8
Variations in the Effects of Education in 28 Countries

8.1 Introduction

Chapter 3 has introduced the idea of embedded effects in order to draw attention to the questions whether and why effects on women’s employment differ between areas, and in Chapter 7 the weaker impact of labour demand and societal norms on women’s white-collar employment suggested that the differences between lower- and higher-educated women are context dependent. Here, I further theorize and test the notion of embedded effects for education’s influence on women’s employment.

The previous chapter has shown that educational attainment is a major influence on women’s employment: women’s odds of employment increase by 53% if a woman has primary education instead of no education. For secondary education this is 203%, and for tertiary education 1,212%. However, this effect might differ considerably per area and the literature on education provides some thoughts on context specificity (e.g. Abu-Lughod, 1998; Acar, 2006; Jansen, 2006; Tansel, 2002)\(^1\) and this is combined with the framework in this book to further theorize context dependency in this chapter.

I start by briefly assessing the differences in education and effects across countries and districts (Section 8.2). After establishing that education indeed has different effects in different areas, I give a short literature review in Section 8.3, and Section 8.4 formulates expectations regarding the different effects. The interaction models are discussed in Section 8.5 and there I also refer to the additional models separating blue- and white-collar employment. In the concluding section (8.6), the results are related to the general framework and core questions of this book.
8.2 Different effect sizes of education

By simply plotting the different employment rates of women with different levels of education for a few countries (Figure 8.1) it already becomes clear that the impact of education differs substantially across these countries. For instance, in Pakistan women with no, primary, or secondary education have employment rates of about 13–14% which rises to 27% among tertiary-educated women. On the other hand, in Senegal women’s employment rate increases with each level of education, but the increase levels off. At the same time, the pattern for Indonesia and Yemen are quite similar, but in Indonesia the employment rate is about 20 percentage points higher. To test these differential effects more systematically, the final model as presented in the previous chapter is rerun with random slopes for education at the district or country level. Major advantages of such an approach are that it focusses on net effects (it controls for other determinants of employment) and that it calculates whether the differences are statistically significant or possibly due to coincidence. Table 8.1 tells us that for each level of education the impact on women’s employment differs significantly between countries and districts. That the variance coefficients become larger suggests fanning out (see Jones, 2007): the differences between areas grow for each additional level of education. Figure 8.2 graphs the controlled

![Figure 8.1](image-url)  
**Figure 8.1** Women’s employment per educational level in five countries