

Discussions on “Women's Empowerment Metric for National Statistical Systems (WEMNS) by Seymour et al. 2024”

Jose Ramon G. Albert, Ph.D.
Senior Research Fellow

Outline

1. Summary of the Paper

- Purpose and Development
- Methodology
- Key Findings

2. Relevance and Contribution

3. Methodological Considerations

4. Data and Analysis

5. Institutionalization and Practical Applications

6. Ways Forward

1.1. Paper's Purpose and Development

Addresses need for standardized measure on women's empowerment

Designed for large-scale, multi-topic surveys

Developed through iterative process: expert interviews, cognitive testing, piloting

1.2. Summary of Paper's Methodology

Four domains: intrinsic,
instrumental, collective agency,
agency-enabling resources

12 indicators for women, 8 for
men

Counting-based
multidimensional index
approach

1.3. Paper's Key Findings

Piloted in Bangladesh, Malawi, Nepal,
Guatemala



Women consistently less empowered
than men across countries



Variation in empowerment levels and
contributing factors across contexts

2. Relevance and Contribution

Fills gap in existing empowerment measures

Applicable across rural/urban areas and various livelihoods

Aligns with SDGs, particularly SDG5 on gender equality

2. Relevance and Contribution (cont'd)

Enables cross-contextual comparisons

Decomposable for targeted policy insights

Potential to track progress on women's empowerment over time

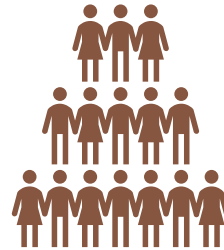
2.1. Extent of Coverage of Critical Areas on Women's Empowerment ([ADB UN Women 2018](#))

Areas	Strength of WEMNS	Other Remarks
1. Realizing Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights	includes an indicator on "Influence in own health decisions,	not fully capture the breadth of sexual and reproductive health rights
2. Recognizing, Reducing, and Redistributing Unpaid Care and Domestic Work	includes an indicator on "Influence over time allocation", which includes questions about household duties and caregiving	
3. Eliminating Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)	includes an indicator on "Rejection of women's subjection to sexual harassment,"	not comprehensively covers all forms of VAW
4. Empowering Women in Climate Resilience & Disaster Risk Reduction		Not directly addressed in WEMNS
5. Improving Women's Leadership and Participation	includes indicators on "Participation in organizations" and "Leadership in organizations	

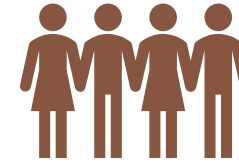
3. Methodological Considerations



Strengths: rigorous development, cognitive interviewing, multiple testing rounds



Counting-based approach: easy to communicate, policy-relevant



Challenge: setting appropriate empowerment cutoffs across diverse contexts

3. Methodological Considerations (cont'd)

Indicator selection:
balance between
comprehensiveness
and brevity

Limitations: self-
reported measures,
potential cultural
biases

Different indicators
for women and men
affect comparability

Alignment with or
complementing
existing gender-
related indicators

4. Data and Analysis

Pilot study: non-representative samples
in four countries

Decomposability allows identification
of key contributors to
disempowerment

Questions of cross-cultural validity and
comparability remain

4. Data and Analysis (cont'd)

Low to moderate correlations among indicators suggest distinct constructs

Limited associations with external variables (e.g., well-being measures)

Need for further validation with more diverse, representative samples

5. Institutionalization and Practical Applications



Potential for integration into national surveys (e.g., 50x2030 Initiative) but resources needed for new surveys or new questions in surveys



Relatively brief administration time (15-20 minutes) facilitates adoption

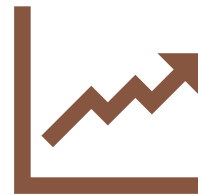


Challenges in standardizing across diverse cultural contexts

5. Institutionalization and Practical Applications (cont'd)



Can inform policy interventions through decomposition analysis



Opportunity for longitudinal tracking of empowerment



Need for capacity building in national statistical offices

5.1. Institutionalization Challenges

- Resource constraints of National Statistical Offices
- Need for integration with existing surveys
- Capacity development requirements

6. Ways Forward

- Further testing with nationally representative samples
- Refinement based on critical empowerment issues
- Explore phased implementation strategies

