Research Finding Seminar

"Essays on the Welfare of Children in Nigerian Families: Effects of Polygyny on Child Health and Determinants of Birth Registration" (in English)

Presenter:	**Ms. ANADUAKA, Uchechi Shirley (PhD Student)**
Date:	11 April 2019 (Thursday)
Time:	3:30 pm – 4:15 pm
Venue:	WYL314, Dorothy Y. L. Wong Building
Chief Supervisor:	Prof. LIN Ping (Professor)
Co-supervisor:	Prof. Alex WONG (Assistant Professor)

Abstract:

In this thesis, I study the impact of parental socio-economic characteristics on early childhood outcomes, namely health and birth registration in Nigeria. The focus on parental socio-economic characteristics is motivated by the growing body of literature showing the crucial role they play in shaping early childhood outcomes. Nigeria is of utmost concern because of the high variation in parental socioeconomic characteristics (e.g. polygyny is widespread) and high rates of children with very poor welfare levels (poor health outcomes and low birth registration). Identifying the impact of parental socio-economic characteristics can allow policy makers to target policy interventions more effectively to achieve the health (target 2.2) and birth registration (target 16.9) targets of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

The first essay examines the effects of polygyny on a child's health status (height-for-age, weight-forheight and weight-for-age) in Nigeria. I use a sample of 40000 children under-5 years of age drawn from the 2003, 2008 and 2013 waves of the Nigerian Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) dataset to investigate this relationship. The results of the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) and cluster fixed-effects regression techniques show a strong negative relationship between polygyny and child health outcomes. However, I identify evidence of self-selection into polygyny by young and poorly educated women. To correct for the self-selection bias, I employ instrumental variable (IV-2SLS) regression techniques. The IV-2SLS results support the negative relationship between polygyny and the health status of children under-five years in Nigeria. Furthermore, I find poor parental investments as a possible explanation for the results. For instance, polygynous mothers are less likely to deliver in health facilities, deliver with skilled birth attendants, and are less likely to vaccinate their children.

The second essay examines the determinants of birth registration in Nigeria. I use a sample of approximately 40,000 children under-5, drawn from the 2008 and 2013 Nigeria DHS data. Using OLS and Cluster fixed-effects regression approaches, I find that parents with better education and income are more likely to register the births of their children. I also find the children are also more likely to be registered if they were delivered by a skilled birth attendant or ever immunized, and less likely to be registered if they lived far away from the registration centres. While there were no gender differences, the results show that children of higher order births are more likely to be registered.

In summary, the essays show that the differences in parental socio-economic characteristics translate to inequalities in welfare outcomes for children under-five years of age. To achieve the health and birth registration targets, these differences need to be incorporated into already existing or future health and birth registration policies such as the National Programme on Immunization (NPI).

ALL ARE WELCOME

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