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The effect of social support and economic empowerment of women on family social development with the mediating role of life satisfaction

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Abstract

The aim of this study is "The effect of social support and economic empowerment of women on family social development with the mediating role of life satisfaction". This research is descriptive-survey and applicable; and in terms of relationships between variables, it is correlational. Henceforth, a statistical population consisting of women working in agricultural and horticultural economic cooperatives in the city of Rudbar in a sample of 130 people were studied by random method. Data collection was carried out using a questionnaire whose validity was confirmed by experts and its reliability by Cronbach's alpha coefficient. SmartPLS3 statistical software was used to analyze data and test hypotheses. The findings of this study show that women's economic empowerment has a positive and significant effect on social development. However, the results showed that the significance level of the social support variable at the 95% confidence level is greater than 0.05, but considering that this value is close to 0.05, it can be said that social support for women at the 90% confidence level has an impact on social development. The results of the study further showed that life satisfaction has a mediating role in the relationship between social support for women and social development, as well as women's economic empowerment and social development.

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Extended Abstract

Introduction

In recent decades, the issue of social development has expanded from the macro level of society to the family institution and even its individual actors. One of the central issues in the discussion of social development is paying attention to the role and position of women in the process of improving the social status of families and society as a whole. Women, as half of the human body, not only play a key role in creating and maintaining family ties, but are also considered to be the main role-makers in the process of socialization of new generations. For this reason, empowering and supporting women, especially in the social and economic dimensions, is considered the key to the comprehensive development of the family and, on a larger scale, of society (Maubrigades, 2017).

Social development of the family can be understood as comprehensive growth in the areas of interpersonal relationships, social participation, promotion of social capital and improvement of general welfare indicators, in which women play a major role as agents of change. However, achieving sustainable social development in the family is possible when women, in addition to enjoying the necessary social support, also find the opportunity to actively and effectively participate in the economic arena. It is obvious that the presence of women in economic and social activities requires support from the family, society and the government. This support can be formed in the form of emotional, informational and financial relationships between the family and women, or the provision of job, educational and professional opportunities by social institutions (Hechavarria et al., 2019).

Meanwhile, one of the most important factors in the process of social development is the level of life satisfaction of individuals, especially women. Life satisfaction is not only a reflection of a sense of happiness and personal security, but can also strengthen women's motivation to play a social and economic role. In other words, having social support and economic opportunities, beyond improving the individual's economic and social status, leads to improving the quality of life and increasing satisfaction with daily life, which in turn has an effective impact on the dynamics of the family and society (Waseem et al., 2020).

Considering these dimensions, this article seeks to examine the impact of social support and women's economic empowerment on social development, emphasizing the mediating role of life satisfaction. In order to clarify the dimensions and importance of the issue, it is further analyzed in three main axes: the role of social support in women's social development, economic empowerment, and finally the role of life satisfaction in this process.

Theoretical foundations of the research

Social support and social development of women

For women, social support plays a fundamental role in improving their social status, increasing their social participation and individual empowerment. On one hand, women feel more valuable and psychologically secure by receiving emotional and psychological support from their family and society, and are more motivated to be more active in social arenas. On the other hand, social support strengthens women's social network and provides a suitable platform for exchanging experiences, collective learning and effective participation in society (Mehdi et al., 2022).

Numerous studies have shown that women who enjoy greater social support experience a higher level of mental health, self-confidence and life satisfaction; and are more successful in dealing with life's challenges and crises. This support also enables women to participate more widely in social, professional and voluntary activities and makes the family institution more dynamic and efficient. As a result, increasing social support for women can be considered one

of the most important solutions for sustainable social development and improving the human capital of society (Kiani et al., 2018).

Economic empowerment and social development of women

Economic empowerment of women not only leads to improving the level of family well-being, but also contributes to sustainable social development. Women who benefit from appropriate economic opportunities are able to play a more active role in managing family resources, raising children, health programs, and education. Also, women's economic independence reduces their vulnerability to poverty, domestic violence and discrimination and increases the resilience of the family in adverse conditions (Eggers del Camp & Steinert, 2022).

Based on the findings of social and economic studies, societies that have given importance to women's economic empowerment have witnessed higher human development indicators, reduced poverty rates, increased food security, improved children's education, and even increased civic and political participation. These findings show that, beyond individual benefits, investing in women's economic empowerment has widespread effects on the progress of the family and society, and is considered one of the main pillars of social development and gender equality (Jabeen et al., 2020).

The role of life satisfaction in women's social development

As a vital component of psychological well-being, life satisfaction plays a key role in the social development process of women and families. Life satisfaction is influenced by several factors, including economic status, level of social support, quality of family relationships, and individual factors. Women with a high level of life satisfaction have more motivation and energy to actively participate in society, and the quality of their relationships in the family is significantly higher (Waseem et al., 2020).

Studies show that meeting women's psychological and social needs, increasing their sense of self-efficacy and worth, and improving their level of well-being and psychological security are all outcomes and achievements of life satisfaction for women. Life satisfaction not only affects women's vitality, hope, and mental health, but also, as a mediating variable, doubles the effect of social support and economic empowerment on women's social development; meaning that even if a woman has more social support and economic empowerment; but overall life satisfaction is low, the positive effects of these factors are less evident (Lombardo et al., 2018).

Overall, increasing women's life satisfaction can be the starting point for positive changes in the family and society; because satisfied and happy women can perform much better in their maternal, spousal, professional, and social roles, and create a platform for improving the quality of life of all family members and improving the social capital of their surrounding society (Waseem et al., 2020).

Research Method

This research is applicable in terms of its purpose, and descriptive-survey in terms of its research implementation method. The statistical population of the research consists of women working in agricultural and horticultural economic cooperatives in the city of Rudbar, from which a sample of 130 people was selected by stratified random method and a research questionnaire was distributed among them. The research data collection tool was a researcher-made questionnaire. In this research, structural equation modeling with the help of partial least squares and PLS software was used to examine the hypothesis testing and model accuracy. PLS is a variance-based approach that requires fewer conditions compared to

similar structural equation techniques such as LISREL and EMON, and its main advantage is that it requires fewer samples compared to LISREL modeling.

Research findings

Modeling in PLS is done in two stages. In the first stage, the measurement model should be examined through reliability and validity analyses, and in the second stage, the structural model is analyzed by estimating the path between variables and determining the model fit indices. According to the results obtained from the path coefficient (indicating the intensity and type of relationship between two latent variables) and the t-statistic, women's economic empowerment has a positive and significant effect on social development. However, the results showed that the significance level of the social support variable at the 95% confidence level is greater than 0.05, but given that this value is close to 0.05, it can be said that social support for women is effective at the 90% confidence level on social development. The results of the study further showed that life satisfaction has a mediating role in the relationship between social support for women and social development, as well as women's economic empowerment and social development.

Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of the present study clearly indicate the importance of women's economic empowerment in promoting the social development of the family. Based on data analysis, the path coefficient obtained was positive and significant, and the t-statistic also confirmed this significance. This means that any increase in the level of women's economic empowerment directly affects the social aspects of family life. These results are in line with the studies of Waseem et al. (2020), Rezaei et al. (2021), and Mikaeili et al. (2021).

Women's economic empowerment increases women's financial independence, power of choice, and role-playing in the family and society. This issue has also been repeated in the research literature; according to the theory of social development, whenever women can actively participate in economic processes, the results will be an improvement in the family's welfare; an increase in the level of social interactions; an improvement in the education of children; and even a reduction in social harms. In the local community of Rudbar, where a major part of women's economic activity is devoted to household chores, gardening, and agriculture; strengthening this sector can lead to an improvement in the living standards of the entire family. Women who have the necessary economic support and facilities are far more empowered and play their role in decision-making and social interactions with greater self-confidence.

The research findings showed that the effect of women's social support on family social development, although far from the significance threshold at the 95% confidence level, is significant at the 90% level. This indicates that social support still plays a key role, but the intensity of this role may not be as strong as economic empowerment. Social support - whether provided by family, friends, social institutions, cooperatives, and even government agencies - can boost women's morale and support them in dealing with difficulties and challenges. Social support provides a network of interactions and connections that women can rely on in different situations. However, the intensity of this support impact will be limited and is not sufficient and effective in practical and economic terms if it remains solely emotional and spiritual.

One of the most important findings of the research was the revealing of the mediating role of life satisfaction in the relationships between the variables. Life satisfaction is a comprehensive concept that strengthens women's feelings of happiness, psychological peace, and hope for the future. The results showed that when women simultaneously enjoy social support and play an

active role in the economic arena, their level of life satisfaction increases, and this satisfaction is an important factor in improving the level of family social interactions and promoting social development.

The mediating effect of life satisfaction means that efforts for economic empowerment and social support have an effective and durable impact on family social development when women feel satisfied and calm in general with life. This shows that development approaches should be comprehensive and not focus solely on one economic or social aspect.