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Phenomengraphy of Perceived Social Support in Women Heads of Households

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| Article Info	ABSTRACT
	Introduction At this time, there is a worldwide rise in the proportion of female household heads, including in Iran, and it is universally acknowledged that they constitute a vulnerable demographic that requires assistance. Frequently offered assistance is that of relatives, friends, and quasi-governmental and governmental organizations. However, it appears that the perception of these supports by the female heads of household is more significant. The objective of this research endeavor was to examine the perspectives of the aforementioned women regarding social support. **Methodology** This study employed the phenomenological method to select 21 participants from among the female heads of households residing in Mashhad city in the autumn of 1400. The selection process was targeted and maximum distribution was maintained until theoretical saturation was achieved. The participants then shared their experiences with these resources in the course of a semi-structured interview. Following the conclusion of the interview phase, each narrative was meticulously coded and implemented to furnish the essential context for the purposes of comparison, differentiation, and classification. Once more, an assessment was conducted to determine whether the extracted classes possess adequate descriptive capability and significance for the data. The process of modification and revision continued until it seemed that the modified classes were compatible with the interview data. Then the above classes were examined with the objective of drawing the result space. **Results** The results indicate that women who are the heads of households receive support from three primary sources: family, friends, and governmental and semi-governmental institutions. These institutions offer various forms of assistance, including financial, emotional, instrumental, and informational support, contingent upon the recipient's proximity.
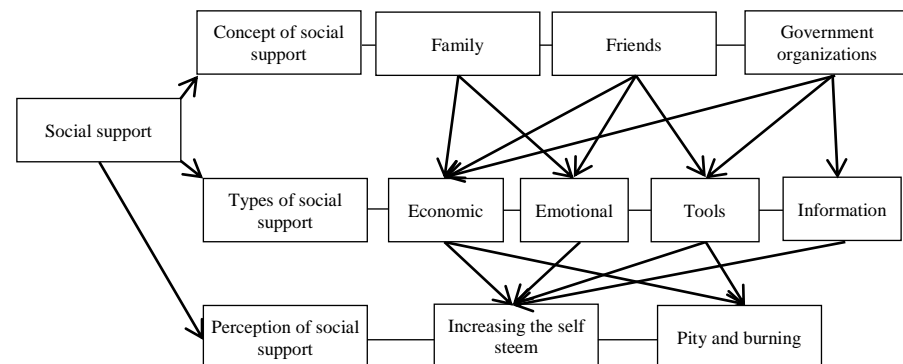
Figure 1. Conceptual classes of perception of social support in female heads of household

Although the family provides them with financial and emotional assistance, it disapproves of their public presence. Friends provide these women with a broader spectrum of assistance, encompassing not only financial but also practical, vocational, emotional, and spiritual support. Additionally, government departments and non-governmental organizations provide empowerment courses to aid in the development of their professional

abilities, in addition to providing economic aid. This is the case despite the fact that the economic aid provided by these institutions, if not aligned with the goal of alleviating poverty, perpetuates the cycle of poverty and debt for a significant number of these women. Due to their apprehension that receiving assistance from strangers would engender suspicion, the respondents avoided any potentially harmful source of support. Additionally, atmosphere-borne toxicity, mistrust, and instability have impacted the lives of the majority of them. The majority of female heads of household prioritized seeking emotional support from family and friends; however, a subset of them also sought assistance from official institutions in the form of financial assistance. However, due to the cultural repercussions of widowhood, divorce, or celibacy, the majority of their interactions are with women. Furthermore, nearly all of them lack trust in males and, in the majority of cases, prefer temporary presence and "living apart" to fulfill their needs. Hence, the aforementioned concerns regarding the toxicity, instability, and lack of trustworthiness of their relationships, particularly those involving individuals of the opposite sex, undermine their appeal for assistance from the three aforementioned sources—family, friends, and government institutions—and contribute to the emergence of conflicting perspectives regarding the efficacy of said support systems.

The Perceptions of receiving support are spanned by the two primary axes of "attempting to distance" and "reevaluating relationships." As a result of a dearth of confidence, certain individuals attempt to isolate themselves from others and restrict their communication in this troubled environment. Conversely, others have initiated a reevaluation of how they obtain social support, disregarding the opinions and judgments of those in their vicinity in favor of fulfilling their own needs. Conversely, the majority of female household chiefs have shifted their connections to online communities. However, as time passes, they begin to express interest in material, informational, and pecuniary resources. Additionally, at the onset of their separation, divorced women require more emotional support than any other type; in contrast, single women prioritize financial, practical, informational, and ultimately emotional independence.

The findings indicated that women who assume the role of household heads are subject to societal expectations that establish a new identity for them; consequently, they establish their interactions with society within a unique framework from which they generally gain nothing. Among these are the emotions of estrangement and rejection, pity, alienation, insecurity, and unease. Within this particular milieu, these women endeavor to devise diverse resolutions, including concealing their guardianship, reuniting with their paternal family and establishing fresh connections, manipulating social interactions to reestablish their sense of self, and surmounting the psychological distress and anxiety induced by guardianship. This personal experience, while simultaneously isolating and rejecting individuals from their group, compels them to broaden the scope of their social connections in order to maintain financial stability and form fresh relationships beyond their group.

Conclusion

Consequentially, social class influences access to resources and opportunities and can contribute to a variety of inequalities (Torabi et al., 2016); thus, social class membership is an inextricable component of an individual's identity and, consequently, to a certain extent, influences their circumstances. Social class has a profound effect on the psychological system, influencing how an individual perceives themselves and others. The examination of women chiefs of household's perceptions of their social class and the accompanying emotions appears to have been omitted from discussions and literature ever since those theories and publications were first developed. Is. Nevertheless, an analysis of social class is crucial due to the fact that it contributes to inequality. His new relationships include approaching his family, friends, official and unofficial institutions, and redefining the individuals he formerly congregated with. Kaufman (2015) argues that social relations are increasingly shifting towards an artificial realm. As a result, certain women engage in activities in cyberspace, which presents them with structural contradictions similar to those in the physical world. The findings from the accounts provided by female heads of household regarding social support indicate that they are predominantly assisted by their family members and acquaintances. This result provides support for Habermas's assertion that the rationality of the live world (informal groups) should be distinguished from that of the social system (official body).