. This is essential because of the suitability of survey design in collecting responses from a large population. The targeted population consisted of women in Kogi State. However, Cochran's (1977) sampling formula was used to arrive at a sample size of (384) respondents. Furthermore, the sample size was increased by 10% to compensate for non-responses (Israel, 1992) making a total sample of (422) respondents

A purposive sampling technique was employed to select respondents from 6 local government areas, two local government areas were picked from each senatorial zone based on a high level of commercial attraction. The local government areas are as thus:

Table 1

Breakdown of Study Sample Per Local Government:

Local Government	Sample
Lokoja	70
Yagba West	70
Okene	72
Ajaokuta	70
Idah	70
Ankpa	70
Total	**422**

Source: *researcher's computation, 2022*

Furthermore, a self-administered close ended likert scale questionnaire was used. The questionnaire is divided into two sections where Section A contains questions on socio-demographic characteristics about the respondents and Section B contains questions related to women economic empowerment and management of household food security. The questionnaire was adopted from the studies conducted by Galie et al. (2019); ADB (2013); Clement et al. (2019). Additionally, descriptive statistics which include the use of frequency tables and inferential statistics such as Pearson Product-moment correlation analysis, OLS regression and Analysis of Variance ANOVA are applied with the aid of statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 26. The model specified for this study is justified and aligned with the study conducted by Rurangwa, Muturi & Ibingira, (2017) to illustrate the relationship between the dependent and independent variables and is given below:

[1] MHFS = (WEE)

Where MHFS is management of household food security and women economic empowerment. More explicitly the model can be expressed thus;

[2] $MHFS = \beta 0 + \beta 1WOAA + \beta 2WAC + u_i$

Where, WOAA is women ownership of household security, WAC is women access to credit, u_i is the stochastic variable or the error term and; β is the Beta coefficient.

4. Results and Discussion

As clearly stated in the methodology purposive random sampling is utilized as the sample selection technique based on the fact that 6 local government area were used (2 per senatorial zone). Table 4.1 describes the response rates where a total of 405 copies of questionnaire were properly filled and successfully returned.

Table 2
Description of the response rate

Local Government	Questionnaire Administered	Questionnaire Returned
Lokoja	70	66
Yagba West	70	68
Okene	72	71
Ajaokuta	70	70
Idah	70	64
Ankpa	70	66
Total	**422**	**405**

Source: *researcher's computation, 2022*

Demographic Features of Respondents

Table 3: Age Distribution

Variables	Frequency	Percent
21-25 Years	21	5.2
26-30 Years	80	19.8
31-35 Years	91	22.5
36-40 Years	131	32.3
41 and Above	82	20.2
Total	**405**	**100.0**

Source: field survey, 2022

The results from table 3 above indicate that 5.2% of the respondents were between the age bracket of 21 – 25 years, 19.8% were between the age gap of 26 – 30 years, 22.5% of the respondents falls within the age bracket of 31 – 35 years, 32.3% of the respondents were within the age gap of 36 – 40 years and 20.2% falls above 40 years.

Table 4
Correlations.

Variables	MHFS	WOAA	WAC
MHFS	1		
WOAA	.753**	1	
WAC	.273**	480**	1

Source: *SPSS Output, 2022*

Table 4 shows a positive relationship between management of household food security (MHFS) and women ownership of agricultural assets (WOAA) with a coefficient of 0.753; management of household food security (MHFS) and women access to credit (WAC) with a coefficient of 0,273; women ownership of agricultural assets (WOAA) and women access to credit (WAC) with a coefficient of 0.480. It can also be inferred from the table that there is little or no presence of multicollinearity since most of the values are below 0.7.

Table 5
Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.760[a]	.578	.576	.45467

Source: *SPSS Output, 2022*

Table 5 shows that the coefficient of R^2 0.578 which indicates that 57.8% in management of household food security can be explained by women ownership of agricultural assets and women access to credit while the remaining percentage is captured by the error term and other exogenous variables not captured in the model.

Tabe 6
ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	113.745	2	56.873	275.109	.000[b]
	Residual	83.104	402	.207		
	Total	196.849	404			

Source: SPSS Output, 2022

Table 6 showed an ANOVA test performed on women ownership of agricultural assets and women access to credit. It has a p-value equal to 0.000 which is lower than alpha value (0.05), therefore concluded that the model is significant and fit.

Table 7
Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	2.341	.208		11.270	.000
	WOAA	.680	.031	.809	21.891	.000
	WAC	-.157	.050	-.115	-3.117	.002

Source: *SPSS Output, 2022*

The results from the above table shows that women ownership of agricultural assets and women access to credit are statistically significant at 5% level of significance. The variable women ownership of agricultural assets has a positive coefficient of (0.680) which indicates a unit increase in women ownership of agricultural assets will increase management of household food security in Kogi State by 68%. For women access to credit, it has a coefficient of (-0.157) indicating that a unit increase in women access to credit decreases management of household food security by 15%.

However, it can be revealed base on the results that women economic empowerment exerts a significant relationship on management of household food security. This result is consistent with the findings of Galie *et al.* (2019); Clement *et al.* (2019).

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study was an investigation of women economic empowerment and management of household food security in Kogi State, Nigeria. Data was sourced from six (6) local government areas in Kogi State. Base on the results from the analysis, it was discovered that the correlation results have a positive relationship among all variables. Similarly, the regression result posits that women ownership of agricultural assets and women access to credit are statistically significant at 5% level of significance which brought us to a reasonable conclusion that women economic empowerment exerts a significant effect on the management of household food security in Kogi State.

Furthermore, valid recommendations were made by this study as thus:

i. In order to achieve more women economic empowerment; government, support more women with adequate agricultural assets that will aid in necessitating management of household food security in their homes and beyond.
ii. Women should be enlightening on how to make use of credit facilities to prove their ability to manage household food security.

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