PEER REVIEW HISTORY

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ARTICLE DETAILS

| TITLE (PROVISIONAL) | Determinants of children ever born among ever-married women in Bangladesh: evidence from the Demographic and Health Survey 2017-18 |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AUTHORS             | Rahman, Atikur; Hossain, Zakir; Rahman, Lutfor; Kabir, Enamul                                                             |

VERSION 1 – REVIEW

| REVIEWER             | Gautam , Abhishek |
|----------------------|-------------------|
|                      | International Center for Research on Women Asia Regional Office |
| REVIEW RETURNED      | 05-Oct-2021       |

GENERAL COMMENTS

Congratulations to authors for insightful analysis and putting the manuscript, it will surely provide basis for program designing but it will be good to add implication in the discussion section to make it more strong. Also the discussion section need to be strengthen before it can be accepted for publication.

Now coming on the specific comments:

1. Introduction Section: third paragraph, first line - the number of CEB increases with age and wealth index - is that correct? as our study shows opposite trend specific to wealth. Please put reference or correct it.

2. On page 4 first paragraph third last line you have mentioned about MLR modelling, this is first time i suppose MLR is coming can you please expand it.

3. The outcome variable is binary CEB and you have recoded it as 0=1 or 2 and 1 as 3 or more. In the survey there must be woman who are at zero parity. Were they excluded from the analysis? If so it is better to mention it in methods section.

4. What do you mean by cultural attributes which variables fall into this category.

5. The way variable on Empowerment is defined need to be corrected. If I remember correctly it is constructed using the decision making questions who's response are captured as "Self", "Spouse/Partner", "Jointly", "Others" So when we say we have considered women who have the power to take decision independently. In survey we get varied response from respondent and many times they are also socially acceptable or given in order to hide actual reality, i do not deny that for empowerment we use this scale and measure but terming it as power to take decision independently sounds very strong may be we can say "Women
empowerment is constructed if woman reported taking decision on her own on any of the three conditions”.

Also, the result of women empowerment is indicating that the more empowered the women is, the likelihood of having more children increases, though author have given argument connecting it with religious belief but that alone may not suffice and in discussion these points should be discussed and if there are other studies showing similar results they should be referred.

6. The variable like education and wealth index are many times highly correlated, in the current analysis we have taken into account both husband and wife’s education in the model. Did we check for collinearity in the model?

7. On Page number 8 in the second last line it is mentioned that “of the total respondents, 12% of husbands desired more children and 88% had a negative attitude towards having more children”. The responses were captured by women, it is her perception about her husband's desires and not attitude so quoting it as his attitude is not correct way of mentioning it. Better to simply say 88% men do not desire to have more children or do not support or want more children.

8. The variable on the NGO membership, though available only for one round of the survey the results are in somewhat opposite direction as anticipated. Is there any specific reason behind it, will be good to discuss or at least have some argument around it with some referencing. Also, why it was not captured in 201-18 or was there any other variable used for it.

9. On Page 17 under discussion section, the second paragraph need to be checked again - it is written that “age at first marriage, first birth, women and husbands educational status and place of residence have negative effect” - is it negative or positive as they are less likely to have more children. Please review the paragraph and correct accordingly.

10. The discussion section of the paper need to be strengthened more and if possible do add implications.

REVIEWER
Khan , Hina
The University of Lahore, Department of Statistics

REVIEW RETURNED
17-Nov-2021

GENERAL COMMENTS
The idea of the manuscript topic is interesting, especially in the point of view of behavior of married women in different regions of Bangladesh. References should be in alphabetical order.
Reviewer #1 comments

Congratulations to authors for insightful analysis and putting the manuscript, it will surely provide basis for program designing but it will be good to add implication in the discussion section to make it more strong. Also the discussion section needs to be strengthen before it can be accepted for publication.

Now coming on the specific comments:

1. Introduction Section: third paragraph, first line - the number of CEB increases with age and wealth index - is that correct? as our study shows opposite trend specific to wealth. Please put reference or correct it.

Authors’ response

Yes, you are correct. We did a mistake and now corrected the sentence including the additional reference (highlighted in page 2: last paragraph).

1. On page 4 first paragraph third last line you have mentioned about MLR modelling, this is first time I suppose MLR is coming can you please expand it.

Authors’ response

We have expanded the term MLR (mixed logistic regression) [highlighted in page 3: 2nd paragraph].

1. The outcome variable is binary CEB and you have recoded it as 0=1 or 2 and 1 as 3 or more. In the survey, there must be women who are at zero parity. Were they excluded from the analysis? If so it is better to mention it in the methods section.

Authors’ response

In our study, we did not consider the women who are at zero parity following the fertility slogan ‘No more than two children, better if one’ in Bangladesh and it is mentioned in the methods section of the revised manuscript (highlighted in page 4: 1st paragraph).

1. What do you mean by cultural attributes which variables fall into this category?

Authors’ response

Thank you very much for pointing out this issue. The term cultural attribute has been deleted in the revised version of the manuscript as we did not consider any cultural attributes.

1. The way variable on Empowerment is defined need to be corrected. If I remember correctly it is constructed using the decision making questions who's response are captured as "Self", "Spouse/Partner", "Jointly", "Others" So when we say we have considered women who have the power to take decision independently. In survey we get varied response from respondent and many times they are also socially acceptable or given in order to hide actual reality, I do not deny that for empowerment we use this scale and measure but terming it as power to take decision independently sounds very strong maybe we can say "Women empowerment is constructed if woman reported taking decision on her own on any of the three conditions".

Authors’ response

Also, the result of women empowerment is indicating that the more empowered the women is, the likelihood of having more children increases, though author have given argument connecting it with religious belief but that alone may not suffice and in discussion these points should be discussed and if there are other studies showing similar results they should be referred.
Thank you very much for the comment. We have revised the sentence regarding the women empowerment variable (highlighted in page 4: 2nd paragraph) and the relevant results are also discussed in the discussion section including references (highlighted in page 15: 1st paragraph).

1. The variable like education and wealth index are many times highly correlated, in the current analysis we have taken into account both husband and wife's education in the model. Did we check for collinearity in the model?

Authors’ response
Yes, we have checked the multicollinearity in the model by computing the variance inflation factor (VIF) and observed no significant correlation among the explanatory variables (VIF<2) (highlighted in page 11: 2nd paragraph).

1. On Page number 8 in the second last line it is mentioned that “of the total respondents, 12% of husbands desired more children and 88% had a negative attitude towards having more children”. The responses were captured by women, it is her perception about her husband's desires and not attitude so quoting it as his attitude is not correct way of mentioning it. Better to simply say 88% men do not desire to have more children or do not support or want more children.

Authors’ response
Thanks for your comment. We have rewritten the sentence (highlighted in page 8: 1st paragraph).

1. The variable on the NGO membership, though available only for one round of the survey the results are in somewhat opposite direction as anticipated. Is there any specific reason behind it, will be good to discuss or at least have some argument around it with some referencing. Also, why it was not captured in 201-18 or was there any other variable used for it.

Authors’ response
Though it is expected that the women with NGO membership will have lower fertility than others, surprisingly we observed the opposite direction in our analysis. It may happen that they can claim more financial benefits from NGOs by referencing their higher number of children (highlighted in page 14: 1st paragraph). The NGO membership or other relevant variables are not available in the new round of 2017-18 BDHS survey data because the NGO activities are significantly reducing in Bangladesh. One reason could be that the government provides more facilities than NGOs (highlighted in page 4: 2nd paragraph).

1. On Page 17 under discussion section, the second paragraph need to be checked again - it is written that "age at first marriage, first birth, women and husbands educational status and place of residence have negative effect" - is it negative or positive as they are less likely to have more children. Please review the paragraph and correct it accordingly.

Authors’ response
We have rewritten the paragraph and corrected it accordingly (highlighted in page 14: 3rd paragraph).

1. The discussion section of the paper need to be strengthened more and if possible do add implications.

Authors’ response
We have revised the discussion section (highlighted in page 14 and 15).

Reviewer #2 comment:
Comments to the Author: The idea of the manuscript topic is interesting, especially in the point of view of behavior of married women in different regions of Bangladesh. References should be in alphabetical order.

Authors’ response
Thank you very much for your comment.