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Paper: **"Perceptions of the Declining Fertility Rate and Evolving Views on Motherhood: A Comparative Study among University Students in India and Sri Lanka"**

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Peer review:

Reviewer 1: Mondira Dutta
Jawaharlal Nehru University, India

Reviewer 2: Samuel Awoniyi
Solusi University, Zimbabwe

Reviewer 3: Bupinder Zutshi
Jawaharlal Nehru University, India

ESJ *Manuscript Evaluation Form 2025*
This form is designed to summarize the manuscript peer review that you have completed and to ensure that you have considered all appropriate criteria in your review. Your review should provide a clear statement, to the authors and editors, of the modifications necessary before the paper can be published or the specific reasons for rejection.

Please respond within the appointed time so that we can give the authors timely responses and feedback.

NOTE: ESJ promotes peer review procedure based on scientific validity and technical quality of the paper (not perceived the impact). You are also not required to do proofreading of the paper. It could be recommended as part of the revision.
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Reviewer Name: **Prof (Dr) Mondira Dutta**	
University/Country: **J.N.University / New Delhi, INDIA**	
Date Manuscript Received: **20 Aug 2025**	Date Review Report Submitted: **22 Aug 2025**
Manuscript Title: **Perceptions of the Declining Fertility Rate and Evolving Views on Motherhood: A Comparative Study among University Students in India and Sri Lanka**	
ESJ Manuscript Number: **0909/25**	
You agree your name is revealed to the author of the paper: **Yes**	
You approve, your name as a reviewer of this paper, is available in the "review history" of the paper: **Yes** You approve, this review report is available in the "review history" of the paper: **Yes**	

Evaluation Criteria:
Please give each evaluation item a numeric rating on a 5-point scale, along with a thorough explanation for each point rating.

Questions	***Rating Result*** [Poor] **1-5** [Excellent]
1. The title is clear and it is adequate to the content of the article.	**3**
(Please insert your comments) **Too lengthy** **Consider:** Declining Fertility Rate and Motherhood: Perceptions of Students in India and Sri Lanka	
2. The abstract presents objects, methods, and results.	**3**
(Please insert your comments) **Does not highlight the importance of the topic. Needs to set the tone with some secondary sources of information. Sample size and distribution between India and Sri Lanka has not specified a rationale. It would have been better to consider the gender wise perception of the subject rather than being woman centric.**	

3. There are a few grammatical errors and spelling mistakes in this article.	**4**
(Please insert your comments) **Fairly good**	
4. The study methods are explained clearly.	**2**
(Please insert your comments) **The methodology is devoid of a rationale or justification. The qualitative part has not been explained well. There does not seem to be any FGDs held. A table suggesting the two countries sample distribution would make things clearer than mere description.**	
5. The results are clear and do not contain errors.	**2**
(Please insert your comments) **The results need to be presented through graphical representation in addition to tables. At the outset some secondary sources of information should have been presented to compare what the global scenario is between the two countries. After which the primary survey data could have been taken up linking the discussion from micro to macro levels. Diagrammatic representation between the two countries will usher in much more clarity. Case studies should be in boxes and not written in continuation with text. Most of the descriptions ought to be put in the form of diagrams. All tables must be numbered with a title.**	
6. The conclusions or summary are accurate and supported by the content.	**1**
(Please insert your comments) **Conclusions are mostly generic in nature. It can fit into any research in general and nothing is particular to this research. Very general statements and nothing as a deduction of this research.**	
7. The references are comprehensive and appropriate.	**4**
(Please insert your comments) **References seem okay and are presented in the standard acceptable format**	

Overall Recommendation (mark an X with your recommendation) :

Accepted, no revision needed	**-**
Accepted, minor revision needed	**YES**
Return for major revision and resubmission	**-**
Reject	**-**

Comments and Suggestions to the Author(s):
There is no literature review or objectives stated, hence it does not highlight the research gaps. Therefore, the conclusion does not fill in the vacuum of addressing the research gap with interesting facts and figures. As such the paper does not reflect any value addition. The literature review based on secondary sources must be included indicating how this research article is a value addition to the existing literature and facts.

Comments and Suggestions to the Editors Only:
The form must include a column on value addition of the researched paper to the already existing literature on the topic.

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Please respond within the appointed time so that we can give the authors timely responses and feedback.

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Reviewer Name: Prof. Samuel Adebayo Awoniyi	
University/Country: University of Arusha, Tanzania	
Date Manuscript Received: 29/08/25	**Date Review Report Submitted: 04/09/25**
Manuscript Title: Perceptions of the Declining Fertility Rate and Evolving Views on Motherhood: A Comparative Study among University Students in India and Sri Lanka	
ESJ Manuscript Number: 0909/25	
You agree your name is revealed to the author of the paper: YES	
You approve, your name as a reviewer of this paper, is available in the "review history" of the paper: **You approve, this review report is available in the "review history" of the paper:**	

Evaluation Criteria:
Please give each evaluation item a numeric rating on a 5-point scale, along with a thorough explanation for each point rating.

Questions	***Rating Result*** **[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]**
1. The title is clear and it is adequate to the content of the article.	**4**
The title of the paper is clear and adequate.	
2. The abstract presents objects, methods, and results.	**3**
A good abstract should contain the purpose, research design, research methods, population, sample and sampling techniques, instrumentation, validation of the instrument for data collection, data collection methods, methods of data analysis, findings, and recommendations. Some of these are missing.	

3. There are a few grammatical errors and spelling mistakes in this article.	**3**
There are a few grammatical errors, as AI-assisted tools have been used by the researchers to refine language for improved clarity.	
4. The study methods are explained clearly.	**1**
A major weakness in this article lies in the methodology by my evaluation. **The methodology contains a lot of minor details, which water down the section.** **It is not clear how a questionnaire administered through Google Form (online) will be able to discriminate so as to target the sample and the number of participants as described in the methodology. This is not practicable. There seems to be methodological errors that render the results invalid.**	
5. The results are clear and do not contain errors.	**2**
No research objectives or research questions to provide focus, direction, and scope for a study, as well as guide the selection of methodologies, data collection, and data analysis. ***There is no evidence of bivariate statistical techniques as claimed because relationships were not measured.*** ***Table titles are supposed to be on top of the table.*** ***The results end abruptly. There is no section for findings of the study. Without findings, research lacks the substance to contribute meaningful knowledge or inform decisions.***	
6. The conclusions or summary are accurate and supported by the content.	**3**
Conclusion, okay, but not acceptable as how the Google form questionnaire was administered to the target participants was not clear.	
7. The references are comprehensive and appropriate.	**3**
Comprehensive, but consider removing numbering.	

Overall Recommendation (mark an X with your recommendation) :

Accepted, no revision needed	
Accepted, minor revision needed	
Return for major revision and resubmission	
Reject	

Comments and Suggestions to the Author(s):
The methodological errors in the administration of the Google Form (Online Questionnaire) rendered the quantitative results obtained invalid, except if how the participants were targeted is clearly explained. I am personally not comfortable.

Comments and Suggestions to the Editors Only:

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Reviewer Name: Bupinder Zutshi	
University/Country: Retired Professor , Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India	
Date Manuscript Received: 30th August 2025	Date Review Report Submitted: 8th September 2025
Manuscript Title: **"Perceptions of the Declining Fertility Rate and Evolving Views on Motherhood: A Comparative Study among University Students in India and Sri Lanka."**	
ESJ Manuscript Number:	
You agree your name is revealed to the author of the paper: Yes	
You approve, your name as a reviewer of this paper, is available in the "review history" of the paper: You approve, this review report is available in the "review history" of the paper: Yes	

Evaluation Criteria:
Please give each evaluation item a numeric rating on a 5-point scale, along with a thorough explanation for each point rating.

Questions	***Rating Result*** [Poor] **1-5** [Excellent]
1. The title is clear and it is adequate to the content of the article.	**4**
The title of the research paper is appropriate . It adequately represents the contents of the research paper.	
2. The abstract presents objects, methods, and results.	**4**
The abstract reflects the context, objectives and findings clearly.	
3. There are a few grammatical errors and spelling mistakes in this article.	**4**
Generally clear, but some sentences are overly long. Shortening for conciseness will improve readability. Occasional typographical inconsistencies (spacing, decimal alignment) should be fixed.	

4. The study methods are explained clearly.	**4**
Appropriate research methods have been applied to seek answers for the objectives. Sampling description is detailed, but justification for using a **judgmental sample** in Sri Lanka (instead of random or stratified) should be explained. Differences in **sample size (300 vs. 234)** may affect comparability—this needs acknowledgement. Tables are informative but occasionally cluttered; percentages should be harmonized (some show decimals, others don't).	
5. The results are clear and do not contain errors.	**4**
The paper is well-written, relevant, and timely, addressing fertility decline and changing motherhood perceptions in South Asia. It makes a strong contribution to cross-cultural sociology and gender studies. The comparative design (Sri Lanka vs. India) is original and valuable. The study reflects following aspects 1. **Topical Relevance** – Fertility decline and shifting gender roles are pressing demographic and policy concerns in South Asia. The study connects well to global debates. 2. **Comparative Dimension** – India and Sri Lanka are seldom directly compared in this context, adding novelty. 3. **Mixed Methods** – Combining surveys, interviews, and focus groups strengthens validity. 4. **Clear Findings** – Tables are well-structured and support interpretations. 5. **Balanced Discussion** – Links findings to global scholarship (e.g., Gillespie, Park) while grounding them in local contexts. 6. **Policy Implications** – Recommendations (childcare, paternal leave, subsidies) are practical and aligned with international demographic policy discourse.	
6. The conclusions or summary are accurate and supported by the content.	**4**
Conclusion or summary is well written. It reflects a strong contribution to cross-cultural sociology and gender studies. The comparative design (Sri Lanka vs. India) is original and valuable.	
7. The references are comprehensive and appropriate.	**4**
Verify consistency of citation style (APA-like, but minor formatting issues appear).	

Overall Recommendation (mark an X with your recommendation) :

Accepted, no revision needed	**X**
Accepted, minor revision needed	
Return for major revision and resubmission	
Reject	

Comments and Suggestions to the Author(s):

Figures or graphs (bar charts/pie charts) would improve accessibility for non-technical readers. Statistical treatment is mostly descriptive. Consider reporting **tests of significance (Chi-square, t-tests, ANOVA)** where appropriate. Multivariate analysis (e.g., logistic regression) could strengthen claims about discipline/country differences.

While global literature is referenced, the **policy discussion remains general**. More country-specific insights (e.g., Sri Lanka's long history of low fertility vs. India's regional variation)

would improve depth. Gender norms and intersectionality (class, caste, rural–urban differences) could be further explored.