Comments on "Estimating Income Variances by Probability Sampling: A Case Study by Shah and Aleem"

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Abstract

In this article, we wish to write comments on recently published article "Shah, A.A. and Aleem, M. (2010). Estimating income variances by probability sampling: a case study. Pakistan Journal of Commerce and Social Sciences, 4(2), 194-201", which suggest improvement as well as criticism on the paper and also contribute effectively towards journal repute and ranking.

Comments

Income distribution or inequality is an acute area of social and economic research. The article cum case study was started with the nice aim to estimate the variability in income distribution in the subgroup population of Pakistan. Many points are observed for academic integrity, some of them are cited below.

Section 1 of the article explains brief titles about the history of Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) which were held since 1960s. The authors have conducted their own micro level study in the urban area of Bahawalpur during 2007-08, but no attempt has been made to cite necessary figures from the very related national 2007-Household Integrated Economic Survey of Pakistan.

As an income inequality measure, the basic definition of Gini-coefficient is provided in the introductory section of the article but throughout the article Gini-coefficient estimates were absent which ultimately loses the credibility of the definition provided.

Section 2 of the article is based on data and methodology part. Two points are notable. Firstly, the information regarding household income is a sensitive issue all over the world. The income question looked a puzzle for readers, whether the income is personal or individual income or the household income or income per month or annual income. There was no clear statement about the income definition in terms of units and time which definitely loses the worth of the study; however, it was presumed that income will be in Pakistani rupees. Secondly, as authors have conducted the survey, it is also presumed that information about income was accessed through survey instrument

commonly called questionnaire. A brief statement about the income question must be included in this case study.

As far as the academic standards for publication about research methodology section is concerned, a good practice is to provide the detailed description of survey design. The article was strongly lacking this information.

The authors have strongly stressed on the methodology for variance expressions for the basic random sampling techniques which are easily available in the texts and available mostly for the class room exercises. In our part, it is suggested that four key expressions or equations for variance estimation were sufficient and efficient for understanding purposes rather than a two-page basic theorem which is the waste of precious journal pages. Finally, for the data and methodology section, a statement regarding response measures of respondents were completely missing.

Table 2 of the article provides the variance estimates of the 350 households of Bahawalpur. Mainly the discussion and concluding remarks were based on figures provided in Table 2. The authors have claimed in the abstract about the comparison of variances but in Table 2 the relative gains are reported. It would be better if an appendix was made available with the article to facilitate these figures showing efficiency comparisons. However, the superiority of stratified random sampling was shown in the article, which is mere a result of theoretical comparison mostly available in various text-books of sampling methods/ techniques.

Notably, in the last paragraph of the article, 2007-08 micro level study (authors study) regarding income distribution is compared with national 1963-64 HIES study. This entirely seems to be an unbalanced comparison not only in terms of time gap but also the measure used for making comparisons.

The study of income distribution assumed to be incomplete if some poverty levels are not incorporated. We think the readers might be surprised by looking at the list of bibliography and may leave an assertion as "An article with-out article reference", to add the credibility of this study at this time when a very few relevant studies are available (see Hussain et al., 2009).

REFERENCES

Hussain, S., Chaudhry, I.S. and Hassan, M. (2009). Globalization and income distribution: Evidence from Pakistan. *European Journal of Social Sciences,* 8(4), 683-691.

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