

Women's Education and Empowerment: Evidence from a Reform in Kenya

Hang Thu NGUYEN PHUNG

Osaka University, Graduate School of Economics
1-7, Machikaneyama, Toyonaka, Osaka 560-0043, Japan
u784490i@ecs.osaka-u.ac.jp

Nahashon Nzioka NTHENYA

Osaka University, Graduate School of Economics
1-7, Machikaneyama, Toyonaka, Osaka 560-0043, Japan
u425086a@ecs.osaka-u.ac.jp

ABSTRACT

This article examines the causal effects of education on women empowerment, focusing on women born between 1950 and 1980 in six waves of Kenya Demographic Health Survey (KDHS) data, who were likely exposed to 1985 education policy change in Kenya. The study employs this new structuring educational system as an instrument and reported the results using reduced-form due to high repetition rate and late enrolment at that time. The findings indicate that being exposed to the new education system yields positive impact on women empowerment. Specifically, being exposed to the 8-4-4 regime, women delayed their age at first birth by approximately 0.564 years, the female genital mutilation (FGM) practice on their eldest daughters declined by 3.51%, sexual domestic violence reduced by 6.47% and their decision-making index was enhanced by 0.067 point. We also conduct some robustness checks and placebo test, and the findings are robust. We provide some potential mechanisms that experiencing the new 8-4-4 system empowers women: 1) exposure to information, 2) husbands/partners' characteristics, and 3) labour market outcome.

KEYWORDS: KDHS, education, women empowerment, Kenya, gender