



AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF THE NEXUS BETWEEN WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND POVERTY REDUCTION IN CAMEROON

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Abstract

The no-poverty objective of the Sustainable Development Goals is still far from reach as poverty remains one of the greatest challenges of governments of the world. Most Literature largely associates women's empowerment with poverty reduction but its empirical evidence is still sparse, especially in Cameroon. To fill this gap, the study investigates the effect of women empowerment on poverty reduction in Cameroon. The methodology employed six indicators of women empowerment drawn from the Cameroon Consumption Household Survey IV to construct an index of women empowerment using the Multiple Correspondence Analysis. Poverty is considered as a dummy variable. The study then employs a control function technique, with pre-estimation and post-estimation tests for robustness. The key result posits that women empowerment has a positive and significant effect on poverty reduction in Cameroon. A one point increase in women empowerment will lead to 0.176 likelihood reduction in poverty which is significant at 1%. Furthermore, household size, age and marriage increase household poverty though age is not significant. Also, the results show that households located in urban areas are significantly less poor than those in rural areas at a 1% level of significance. While being a Christian woman insignificantly reduces poverty household size squared reduces poverty at a 1% significance

level. The study recommends that the empowerment of women should be incorporated in poverty reduction strategies that touch the household directly. Also, all women empowerment measures must be promoted and institutionalized if poverty must be completely reduced.

Keywords: Women's empowerment, poverty reduction, no-poverty objective, SDGs, Cameroon

INTRODUCTION

Despite the economic growth and development witnessed by most countries of the world, poverty and food security still remain one of the greatest challenges of governments in developing countries (Wirba et al., 2019). Poverty leads to hunger; and as such, measures aimed at eradicating hunger should focus on poverty reduction. Enhancing women's abilities can be the major solution to the no-poverty objective of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. Women's empowerment through entrepreneurship and self-employment in different socio-economic sectors of the economy can result to new opportunities for income generation (Islam et al., 2012), which can enhance household welfare and poverty reduction (Sraboni et al., 2014). In Cameroon, about 39% of the national population live below the poverty line; this rate rises to 51.5% for women, with 79.2% of them being underemployed (UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2019). The level of education, matrimonial status and gender reflects the poverty dynamics with women and children constituting about half of those living in rural poverty. Given that poverty is at the origin of food crisis, for households to be considered food secured, women must have the means and access to food that meets its nutritional requirements (Ntenkeh et al., 2022). According to the fourth round of Cameroon's Consumption Survey, Cameroon recorded a slight decrease in the income poverty rate. The poverty rate fell by 2.4 points to 37.5 % in 2014, compared to 39.9 % in 2007 and 40.2 % in 2001 (INS, 2014). Though the poverty rate has marginally decreased in urban areas moving from 12.2% in 2007 to 8.9% in 2014, it has slightly increased in rural areas from 55.7% to 56.8% over the same period (INS, 2014).

This performance however falls short of the expectations of the Growth Economic and Strategic Paper (GESP), which forecasted a poverty rate of 28.7 % in 2020 through an average sustained economic growth of 5.5% between 2010 and 2020 (Ministry of Economy, Planning and Regional Development, 2020). The average rate of growth between 2010 and 2014 was around 4.7% per year and to meet up with government's target, the growth rate of the real GDP between 2015 and 2020 should be above an annual average of 7% (INS, 2014). But the annual GDP real growth rates in Cameroon between 2015 to 2020 were 5.7%, 4.6% and 3.5%, 4.1%, 3.9% and -2.8% respectively (CIA, 2020). The empowerment of women is therefore vital for the

country's economic growth and sustainable development. However, Cameroon attaches a lot of importance to its local customs and traditions which widely affects women's status since it does not give them as much protection as modern equality laws (Ngassa, 1999).

Most societies in Cameroon are basically patriarchal with cultural differences accounting for the different forms of treatment between men and women and unequal social consideration. The status of Cameroonian women depends largely on the perception that society has of their role, and life in most households is based on the supremacy of men and subordination of women. Women in Cameroon are considered subject to male authority. Male characteristics are considered central to the decision making process at family, community and national levels. Cultural barriers that subject women to men include rules of inheritances, births, deaths, work, child care and reproduction and a host of traditional rites (Ntenkeh, 2021). Removing the barriers to women's empowerment in Cameroon, and allow them access to economic opportunities, human rights and human capital endowment the same way as men, will go a long way to reduce household poverty. It is this against this backdrop that this paper seeks to investigate the effect of women's empowerment on poverty reduction in Cameroon. The rest of this paper is structured as follows. First, the conceptualization of poverty in Cameroon by different authors is reviewed in section 2, followed by the literature review in section 3. The paper further examines the methodology, description and discussion of result in section 4 and 5. Section 6 concludes the paper and suggest policy recommendations.

CONCEPTUALIZATION OF POVERTY IN CAMEROON

The poverty issue in Cameroon is multifaceted, with education being the primary barrier between those living in poverty and those who are not (Peart, 2019). According to Kamgnia (2007), 52% of people in poor households in Cameroon are women, and those under 15 years of age. The major causes of poverty including: lack of job opportunities, declining incomes, poor infrastructures and even illiteracy, which inhibits the household from improving on its welfare. The poorest regions in the country are mostly the rural areas. According to Dover (2017), out of Cameroon's more than 23 million people, 24% live in poverty, and 55% of those in poverty live in rural communities.

Authors such as Fambon et al. (2001), Njong & Ningaye (2015), and Tegoum & Dodzi (2016), have carried out studies on the multi-dimensional approach to the measurement of poverty in Cameroon. Fambon et al. (2001) used income or expenditure as a measure of welfare and established that poverty is experienced more in rural than in urban areas. The poor spent less on education than the non-poor and the poverty level decreases with level of education. Yet the amount spent on health is higher than that spent on education. They

concluded however, that household size and education are the main variables that affect poverty in Cameroon. Njong & Ningaye (2015) used the Multiple Correspondence Analysis to target poverty in Cameroon from a multidimensional approach. They concluded that Cameroon is divided into areas of extreme multi-poverty, an area of non-multi-poverty, and an area in between. To them, policies aimed at fighting poverty must target the areas of extreme multi-poverty and rural areas on the basis of shortages of capabilities in all these dimensions. This recommendation confirms that poverty in Cameroon is a rural phenomenon, and policies aimed at eradicating it must first begin from the rural areas before spreading its tentacles to the urban areas.

Tegoum & Dodzi (2016) used the Multiple Component Analysis to study multidimensional poverty issues in Cameroonian children and households. They found out that 73% of children less than five years of age live under the child multidimensional poverty threshold with 25% affected by extreme poverty. On the other hand, 61% of Cameroonian households were poor. They established that the key determinants of child multidimensional poverty are level of education, area of residence and age of the mother. Table 1 presents trends in the measure of poverty for Cameroon using the Human Poverty Index (HPI) from 2004-2014.

Table 1: Trend in Cameroon's Poverty Measure Using the HPI from 2004-2014

| Indicator | Year | Value |
|--|------|-------|
| Multidimensional poverty Index | 2004 | 0.287 |
| Multiple Poverty Index: headcount, population in poverty (%) | 2004 | 53.3% |
| Multidimensional poverty Index | 2008 | 0.229 |
| Multiple Poverty Index: headcount, population in poverty (%) | 2008 | 54.6% |
| Multidimensional poverty Index | 2014 | 0.243 |
| Multiple Poverty Index: headcount, population in poverty (%) | 2014 | 53.5% |

Source: Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) for Cameroon

The Multiple Poverty Index (MPI) above shows the level of human development in the areas of education, health, and standard of living each of which could be based on several other indicators. In 2004, about 54% of the population of Cameroon was said to be deprived by multiple indicators, and the intensity of the deprivation shared among the multi-dimensionally poor population was 0.287. The income poverty level (i.e. people living below 1.25 US\$ per day) was 9.6% while the national poverty line (percentage of poor) was 39.9%. The trend witnessed an increase in 2010 with approximately 55% of the population being deprived of multiple

indicators, and the intensity of the deprivation shared among the multi-dimensionally poor population was 0.299.

The income poverty level (i.e. people living below 1.25 US\$ per day) was 33% while the national poverty line (percentage of poor) was 40%. In 2014, the trend experienced a drop indicating an improvement in welfare. The population that was deprived of multiple indicators was nearly 53.5% and the intensity of the deprivation shared among the multi-dimensionally poor population was 0.243. The income poverty level (i.e. people living below 1.90 US\$ per day) was 23.8%, while the national poverty line (percentage of poor) was 37.5%. The improvement in the welfare indicators in 2014 can be attributed to the increase in economic growth between 2014 and 2015 to about 5.2% in 2015 (SDG Knowledge Platform, 2019).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of women empowerment is multidimensional and varies from time to time, region to region, and culture to culture (Ntenkeh et al., 2022). Lillykutty (2003) view women's empowerment in terms of developing in women awareness, enabling them to be economically productive, politically active and independent making intelligent decision in matters that affect them and their nations. Ewerling (2018) relates women empowerment to the ability of women to make decisions about their own life and destiny. Feminist advocates view women's empowerment as a set of rights towards equality with men (Kabeer, 2001). According to Jejeebhoy (2000), women's empowerment is the capability of women to control their own lives within the family, community and society. The concept of women empowerment can be summarize as enhancing women's agency and opportunity structure leading to positive development outcomes with poverty reduction being one of those outcomes.

Just like the concept of women's empowerment, poverty is a multifaceted concept which is defined based on author's perception. Accordingly, Pantazis et al. (2006) categorize poverty as the lack of participation in decision making in civil, social and cultural life. Block (2002) defined poverty as the inability to afford an adequate standard of consumption. Nnamani (2006) stated that to be poor is to be socially excluded, often suffer from ill health and to be vulnerable. Hossain (2005) on his part viewed poverty as a product not just of material conditions but of a set of interlocking factors which include social isolation, physical weakness, vulnerability and powerlessness. Poverty can be relative or absolute. Absolute poverty results when a household lack sufficient income to sustain even a basic acceptable standard of living or meet its basic needs while relative poverty is the unequal distribution of resources associated with a matter of social equity (Usman, 2009). Summarily, poverty is characterised by the inability or lack of capability to provide for physical sustenance, to invest or participate in decision making.

Empirical research has shown that enhancing women's capabilities to make choices will lead to the transformation of these choices into desired outcomes such as poverty reduction. Regarding the effect of women's empowerment on household poverty, Nadim & Nurlukam (2017) qualitatively investigated the impact of women's empowerment on poverty reduction in rural areas of Bangladesh focusing on village development programme. Their result from self-assessment questions illustrated that about 63% of women agreed that women's empowerment is important in poverty reduction. Furthermore, results from the correlation analysis indicated that women's empowerment is positively correlated with poverty reduction with a significant positive correlation coefficient of 0.52. Wei et al. (2021) investigated the influence of women's empowerment on poverty reduction in the rural areas of Bangladesh. Using primary data, they concluded that a percentage point increase in women's empowerment will reduce income poverty by 0.1% and the income poverty gap by 0.01%. On the effect of women's empowerment on multidimensional poverty; a percentage point increase in women's empowerment will reduce multidimensional poverty by 0.10% and multidimensional poverty intensity by 0.57%.

Uzoamaka et al. (2016) examined women's empowerment as a panacea for poverty reduction and economic development in Nigeria. Using data from primary and secondary sources, they concluded that women's empowerment is strongly correlated with poverty with a correlation coefficient of 0.73. This implies that increasing women's empowerment will strongly reduce poverty. Yeboah et al. (2018) carried out a descriptive study on the nexus between women's empowerment and poverty reduction in the Ho municipality in urban Ghana and illustrated that empowering women with employment skills reduces household poverty. In Cameroon, Nkemnyi et al. (2017) assessed the role of women in development and poverty alleviation using questionnaires and focus group discussions. Their result revealed a significant correlation between women's formal occupation and household income level.

Lumsi (2012) carried a study on microfinance and their efforts to assist women fight poverty in Cameroon. She used data from 15 women selected through a snow ball sampling technique from two microfinance corporations each and revealed that microfinance greatly enhances women's capability in fighting against poverty. However, most of the findings were virtually qualitative, lacking empirical verification to objectively access the relationship between women's empowerment and poverty reduction. Some only focus on an aspect of women's empowerment on poverty reduction. This paper intends to fill the gap by empirically analysing the effect of women's empowerment on poverty reduction. Besides, women empowerment is capture using an index of six different indicators which cumulatively enhance women's potentials.

Methodology

Data Description

The study made use of the fourth Cameroon Household Consumption Survey (ECAM 4) conducted in 2014 by the National Institute of Statistics. ECAM 4 was aimed at a national representative sample of about 10,303 households consisting of 2,980 female household heads and 7,323 male headed households. All household members drawn are registered in the household questionnaire. The survey questionnaire contained principally thirteen (13) sections numbered 00-12 which addressed all households residing in urban, semi-urban and in the rural areas (NIS, 2014).

Model For The Construction Of An Index of Women's Empowerment

To investigate the effect of women's empowerment on poverty reduction in Cameroon, a composite index for women's empowerment is constructed using the Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA) developed first by Benzécri (1973). The primary indicators used to construct the index are education, professional training, having saving account, having access to credit, being a shareholder and being employed. Suppose, i designates an individual in the labour force and the value of the composite indicator for individual, the functional form as developed by Asselin (2002) is given by

$$C_i = \frac{\sum_{k=1}^K \sum_{jk=1}^{Jk} W_{jk}^k I_{jk}^k}{K} \quad 1$$

Where; K stands for number of categorical indicators; Jk refers to the number of categories of indicator k ; W equals to the weight (score of the first standardized axis of category Jk); and I designate binary variable 0/1, corresponding to the category Jk . The gross indicator obtained in equation (1) may have positive values for some individuals and negative for others which render interpretations difficult. As such, the gross indicator is normalized to have positive values in order ease interpretation (Kamgnia and Timnou, 2008). Thus, the following expression allows us to deduce an indicator with positive values \tilde{C}_i :

$$\tilde{C}_i = (C_i - \min(C)) / (\max(C) - \min(C)) \quad 2$$

The normalised indicator \tilde{C}_i classifies individuals in terms of increasing women's empowerment (or decreasing empowerment), with values ranging from zero to one. Poverty is a dummy.

Modelling Women's Empowerment on Poverty Reduction

Modelling women's empowerment on poverty reduction poses a correlation between women's empowerment and the error term. This causes an econometric problem of endogeneity which needs to be resolved. To resolve this endogeneity problem, the instruments media exposure through ownership of radio is used. The model for expressing this relationship is represented on our structural equation below as:

$$Pov = \beta_0 + \beta_1 WE + \delta X + \varepsilon$$

Pov = 1 if household is poor;

0 if otherwise.

Where, *Pov* is the dependent variable, and *WE* the independent variable; *X* refers to exogenous variables which are religion (Christian =1) marital status (married=1), age, household size, household size squared, zone of residence (urban=1). δ refers to the parameters to be estimated and ε the error term. The structural equation model involves a combined set of both endogenous and exogenous variables. We need to find a set of instruments of only exogenous variables. So, the instrument used to solve the endogeneity problem in this case is ownership of radio. Ownership of radio exposes women to information through the media which builds their confidence.

Analysis

The data was first presented and discussed first as descriptive statistics and finally the analysis of the effect of women's empowerment on poverty reduction in Cameroon.

DISCUSSION OF RESULT

Descriptive Statistics

From the descriptive statistics, the total number of observation is 2,980 though there are five missing variables from professional and vocational training. Out of this number of women headed households, about 20.6% are poor. The average ages of the women is 43 years and close to 46% of them are married. Female headed households have an average of 3 persons per house. As concerns religion, approximately 83% of women are Christians with close to 25% of them having access to radio. From the total number of female headed households considered, around 54% of them live in urban areas.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Selected Variables

| | N | Mean | SD | Min | Max |
|--|----------|-------------|-----------|------------|------------|
| Poor (1=poor, 0 otherwise) | 2,980 | 0.206 | 0.405 | 0 | 1 |
| Share ownership | 2,980 | 0.005 | 0.730 | 0 | 1 |
| Prof. and Voc. training | 2,975 | 1.550 | 0.667 | 0 | 1 |
| Education | 2,980 | 0.478 | 0.500 | 0 | 1 |
| Savings account | 2,980 | 0.256 | 0.437 | 0 | 1 |
| Access to credit | 2,980 | 0.017 | 0.130 | 0 | 1 |
| Being employed | 2,980 | 0.958 | 0.200 | 0 | 1 |
| Age | 2,980 | 43.691 | 15.665 | 16 | 98 |
| Marital Status (1=Married, 0 otherwise) | 2,980 | 0.469 | 0.499 | 0 | 1 |
| Household Size | 2,980 | 3.862 | 2.675 | 1 | 30 |
| Household Size Squared | 2,980 | 22.073 | 36.159 | 1 | 900 |
| Religion (1 if Christian & 0, otherwise) | 2,980 | 0.831 | 0.375 | 0 | 1 |
| Ownership of Radio | 2,980 | 0.256 | 0.437 | 0 | 1 |
| Place of residency (1= urban, 0 otherwise) | 2,980 | 0.549 | .0498 | 0 | 1 |

Source: By author using ECAM 4

As concerns the indicators of women's empowerment, nearly 0.5% of household members own shares while on an average, 15% of them had professional and vocational training. To continue, about 47% were educated while close to 25% of household members had savings account. Additionally, approximately 17% of household had access to credit while close to 95% of women were employed.

Inferential Statistics

Table 3 shows the effect of women's empowerment on poverty reduction in Cameroon. The P value associated with the Chi² statistic of 0.000 shows that the overall model is statistically significant at 5% level. From the result, it is observed that women's empowerment reduces household poverty. A one point increase in women's empowerment will lead to 0.176 likelihood reduction in poverty which is significant at 1%. Women's empowerment is a critical driver and important measure of poverty reduction. When women are empowered, they gain and exert influence over the economic, political and social process that constrains their livelihood opportunities leading to poverty reduction. This result is consistent to similar results of Nadim & Nurlukman (2017) who found a positive association between women's empowerment, increased income and poverty reduction.

Table 3: The Effects of Women's Empowerment on Household Poverty

| Variables | Logit (1) | Logit (2) | Probit (3) | Probit (4) | Control | Control |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| | Coefficients (poor) | Marginal Effects (poor) | Coefficients (poor) | Marginal Effects (poor) | function(5) Coefficients (poor) | function (6) Marginal Effects (poor) |
| WEI_psu | -1.108*** (0.139) | -0.128*** (0.0156) | -0.598*** (0.0753) | -0.134*** (0.0166) | -0.770*** (0.106) | -0.176*** (0.0252) |
| Christian | -0.163 (0.132) | -0.0196 (0.0165) | -0.0954 (0.0762) | -0.0222 (0.0183) | -0.0835 (0.0767) | -0.0197 (0.0186) |
| Age | 0.00458 (0.00325) | 0.000528 (0.000375) | 0.00272 (0.00184) | 0.000610 (0.000414) | 0.00274 (0.00184) | 0.000627 (0.000422) |
| Married | 0.407*** (0.105) | 0.0475*** (0.0125) | 0.219*** (0.0596) | 0.0496*** (0.0136) | 0.206*** (0.0598) | 0.0476*** (0.0139) |
| HH size | 0.514*** (0.0521) | 0.0593*** (0.00584) | 0.295*** (0.0295) | 0.0664*** (0.00643) | 0.291*** (0.0294) | 0.0665*** (0.00654) |
| HH sizesq | -0.0187*** (0.00381) | -0.00215*** (0.000433) | -0.0108*** (0.00219) | -0.00243*** (0.000485) | -0.0106*** (0.00219) | -0.00243*** (0.000494) |
| Urban | -1.731*** (0.121) | -0.219*** (0.0156) | -0.970*** (0.0655) | -0.229*** (0.0156) | -0.951*** (0.0660) | -0.228*** (0.0158) |
| Interact2 | | | | | -0.185** (0.0755) | -0.0424** (0.0176) |
| Constant | -2.719*** (0.255) | | -1.567*** (0.144) | | -1.595*** (0.144) | |
| Obs | 2,980 | 2,980 | 2,980 | 2,980 | 2,980 | 2,980 |
| Pseudo R ² | 0.236 | 0.236 | 0.235 | 0.235 | 0.237 | 0.237 |
| Prob>chi ² | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 |
| chi ² | 716.0 | 716.0 | 714.0 | 714.0 | 719.1 | 719.1 |

Source: Computed by the researcher using ECAM 4; N/B: WE=Women's empowerment.

***, ** and * indicates significance at 1%, 5% and 10% respectively.

Values in brackets are the standard errors.

Furthermore, the result indicated that an increase in the number of household members increases the probability of that household being poor by 0.067 which is significant at 1% level. Large households consisting of dependent members and individuals who are disguisedly employed, will increase the burden on household budget leading to an increase in poverty. It

might be rational for poor parents to increase their family size to increase the probability that they will get support when they get old but over time, they may become poor when household members become disguisedly unemployed. Therefore, large households tend to be associated with poverty. This is similar to the results of Khan et al. (2015); Kiran & Dhawan (2015). At a certain threshold, increased household size will lead to a decrease in the poverty status of the household. This is seen from the negative relationship between increased household size and household poverty which is significant at 1% level. This is evident as eventually, household members may become part of the working population which enhances their participation in productive economic activities.

Furthermore, a unit increase in the age of the household head has the probability of increasing household poverty by 0.062%. According to the life-cycle theories, poverty is expected to rise at very young ages, decreases during the middle age and later. In the developing countries, where incomes are low leading to low savings, it can be argued that poverty increases with age. This is because of a decrease in the productivity of the individual overtime, as the individual has insufficient savings to compensate for the loss in productivity and income. Besides, overtime, a greater portion of the household income is devoted for medical and health care maintenance with age. This diversion of income from household consumption to meet up with medical expenses implies an opportunity cost in terms of sacrificing present consumption. This leads to a decrease in food expenditure damaging people's ability to grow mentally and physically, impeding child growth and development. This reduces the cognitive ability, and extremely inhibits school attendance and performance which compromises the effectiveness of educational investment, leading to a vicious poverty cycle. The result is consistent with similar results of Aliber (2003) who found that households with older members are more vulnerable to poverty.

From the result, an increase in the number of households residing in the urban areas, tend to reduce poverty by 0.228 units which is significant at 1%. This is because urban areas have a lot of opportunities where income can be generated thereby increasing consumption expenditure which reduces poverty. Thus urban residencies are evident of economic progress (Liddle, 2017). This result is consistent with the result of Cuong (2012) who found that urbanization reduces household poverty rate. He concluded that a one percentage point increase in the proportion of urban residency results in a 0.167 percentage point reduction in the poverty rate for the both years considered.

The result further illustrates a positive relation between marriage and household poverty. The control function estimates show that an increase in the number of married persons will increase poverty by 0.048 which is significant at 1%. This is because marriage leads to an

increase in household size which adds the financial burden of the household, leading to an increase in household poverty. However, this result contradicts that of Garrett (2002) who elaborated that the fastest way to escape poverty is to get married.

The result further demonstrates a negative relationship between Christianity and poverty. Being a Christian woman has the probability of reducing poverty by 0.020. Christianity promotes care for the poor, sick, elderly, widow and orphans which goes a long way to reduce household poverty (Kaiser, 2013). Christians and faith-based social organizations, as well as churches and congregations, are engaged in a variety of ways in poverty reduction and the provision of social and health services and assistance (Furnes & Gilligan, 2012; Thornton et al., 2012). However, this result controverts the findings of Mariz (1996) who criticize pentecostal churches for proliferating poverty, by demanding high contributions from members and for promoting cures and all kinds of miracles which causes Christians to be lazy.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The successes of Cameroon's poverty reduction programmes largely depend on the development of women's potentials. Despite women's' contribution in national development programs and poverty reduction in Cameroon, cultural and institutional norms limit their spheres of influence. It is therefore recommended that the empowerment of women should be incorporated in poverty reduction strategies that touches the household directly. Most poverty reduction strategies usually target the economy in general and its effects hardly trickle down to smaller units of the society. Thus, implementing strategies that target women's empowerment within the household directly can reduce the prevalence of household poverty and arrest its growing effects on the economy.

Furthermore, financial institutions should encourage more women through their women's committee to own shares, by relaxing the process of obtaining shares and credit especially for women. This will enhance women's potential for investment, leading to empowerment and poverty reduction. Moreover, vocational and technical institutions should be promoted in the country to enable women learn specific skills and become empowered. This will enable them to easily pick up paid jobs which will go a long way to reduce household poverty.

Further research could be conducted on the effect of women's empowerment on multidimensional poverty reduction in Cameroon, where multidimensional poverty can be captured using a composite welfare index to draw up a multidimensional poverty profile. Also, future researchers can investigate on the impact of women's empowerment on the income poverty reduction of Cameroonian women. The research findings therefore will be very useful to

policy makers, administrators, development agents and the government in initiating strategies aimed at enhancing women's empowerment for poverty reduction in Cameroon.

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