

# Women's Empowerment and Nutritional Status of Children: New Evidence for Bangladesh

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# Introduction

- Women's empowerment and gender equality
- Women in Bangladesh has less autonomy of decision-making
- In Bangladesh, the majority of deaths of u-5 children occur due to Acute Respiratory Tract Infections (ARIs)
- Low access to appropriate healthcare services in Bangladesh
- Positive association between women's autonomy of decision-making and household food security, improved nutritional status and access to healthcare services onset of ARI

## Rationale

Limited evidence: most effective domain and priority for policy implementation to improve the nutritional status of under-five children suffering from ARI

## Objective

To examine the aspects of women's empowerment related to the nutritional status of the under-five children in Bangladesh, including their age-appropriate diet intake and access to healthcare during ARI

# Data and methods

- Secondary data analysis
- Three waves of data from the Bangladesh Demographic Health Survey (2011, 2014 and 2017-18)
- Eligible criteria of women
  - Married
  - Age 15-49 years
  - Living with their husbands
  - Had at least one under-five child

## Data and methods

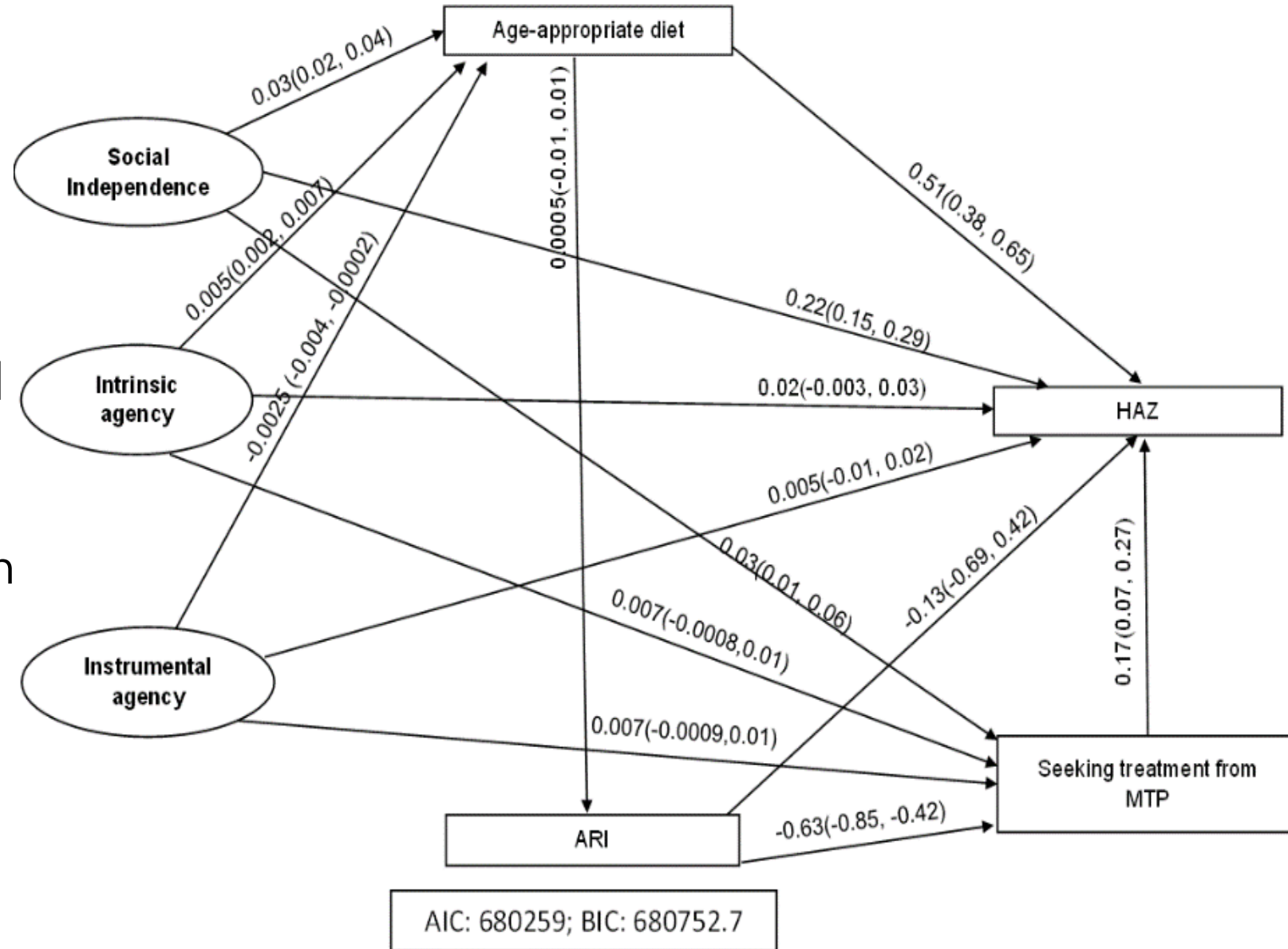
- Survey Based Women's Empowerment Index (SWPER)
- Three domains
  - 1) Social independence
  - 2) Intrinsic agency, and
  - 3) Instrumental agency
- Three domains were constructed by confirmatory factor analysis
- Available 14 variables of DHS data

## Data and methods

- Nutritional status of under-five children was measured by
  - Height-for-age Z score (HAZ)
  - Weight-for-age Z score (WAZ)
  - Weight-for height Z score (WHZ)
- Age-appropriate diet intake, ARI and Medically trained providers were constructed by using definitions of BDHS (2019) report
- Generalized structured equation modeling
- UNICEF conceptual framework for under nutrition (UNICEF, 2013)
- STATA 16

# Results

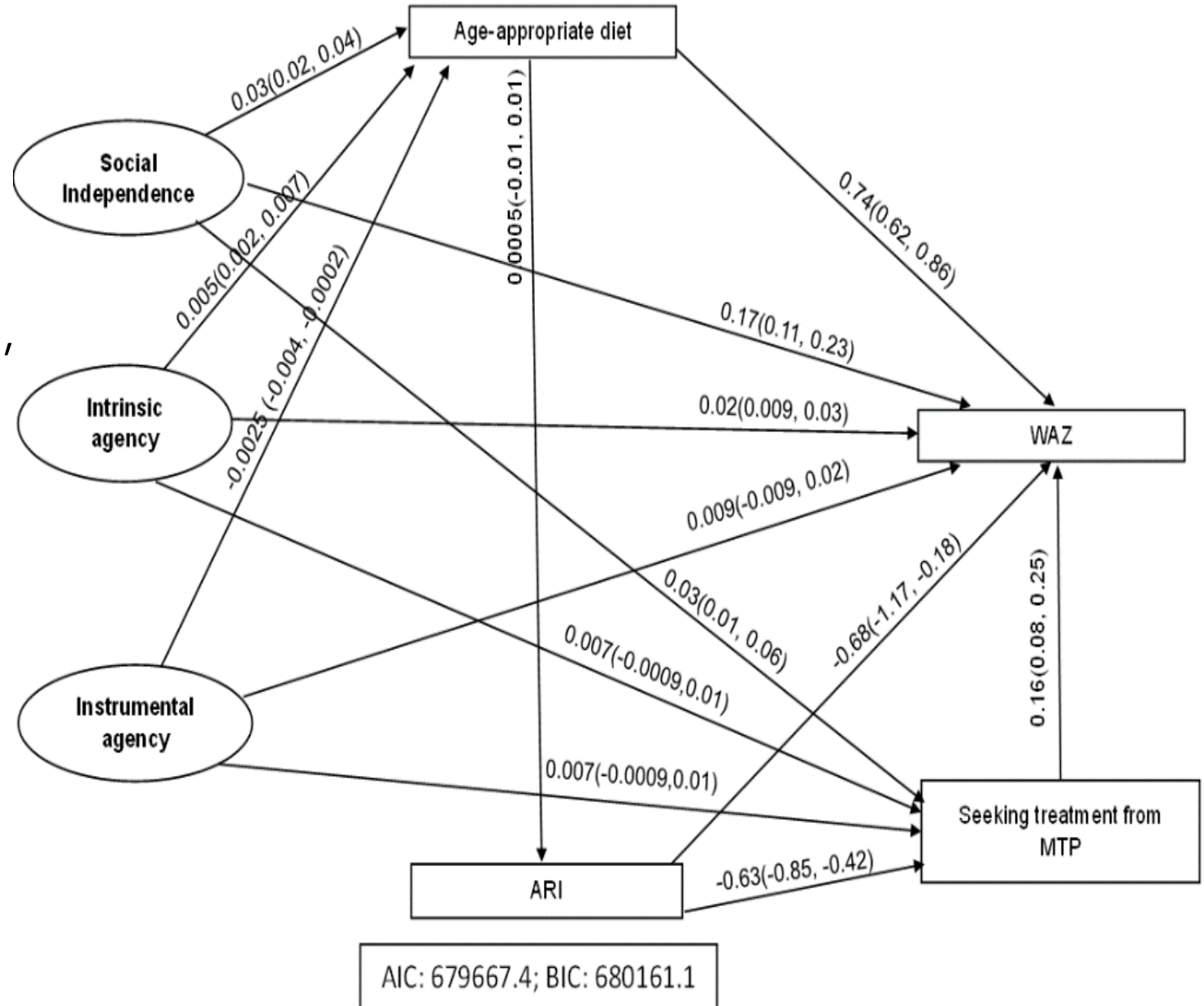
**Figure :** Pathways between women's social independence, intrinsic and instrumental agency and improved Hight-for-Age Z scores of under-five children in Bangladesh





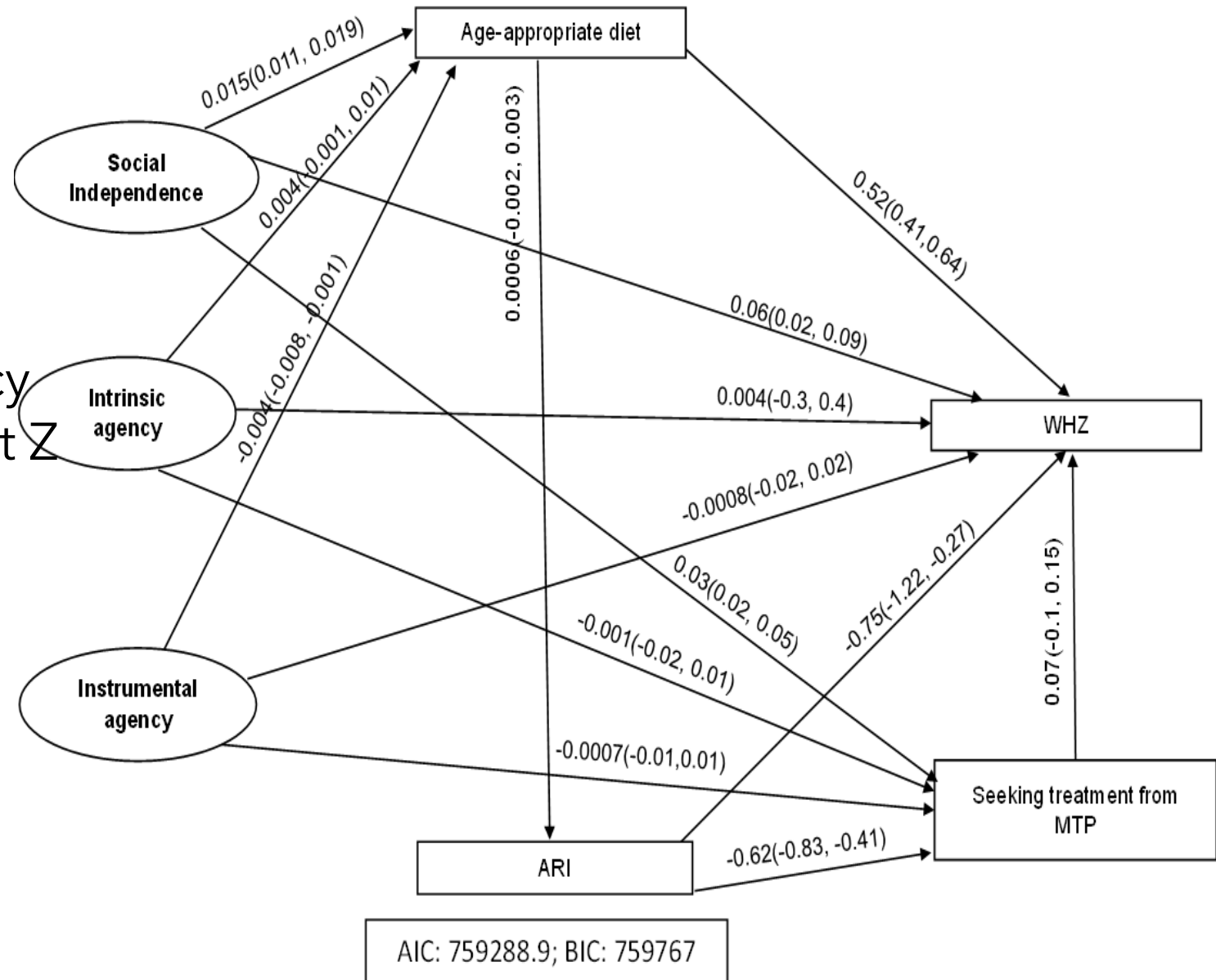
# Results

**Figure :** Pathways between women's social independence, intrinsic and instrumental agency and improved Weight-for-age Z score of under-five children in Bangladesh



# Results

**Figure:** Pathways between women's social independence, intrinsic and instrumental agency and improved Weight-for-height Z score of under-five children in Bangladesh



# Summary Findings

- Social independence had positive effect on HAZ, WAZ and WHZ scores, age-appropriate food consumption and access to healthcare at the onset of ARI
- Intrinsic agency was specifically associated with improved WAZ score and age-appropriate dietary habits
- Instrumental agency effect negatively on age-appropriate food consumption
- Consumption of an age-appropriate diet substantially improve nutritional status of children
- ARI had adverse effect on WAZ and WHZ scores
- Seeking treatment from MTPs was found to improve HAZ and WAZ scores among under-five children

# Conclusions

- Maternal social independence and intrinsic agency enhance the nutritional status, food consumption, and healthcare access of under-five children in Bangladesh
- Scaling up interventions that focus on social independence and intrinsic agency of women

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Thank you!