



Modelling Education Mediated Effects of Child Marriage Bans on Second Generation Child Marriage in Low and Middle-Income Countries

Laetitia Amiss Pemba^a, Alec Morton ^{a,b}, Stuart McIntyre^a

^a*Strathclyde Business School, University of Strathclyde, 199 Cathedral Street, Glasgow, G4 0QU, Scotland, United Kingdom*

^b*NUS Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health, National University of Singapore, 12 Science Drive 2, Singapore, 117549, Singapore*

Abstract

Child marriage has negative effects on human capital development, spurring a global effort to ban the practice. However, child marriage remains prevalent in developing countries despite legal prohibitions, raising questions about whether the child marriage bans generate persistent long-term benefits or fade over time. This paper evaluates the intergenerational impacts of the bans on educational attainment and child marriage outcomes. We achieve this using data from the UNICEF Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey and the World Bank's Women, Business and Law dataset, comprising eight Low and Middle-Income Countries. Exploiting subnational spatial variations in pre-ban intensity of child marriage and cohort treatment variations, we apply difference-in-difference and instrumental variable approaches to identify causal effects. We find that exposure to the ban results in improved educational attainment and reduces the likelihood of child marriage in the second generation, proving persistent policy effects. Therefore, a well enforced child marriage ban can create a higher self-sustaining equilibrium among the next generations such that resources could be focused on solving other challenges in future. However, the impacts are concentrated in urban areas with limited effects in rural areas. Strengthening the enforcement of the ban, particularly in rural areas, is imperative to enhance long-term benefits.

Keywords: Child marriage bans; intergenerational educational outcomes; intergenerational child marriage