Research Article

DETERMINANTS OF WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT: ANALYSIS OF DEMOGRAPHIC AND HEALTH SURVEYS (DHS) IN THE CASES OF YEMEN, EGYPT AND JORDAN

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Abstract

This paper explores the determinants of women's economic empowerment from a capacity perspective for three Arab countries that are Yemen, Egypt and Jordan. The MIMIC model was estimated using data from the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS). To explain the empowerment of women in Arab countries, this study attempted to address key issues concerning women's decisions about health care, major household purchases, the use of women's and partners' income. Findings indicate that women's empowerment was related to age, place of residence, educational attainment, women's income relative to husband's income, access to newspapers, frequent watching television and listen to radio.

Keywords: women empowerment, Capability Approach, structural equation model.

INTRODUCTION

Economic empowerment has become a key tool in strengthening women's capacity to improve their economic status and wellbeing, reducing household poverty and enhancing economic growth, productivity and efficiency (Golla and al., 2011). As evidence of the link between gender equality, economic growth and development, interest in studying the determinants of women's empowerment has increased. Women's empowerment has a positive impact on society, making it necessary to study its determinants (Sen, 2000). The Arab region is not homogeneous due to differences in economic, demographic and other social and cultural conditions, but there are several commonalities that require similar treatment. While progress has been made on gender equality and women's empowerment, gender continues to be a challenge in the Arab world. Women face obstacles at many levels that make it difficult to strengthen their subordinate status. In this context, we selected a sample of Arab countries which are Egypt, Yemen, and Jordan. Most of these countries are among those with high levels of gender inequality, low levels of women's empowerment and labor market participation. This shows that cultural and social heritage explains the persistence of patriarchal attitudes and that economic development alone will not promote gender equality and women's empowerment (Blumberg 2015; Litterelland Bertsch, 2013a; Moghadam, 2014). The main reason for women's subordination in the Arab region is that women had no negotiating power, thus they were unable to generate and control economic resources and were forced to depend on men. Arab women suffer from political and socio-cultural barriers. The Social Institutions and Gender Equality Index (SIGI) shows that their efforts to eliminate discrimination against women remain weak at less than 0.56.

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According to the 2017 Global Gender Gap Report, Arab women are making slow progress towards empowerment. Women are marginalized with a severe lack of capacity. In this context, the capacity approach (Sen, 1999, 2000) is a choice-based framework that aims to expand real life opportunities (effective choices). In this way, women's empowerment can be defined as an expansion of effective opportunities for women to choose the life they want. Zen (1985) suggested that capacity can be tied to eliminating barriers in people's lives, in order to be more independent and have more freedom. The capabilities approach is of great importance for women who are victims of discrimination and patriarchal norms. Conventional measures of development may be insufficient to assess their well-being. In this context, women can be excluded from economic growth and family income. As a result, focusing on capacity rather than income can reveal more specifically the different dimensions that can contribute to women's well-being. According to Nussbaum (2000), another interesting aspect of this approach is that it can address gender inequality in accessing family resources and opportunities.

In this article, the capabilities approach can be very relevant for the intra-household study on women's empowerment in Arab countries. This allows answering a crucial question: are women free to choose a life without control or discrimination inside the family?

The article is organized as follows. Section 2 presents a theoretical framework of the determinants of women's empowerment. Section 3 explains the methodology undertaken to conduct the empirical study as well a data description. The empirical results are presented and discussed in section 4. Conclusions will be provided in section 5.

Theoretical framework

The economic empowerment has become an essential tool to enhance women's capacity to assert their rights and well-being, thus reducing household poverty and increasing economic

growth, productivity, and efficiency (Golla *et al.,* 2011). As evidence of the links between gender equality, economic growth, and development, interest in studying the determinants of women's empowerment has grown. Indeed, if the determinants of empowerment are not empirically evaluated, it will be difficult to find ways to improve women's empowerment. It is important to assess the determinants of empowerment and provide a valid and reliable measure of this phenomenon. With the increasing importance given to empowerment in development processes, researchers have become increasingly concerned with the theoretical evolution, determinants, and measurement issues of women's empowerment since the last two decades of the 20th century (Malhotra, Schuler, & Boender, 2002). On the other hand, given that women's empowerment generates positive effects for society, it is essential to identify the determinants of women's empowerment in the domestic sphere. Numerous studies have been conducted to analyze the impacts of different determinants on women's empowerment. A brief overview of selected studies is summarized in the present section.

Education

Women's education is a powerful tool to change their position and status in society. Education is considered an important step towards women's empowerment as it gives them the opportunity to overcome challenges, confront their traditional roles and change their lives. Women's education is important to increase decision-making within the household, access to work, mobility, political participation, and good health (Kim, 2018; Malabet *et al.,* 2019). Education has proven to be one of the important determinants of women's empowerment. The study by Rahman and al. (2009) analyzes the determinants of women's empowerment in Bangladesh. The results show that decision-making power increases with increasing education level of women. Educational attainment also affects daily household spending, freedom of movement and household decision-making. Fatima (2013) used data from the 2007-2008 Survey on Measuring Social and Living Conditions in Pakistan to study the relationship between education, employment and women's empowerment. Fatima (2013) found that education and employment have a significant effect on women in some household decisions, but not in all decisions.

The importance of education also varies across different indicators of women's empowerment. Malhotra and Mather (1997) empirically investigated the relationship between education, paid work and the decision-making power of married women in Sri Lanka. The results demonstrate a significant effect of education on financial decision-making, but not in social and organizational decisions. According to Kishor (1995), a husband's higher educational level leads to more equitable relationship with his wife. Rodman's (1972) study reveals that a greater degree of education for males supports their role as dominant partners and can reduce their wives' autonomy.

Age

Age is another factor which is generally considered to be a determinant of women's empowerment within the household. Acharya and al. (2010); Chaudhry and Nosheen, (2009); Khan and Awan, (2011); Parveen and Leonhauser, (2005) and Rahman and al. (2009) found that age of women appeared to be a positive and significant determinant of economic

empowerment. Anderson and Eswaran (2009) found that, unlike previous studies, age has a negative effect on empowerment. According to Jensen and Thornton (2003), women who marry young have fewer financial resources than their older spouses. They tend to be more dependent on their husbands, which has a negative impact on their social status inside the family. However, women who marry later, have greater chances for education, work, and the ability to choose a spouse, enhancing their bargaining and decision-making power (Fargues, 2005).

Media exposure

Musonera and Heshmati (2016), Parveen and Leonhauser (2005), Acharya et al. (2010), and Schuler, Islam and Rottach (2010) found that exposure to the media is an important factor in determining women's empowerment. They concluded that access to television and radio can increase women's awareness of the problems of daily life, family planning programs, health and hygiene, poverty reduction programs, gender and human rights.

Number of children (Household size)

Khan and Awan (2011) look at the factors that influence two aspects of women's empowerment in Pakistan that are family planning and economic decision-making within the household. The findings reveal that the number of children, not the child's gender, is a factor of women's empowerment. Noreen (2011) found that women's empowerment is determined by the number of children, the age, husband's education, inherited assets, social status and microfinance. Sharma (2004) concluded that the number of children has a significant impact on women's empowerment. Khanand Awan (2011) highlighted the number of children (and not the number of sons) as a determinant of women's empowerment. They concluded that the number of children increases the empowerment of women. It is generally accepted that women with many children enjoy a relatively higher status than women without children.

Marital status

Kamal and Zunaid (2006) used 2004 DHS data from Bangladesh to study the determinants of women's empowerment. Regarding household status, Kamal they found that married women may be more respected in the community. They added that the type of marriage (polygamous or monogamous) can affect women's empowerment. They concluded that being married is a key factor of women's empowerment. Trommlerová and al. (2015) concluded that in terms of marital status married women take better care of their families than unmarried ones. Jan and Akhtar (2008) studied the decision-making power of married and unmarried women. The study shows that there is no significant difference between married and unmarried women in terms of their decision-making power. On the other hand, there are significant differences between married and unmarried women, linked to their empowerment. They found that women's decision-making power is weak and depends on male and / or family decisions.

Employment

Kabeer (1997) indicated that women's ability to control their own funds helps to increase their autonomy. Malhotra and Mather's (1997) study in Sri Lanka shows that women's

employment has a positive impact on financial control. Chaudhry and Nosheen, (2009) analyzed the determinants of women's empowerment using regression analysis based on primary data from a district in southern Punjab. Empirical analysis shows that women's work and household participation rates have a significant effect on women's empowerment. The study by Khan and Awan (2011) examines women's empowerment in different contexts of family planning and economic decision-making within the family. The results show that women's professional status is a favorable factor in controlling resources and enhancing women's bargaining power, thus strengthening women's economic status. Heaton and al. (2005) found that paid work and income-generating activities reduce women's financial dependence. Chaudhry and Nosheen (2009) also found that paid employment has a significant impact on empowerment. Acharya and al. (2010) pointed out that employment seen as an important factor in women's empowerment, allowing women to increase their freedom of movement and control their household decisions. Access to women's financial assets can threaten the status of men in the family, leading to increased conflict and violence and reduced control over women (Kabeer, 2001). Malhotra and Mather (1997) found that employment does not generate empowerment when women do not control their income. Similarly, Samarasinghe (1993) concluded that paid employment enhances women's empowerment only when women's income is used for themselves.

Place of residence

Roy and Niranjan (2004) concluded that urban women are more independent than rural women. Hunter (2010) also found that it is difficult for women to avoid abusive behaviour in developing countries where men have greater social power. Salway and Furuta (2006) suggested that women's empowerment varies with place of residence (urban or rural) and region of residence (Terai, hill or mountain). Indeed, community norms and values influence individual behavior. For the analysis of the determinants of women's empowerment, Jejeebhoy (2000), Jejeebhoy and Sathar (2001) suggested that in relation to nationality, religion and region, only the region is important. The study by Awan and al. (2017) shows that there is a large proportional disparity between rural and urban women in decision-making ability. Nayak and al. (2009) analyzed the status of women's empowerment in India. They found that urban women enjoyed greater autonomy in domestic decision-making. Empirical estimations confirm that married women in urban areas were more independent than those of women in rural areas. This attitude varies significantly with the urban region. In addition, women's control over their cash earnings varies positively with place of residence. Paul and al. (2016) used data from the 2007 Bangladesh Demography and Health Survey (DHSB). The estimation results show that women's place of residence has a significant effect on their economic decision-making power and on their household decision-making power. The results also show that urban women are more empowered in household decision-making than rural women.

METHODOLOGY

Sample and data sources

This study aims to use household decision-making indicators to assess the determinants of women's empowerment in Egypt, Yemen, and Jordan. The data used are from demographics and health surveys (DHS). This data is collected through a representative national household survey conducted by the statistical offices in the countries of origin. This study used the latest surveys available from these Arab countries. All of these countries conducted DHS that compared questions about women's empowerment between 2013 and 2015. The DHS included household decision-making questions to measure women's empowerment. Questions about women's participation in family decision-making are aimed at measuring evidence of women's empowerment. The use of decision-making questions stems from the argument that women's participation in decision-making in daily life is one of the phenomena that can be used to study the link between family and women's empowerment. The choice of indicators for measuring women's empowerment is based on data availability and previous empirical studies. The choice of variables is based on the studies of Kishor and Subaiya (2008), Malhotra and al. (2002) and Jejeebhoy (2000). In these surveys, women aged 15 to 49 were interviewed. For Jordan, the sample contains 42275 women. DHS in Yemen interviewed 25434 women. DHS of Egypt interviewed 16671 women. The information collected by DHS surveys in the three countries includes a detailed description of the population where one can find questions about women's general characteristics and their participation in decision making and other socio-economic characteristics. From DHS data, a total of 13 variables are used in this paper, four indicators representing women's empowerment, and the rest are related to household-level personal and demographic information.

Operational definitions and variable measurements

The basic model is linked to the work of Kishor and Subaiya (2008), and Sado and al. (2014). As in the model of Kishor and Subaiya (2008), our model contains data on indicators of women's empowerment, especially on family decision-making. Some variables are considered to be determinants of women's empowerment.

Dependent variable

The dependent variables used in this study are related to decision making. Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) aggregated data from Yemen, Egypt and Jordan provide information on women's participation in the intra-household decision-making.

- Health care of respondents.
- Major household purchases.
- The decision on the use of the women's income.
- The decision on the use of the partner's income.

The responses were coded

- If the decision was taken by the respondent alone,
- If the decision was jointly taken by the respondent and her husband,
- If the decision was taken by the husband/partner alone,
- if the decision was taken by the respondent and another person,
- If the decision was taken by someone else,
- For others.

Different decisions were labelled according to who took the decision. Any decision that was taken by the respondent herself was labelled '2'. A decision that was jointly taken by the respondent and her husband or by the respondent and another person was labelled '1'. Finally, other possible options mentioned earlier were labelled '0'.

Independent variables

Certain variables are considered to be potential sources of women's empowerment.

- **Type of place of residence** where the household resides in urban or rural areas.
- **The current age in full years** is calculated from the hundredth century code of the respondent's date of birth and the hundredth century code of the interview date.
- **Highest level of education** is a standardized variable providing the level of education in the following categories: *no education, primary, secondary, and the highest level of education.* Any member who has not reached the minimum age required for education is classified in the "no educated" category. The other possible options mentioned earlier are classified in 'educated' category.

Media exposure

The original database has three media usage questions. How often you read newspapers, how often you listen to the radio, how often you watch TV.

- Not at all
- Less than once a week
- At least once a week
- Almost every day
- Daily
- Wife's income compared to husband's income

This variable has five options:

- More than husband
- Less than husband
- Same as my husband
- The husband has no cash income or has not worked

Regression model and technique

The analysis employs the MIMIC model, a specialized form of structural equation modeling (SEM) comprising both structural and measurement equations. This model proves particularly advantageous when multiple dependent variables need to be tied together into a 'single' variable. Its utility has been highlighted in various studies (Di Tommaso 2007; Mabsout 2011; Ross and al. 2015). In this paper, the MIMIC (Multiple-Indicator-Multiple-Cause) model proposed by Joreskog and Goldberger (1975) is used to study the determinants of women's empowerment. The MIMIC model is used to investigate the relationship between household decision-making and the determinants of women's empowerment. According to Ross *et al.* (2015), the MIMIC model makes it possible to study the relationship between observed indicators and latent variables, that is mean between "women's empowerment" and the different possible causes (the type of

place of residence, respondent's age, education level, professional status, wife's income compared to husband's income, desire to have the ideal number of children and exposure to the media). This study analyses empowerment in terms of capacity, as capacity is by definition latent and cannot be measured directly. The MIMIC model is used to achieve two main goals.

- Assessment of the contribution of various determinants to the impact of capacity,
- Define a measure of empowerment determined by various decisions.

For more details, the MIMIC model contains two equations: the structural equation model and the measurement model.

- The structural equation presents the causal link between the latent capacity "empowerment of women" and the causes of empowerment which include a set of variables, such as: the type of place of residence, respondent's age, education level, women's income relative to husband's income, professional status, desire to have the ideal number of children and exposure to the media.
- The measurement model is a multivariate regression model that describes the relationship between the observed variables and the latent capacity (Schumacker and Lomax, 2010). The observed indicators are related to participation in decision making within the household. The latent capacity "women's empowerment" summarizes four questions related to participation in intra-household decision-making: decision in health care, decision in major household purchases, decision in the use of women's income and decision in the use of the partner's income.

The system of equations would specify the relationship between:

Y^* = Unobservable latent variable (Women empowerment) Y = Vector of endogenous variables (Indicators)
X = Vector of exogenous variables

$$Y^* = \alpha'x + \varepsilon \qquad (1)$$

Structural model

Y^* = unobserved latent variable
α' = vector of parameters to be estimated
X = vector of observed exogenous causal variables ε = error term

$$Y = \beta y^* + \xi \qquad (2)$$

Y = vector of observed endogenous variables
β = Vector of parameters to be estimated (factor loadings) ξ = mutually independent error term
The estimated model can be presented by graphical representation using path analysis which is a methodology for analyzing systems of structural equations.

Empirical findings and discussion

The Structural Equational Modeling (SEM) approach is a statistical technique used to test and estimate complex relationships between variables. Before estimating the structural equation model and checking if the measurement

model is valid, we must first evaluate how well the proposed model fits the observed data.

Figure: Path diagram of the general model of women's empowerment.
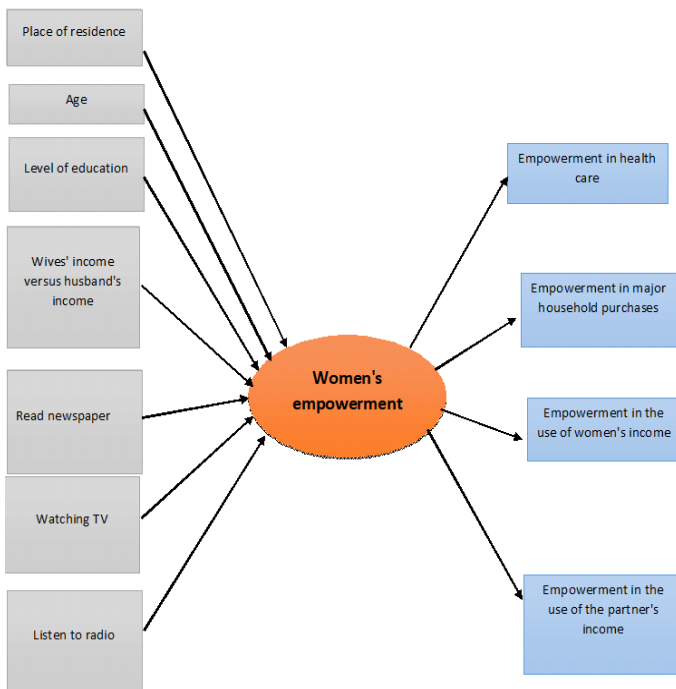
Source: Authors' construction

The standardized root mean square residual (SRMR), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), comparative fit index (CFI), and the Tucker Lewis Index (TLI) are commonly used fit indexes reported when describing the fit of structural equation models (Kline,2010; Worthington & Whittaker, 2006). The SRMR is a measure of the mean absolute correlation residual, with smaller values suggesting good model fit. The RMSEA provides information about 'badness of fit', with lower RMSEA values indicating good model fit. The CFI and TLI are both incremental fit indexes that assess the improvement in the fit of a model over that of a baseline model with no relationship among the model variables; larger values indicate better model fit (Kline, 2010).

Table 1. Values of fit statistics for three countries

Fit Index			
	Egypt	Jordan	Yemen
RMSEA	0,037	0.043	0.050
SRMR	0,020	0.026	0.027
TLI	0,993	0.939	0,947
CFI	0.996	0.991	0,966

According to the results of the table above, the values of the CFI and the TLI are higher than 0.9 for the three countries, which corresponds to an acceptable adjustment with RMSEA less than 0.06. For SRMR, there is also a good fit of the model since it is less than 0.08 for the three countries. The results confirm that the model fits the data correctly and can be considered valid from a structural point of view. For the structural model, the results of the study indicate that most of the coefficients are significant. The regression coefficients are the relative strength of the link between the observed causes and the latent variables (empowerment of women). In this paper, the decision-making power of women in the household is determined by the level of education. The result shows that educated women benefit from an improvement in their decision-making capacities. Education enhances critical

thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making abilities, enabling women to make informed choices about various aspects of their lives, including marriage, family planning, and career pursuits. It promotes autonomy and agency, empowering women to assert their rights and preferences. Education provides women with information and tools that enable them to effectively adapt to changes in the modern world. So, education is an essential source of empowerment. The results show that there is a significant positive association between empowerment and living in urban areas of Egypt, Yemen and Jordan. Women living in urban areas are most likely to participate in decisions making and improves the capacity for empowerment. On the contrary, living in rural areas decreased women decision making in the three countries. This can be explained by the fact that urban living often provides more access to resources, education, employment opportunities, and social networks compared to rural areas. This result is consistent with the result obtained by Roy and Niranjan (2004). This highlights the importance of localization and local context as an important determinant of women's empowerment. Access to the media (watching television, reading newspapers and listening to the radio) is a significant determinant of women's empowerment in the three countries. Access to the media has the same causal relationship as education, as it helps women empower themselves by expanding their access to knowledge and information. Media exposure provides women with access to a wide range of information on various topics such as health, education, employment opportunities, legal rights, and social issues. This access to information enables women to make informed decisions about their lives, families, and communities, contributing to their empowerment. In addition, Media exposure increases women's awareness of their rights, entitlements, and available opportunities. Through news reports, documentaries, and educational programs, women learn about their legal rights, such as property rights, inheritance laws, and protections against gender-based violence. They also become aware of educational and economic opportunities that may be available to them, empowering them to pursue their goals and aspirations. This result is consistent with the results obtained by Haque *et al.* (2011).

The age of women has been shown to be a key factor in women's empowerment. Estimates show that women's age has a positive and significant impact on women's empowerment in the three countries, revealing that older women become more empowered. As women age, they often accumulate experiences, skills, and knowledge that can contribute to their empowerment. Over time, they may gain confidence in their abilities, develop leadership skills, and become more assertive in advocating for their rights and interests. . These results support the findings of Ragui et al. (2014). The wives' income versus husband's income, is a significant determinant of women's empowerment in the three countries. When women earn more than her husband, it can lead to greater empowerment both within the household and in society at large, challenging traditional gender norms and promoting equality and autonomy for women. Also, In Egypt, women who earn an income equal to that of their husbands often achieve greater financial independence. This financial autonomy allows them to make decisions regarding their own lives, such as spending, investments, and career choices, without being reliant on their spouses. Findings were similar to the theories of Heaton et al. (2005) who argue that paid work provides a source of income for women.

Table 2. Causes of empowerment for the three countries

Variable	Egypt	Jordan	Yemen
Respondents current age	.0002375***(.0000471)	.0014987***(.0003051)	.0054041***(.0014747)
Type of place of residence			
Urban	.0071867*** (.001189)	.0083014** (.0037948)	.0720885*** (.0276922)
Rural	-.007292*** (.0011812)	-.0075992** (.003852)	-.0831746*** (.0317112)
Level of education			
No educated	-.0006809 (.0014206)	-.0322475* (.018114)	-.1216918 *** (.0250542)
Educated	.0005232*** (.0001558)	.0085829*** (.0179085)	.1216912*** .025054)
Wives' income versus husband's income			
More than husband	.8503577***(.0107255)	.0028571***(.0041124)	1.245269 *** (.0488633)
Less than husband	.0510925 (.0036318)	-.0004449 (.003578)	-.0047076 (.0054699)
Same as her husband	.052820*** (.0046502)	-.0020277 (.004504)	-.0112008 (.0087253)
Husband has no cash income or has not worked	-.0162839*** (.0054354)	0 (125691.3)	2.024073*** (.0847637)
Media exposure			
Read the newspaper			
Not at all	.000452 (.0057816)	-.0264658 *** (.0043896)	.0234189** (.0124823)
Less than one a week	.0045398** (.0020563)	.0047584 (.0039595)	.0161914** (.0094691)
At least once a week	.0053017 (.0037894)	.0139387*** (.0038409)	
Almost every day	-	.0059596 (.0043657)	.147057*** (.0489126)
Watch television			
Not at all	.0053017 (.0037894)	.0082016 (.0139883)	.0215245 (.0122545)
Less than one a week	-.0064477 (.0049476)	-.0166571 (.0108884)	.0027355 (.0067265)
Almost every day		.0250086*** (.0054367)	.0168208** (.0096714)
At least once a week	.0036169** (.0057918)	.0238026*** (.0050192)	
Daily			.0448782** (.0492563)
Listen to radio			
Not at all	-.004754*** (.0013193)	-.0169563*** (.0037927)	-.004927 (.0058293)
Less than one a week	.0057485***(.0021083)	.0084112* (.0043916)	.0014243 (.005806)
Almost every day		.0047545*** (.0013193)	.0070799 (.0086503)
At least once a week	.0033422*** (.001499)	.0122429*** (.0040315)	

Erreurs standard entre parenthèses*** p <0,01, ** p <0,05, * p <0,1
Source: Authors' Calculations

Table 3. Measurement model results for the three countries

Empowerment	Empowerment in the use of women's income	Empowerment in the use of partner's income	Empowerment in health care	Empowerment in major household purchases
Egypt	1 (0)	8.680728 ***(.4364238)	7.909602***(.399158)	8.822907*** (.4426889)
Jordan	1 (0)	2.0011*** (.144164)	.91448*** (.0752592)	1.641*** (.1213748)
Yemen	1 (0)	2.466***(0.228)	2.251***(0.219)	2.445***(0.240)

Erreurs standard entre parenthèses*** p <0,01, ** p <0,05, * p <0,1
Source: Authors' Calculations

Table 3 presents the estimation results of the measurement models for the three countries. It is interesting to note that all the indicators are significant.

In a MIMIC (Multiple Indicators Multiple Causes) model, latent variables are those that cannot be directly observed but are inferred from a set of observed variables, known as indicators. The relationship between the latent variable of women empowerment and the four measurement variables can be understood as follows:

Empowerment in health care: This indicator measures women's ability to make decisions regarding their health care, including access to healthcare services, making choices about treatments, and being involved in healthcare decisions affecting themselves and their families.

Empowerment in major household purchases: This indicator reflects women's influence or control over significant financial decisions within the household. It signifies economic empowerment and the ability to participate in important financial decisions.

Empowerment in the use of women's income: This indicator assesses the degree to which women have control over their own earnings and the autonomy to decide how to allocate and use their income. It reflects financial independence and decision-making power regarding personal finances.

The decision on the use of women's income is set to 1 to determine the scale of the latent variable "Women's empowerment".

Empowerment in the use of the partner's income: This indicator evaluates women's influence or control over the income earned by their partners. It reflects aspects of economic empowerment and bargaining power within the household, as well as the ability to participate in decisions regarding the allocation of the partner's income.

In the MIMIC model framework, these measurement variables serve as indicators of the latent variable of women empowerment. The model allows for examining both the direct effects of the indicators on the latent variable and the effects of potential covariates or causes on both the indicators and the latent variable. By analyzing these relationships, we can better understand the underlying construct of women empowerment and how it is influenced by various factors such as socio-economic status, cultural norms, and institutional policies.

Conclusion

Research on women's empowerment measures seems to be strongly associated with many determinants. The main purpose of this study is to examine the determinants of women's empowerment in Egypt, Jordan and Yemen. The Multiple-

Indicator-Multiple-Cause In summary, this study delves into various determinants of women's decision-making power within households across Egypt, Yemen, and Jordan. Education emerges as a fundamental factor, as educated women exhibit enhanced decision-making abilities, critical thinking skills, and autonomy. Urban residence is positively associated with empowerment, likely due to increased access to resources and opportunities compared to rural areas. Media exposure also plays a pivotal role in empowering women by providing access to diverse information and raising awareness of rights and opportunities. Furthermore, the age of women is revealed as a key factor, with older women exhibiting higher levels of empowerment over time. Additionally, the dynamics of income within households significantly impact women's empowerment, with instances of women earning more than their husbands leading to increased autonomy and financial independence, particularly notable in Egypt.

The relationship between women empowerment as a latent variable and its measurement through indicators such as empowerment in health care, major household purchases, women's income usage, and partner's income usage is crucial for understanding the multifaceted nature of empowerment. Through the MIMIC model, we can analyze these relationships comprehensively, shedding light on the factors influencing women's empowerment across various domains. By examining these indicators, we can gain insights into the socio-economic dynamics, cultural norms, and institutional frameworks that shape women's empowerment. For our sample of Arab countries, women lack full empowerment, thus a lot is left to be done. Educating women and challenging traditional structures are an important factor to make a sustainable change for women in society and for overall development. The context of this paper does not claim to cover in detail the issue of women's empowerment in Arab countries, but attempts to provide a contextual analysis to understand the reality of intra-household gender equality. This understanding is essential for developing effective policies and interventions aimed at promoting gender equality and enhancing women's empowerment worldwide

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