

Status Inconsistency of Women: A Study in Hamadan, Iran

Hamidreza Babaei¹, Amir Hossein Zomorrodian¹, Sarjit S. Gill¹, Leila Falahati²

¹ Department of Social & Development Science, Faculty of Human Ecology, University Putra Malaysia

² Department of Resource Management and Consumer Studies, Faculty of Human Ecology, University Putra Malaysia

babaei1973@gmail.com

Abstract: This research investigates the status inconsistency among women in Hamadan province, Iran. The study was carried out in eight cities and 32 villages. Questionnaire was applied to collect data from 767 women from urban areas and 786 women from rural area. Data analysis was done by using SPSS software and multi-variable regressions. The results show considerable status inconsistency among women in Hamadan. In addition, with decreasing social status of women here, the status inconsistency increases and the rate of status inconsistency in the rural area was higher than the urban area.

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1 Introduction

Status inconsistency is a concept that is linked with modern society and its subsequent offshoots such as individualism, democracy, separation, distinction and social mobility (Chelbi, 1996; Slomczynski, 1989; Tamin, 1994). In the case of status inconsistency, people and groups suffer from stress and pressures that lead them to abnormal reactions through different attitudes and behavioral forms (Brown, Cretser, & Lasswell, 1988). Imbalance between various aspects of backgrounds, including wealth, power, prestige and knowledge, when followed by growth and development such as urbanism and education, brings along situations such as higher expectations and demands that could not be fulfilled in many societies. Furthermore, denying those claims would affect the societies and individuals in undesirable ways. This lack of conformity and agreement might be a source of negative attitudes for people and leads to social problems such as depression, anxiety and disappointment.

Studies carried out in Iran on status inconsistency determined that this social problem dramatically affects the people of Iran, especially youngsters. Moghaddas (1994) revealed that although job mobility is usually the result of education and passing of different courses and makes it possible to have social mobility, it may not be accompanied by economic achievements. It has been specified that despite educational or even job mobility, people still cannot attain a sound economic position, and the result is imbalance between their desires and their

socio-economic status (Chelbi & Azadeh, 2000; Moghaddas, 1994).

1.1 Status Inconsistency

Status inconsistency has its roots in Max Weber's theory of multi fundamentals in social inequality (Berger, Norman, Balkwell, & Smith, 1992). Lenski (1954) employed the concept of status inconsistency for the first time. Whitt (1983) defined status inconsistency, as the simultaneous occupancy by the individual of unequal ranks in two or more status hierarchies. Goffman (1957) argued that there has been a relationship between status inconsistency and intention to change in power distribution. Rush (1967) found the same relationship between status inconsistency and political views. Treiman (1966) expressed that there was no relationship between this concept and prejudgment with control of social status of respondents. On the other hand, Geschwender (1967) obtained some results that indicate a link between status inconsistency and some of the attitudes and prejudgments (Brown, et al., 1988).

In primary studies on these phenomena, the undesirable psychological results were more emphasized (Caston, 1989; Haus, 1983). Slomczynski (1989) found a decrease in social inequalities and increase in flexible and tolerating attitudes in situations of status inconsistency. Krueger (1989) defines increase in new jobs, independent staff, innovation and creativity of entrepreneurial managers with status inconsistency, and De-Graaf (1991) found status inconsistency to be present when high consumption of cultural products is

accompanied by lower consumption of physical goods to the Under-rewarded people, i.e., people with high education and low income.

In recent studies about status inconsistency, dimensions such as physical capital, job prestige and education find more importance. In addition to materialistic and prestige values, new theories have stressed cultural capital and organizational power, which are among important dimensions in establishing social positions and are being used in determining individuals' background along with other dimensions and aspects (Bourdieu, 1984; Chelbi & Azadeh, 2000; Coleman, 1988).

Some researchers such as Hornung (1980) studied status inconsistency with respect to the mediate variables such as conflicts in expectations and also confusion. His study implies that by using regression analysis models and controlling social status, the status inconsistency manifests many psychological pressures.

Kim (2000) employed status inconsistency in some studies on assigned status, typically when members of minority groups gain some advantages over members of a dominant group. Study on another type of status inconsistency revealed lower migration rates for couples in which the wife's education is higher than the husband's education than for couples in which the wife's education is equal to or lower than the husband's education (Lee, Toney, & Berry, 2009). Another research has shown that individuals with status incongruence, such as a mismatch between educational and occupational attainment, experience overall poorer health (House, 2001; Smith & Frank, 2005).

1.2 Socio-economic Status

Socio-economic status has some dimensions that show the amount of access to the valuable four resources: organizational capital, physical capital, cultural capital and social prestige (Chelbi, 1996; Chelbi & Azadeh, 2000).

From this point of view, physical capital is the name given to physical wealth, accessible financial resources and income of a certain position. Organizational capital relies on the organizational power of the person, control of power, supervision and decision making for others. Prestige shows social obligations and degree of influence on the minds of society members, and cultural capital shows the amount of access to knowledge resources, particularly education.

1.3 Self-image, Expectations and Predictions

Self-image is people's perception of their socio-economic status, which is not necessarily the same as their real socio-economic status (Chelbi,

1996; Chelbi & Azadeh, 2000). Expectation is considered as what people anticipate to gain access in life, in other words, the socio-economic status that they wanted to achieve (Chelbi, 1996; Chelbi & Azadeh, 2000). Prediction refers to the socio-economic status that people think they can achieve, or will achieve in the future. The difference between Expectation and Prediction is narrow but very important. While Expectation is the socio-economic status that people think is sufficient and merited by them, Prediction is about socio-economic status that they think they will achieve at some time in the future.

2 Research Hypotheses

For delivering a complete understanding of research results, we categorized research hypotheses into two main groups.

Hypotheses 1: aims to determine relationships between self-image, expectation, prediction and socio-economic status among women of Hamadan province.

Hypothesis 1a: There is a relationship between self-image of women of Hamadan province and their socio-economic status.

Hypothesis 1b: There is a relationship between expectation of women of Hamadan province and their socio-economic status.

Hypothesis 1c: There is a relationship between prediction of women of Hamadan Province and their socio economic status.

Hypothesis 2: aims to determine relationships between socio-economic status, self-image, expectation and prediction of women of Hamadan provenance and their status inconsistency.

Hypothesis 2a: There is a relationship between socio-economic status of women of Hamadan provenance and their status inconsistency.

Hypothesis 2b: There is a relationship between self-image of women of Hamadan provenance and their status inconsistency.

Hypothesis 2c: There is a relationship between expectation of women of Hamadan provenance and their status inconsistency.

Hypothesis 2d: There is a relationship between prediction of women of Hamadan provenance and their status inconsistency.

3 Methodology

The methodology adopted for the research is survey and data collection through questionnaires and interviews. The population subject of the research consisted of women between 20 to 55 years old from Hamadan province. Based on the last overall census

in Iran, the female population in Hamadan province is 828,734 and 317,854 women out of this number are in the 20-55 age bracket. With respect to the dispersion of this population in the cities, villages and in the different provinces, the Cochran's formula was used and the size of samples determined to be 1553.

To cover the entire province, we used the multi-stage cluster sampling, and ultimately we took eight cities in the province as the sample for urban regions. To select villages, with respect to the share of each city, we selected the sample populations from four villages by using the systematic random method. This research was conducted in 2008, and we analyzed the data by SPSS software and multi-variable regressions.

4 Results

Table 1 contains the descriptive statistics for the variables in the model. These simple descriptive statistics revealed some important findings. The table shows that 55 percent of urban women are in a very low level of socio-economic status; 33.4 percent are in low level, 5.3 percent are in high level, and 4.4 percent are in average level and only 1.8 percent of them are at top level.

In rural districts, 77.1 percent of women (highest frequency) are in very low socio-economic status, 21.2 percent of them are in low level, 1.4 percent are in average level, 0.1 percent in high level and only 0.1 percent in top socio-economic status.

In general, Table 1 shows low level of socio-economic status for women both in rural and urban districts of Hamadan province. Only 1.65 percent of urban women are in higher level in socio-economic status than rural women.

Based on results depicted in Table 1, 39.9 percent of urban women in Hamadan province assess their self-image of socio-economic status as average, 35.7 percent assess their status as low and 4.3 percent as very low. On the other hand, only 19.2 percent assess their status as high and 0.9 percent as very high. This situation was more pronounced among rural women; 48.2 percent (highest frequency) assess their socio-economic status as low. Among them, 11.3 percent assess their socio-economic status as very low level. In addition, 29.9 percent of these women assess their self-image of socio-economic status as average, 10.2 percent as high and only 0.4 percent assess their status as very high. In general, 42 percent of urban and rural women assess their socio-economic status as low, 34.8 percent as average and 14.6 percent as high level. Also 7.9 percent think they are in very low position and 0.6 percent assessed their status as very high.

Moreover, Table 1 showed 56.7 percent of urban women of Hamadan province had high expectation of their potential socio-economic status and 22.6 percent expected to be in average level. The results become significant when it becomes clear that only 1.6 percent of the women population expected to be in low level and about 0.1 percent expected to be in very low socio-economic status level. On the other hand, 19 percent of these women expected to be in very high level of socio-economic status. In the rural areas, 58 percent of women have high expectation about their socio-economic status. In addition, 15.5 percent expect to be in very high socio-economic status. Results also show that 25.4 percent expect to have average socio-economic status, 0.9 percent fell in the low category and 0.1 percent in the very low category.

Result of prediction show that 60 percent of urban women predicted their socio-economic status in future as high and 18.8 percent as very high level. Also 9.8 percent of these women predicted their socio-economic status as average, 10.4 percent as low and only 1 (one) percent as very low level. In rural areas, 51.9 percent of women predicted their socio-economic status to be high and 21.2 predicted they would have a very high economic status in the future. Results also show that 15.9 percent predicted their socio-economic status as average, 9.4 percent as low and 1.5 as very low in the future.

In this research, we used the "criteria variance" and "deviation of different capitals" to assess status inconsistency. The value zero to fifty-hundredth shows low status inconsistency, fifty one-hundredth to ninety nine-hundredth denotes average status inconsistency and one and above is considered as high status inconsistency.

With respect to the relative distribution of status inconsistency, it is clear that almost seventy percent of the sample population had high status inconsistency and only about twenty percent were in a position of low status inconsistency. In addition, the average rate of status inconsistency among the women of Hamadan Province was 2.50, showing relatively high status inconsistencies; this number was 2.64 in urban areas and 2.36 in rural areas, showing higher status inconsistency in urban women.

We tested the first group of hypotheses to determine the relationship between the factors of Self-image, Expectation, Prediction and Socio-economic status. In order to achieve this, we employed the Pearson r correlation coefficient between the variables. The Pearson correlation proved the existence of relationship between Self-image ($M=2.58$, $SD=.8555$), Expectation ($M=3.90$, $SD=.681$) and Prediction ($M=3.83$, $SD=0.9026$) with Socio-economic status ($M=1.45$, $SD=0.7642$).

As depicted in Table 3, relationships between Self-image ($r = 0.540$, $N=1553$, $p < 0.01$), Expectation ($r = 0.646$, $N=1553$, $p < 0.01$) and Prediction ($r = -0.467$, $N=1553$, $p < 0.01$) with Socio-economic status do exist. Findings showed that there was a significant relationship between three dimensions and socio-economic status and correlation analysis showed that expectation has the strongest relationship with socio-economic status.

In addition, Pearson Correlation shows that there is a significant relationship between three dimensions (Self-image, Expectation, Prediction) and Socio-economic status ($R^2 = 0.559$, $F(3, 1549) = 653.6$, $P = .000$). An R-squared value of .558 implied that the three aforementioned predictors explain around 56% of variance/variation in the socio-economic status.

The ANOVA model summary in Table 5 provides an analysis of variance for regression. The significant F value, [$F(3, 1549) = 168.79$, $P < 0.001$] indicates that a significant relationship exists between the weighted liner composite of the independent variables and the dependent variable.

For the first independent variable (Self-image), the test was statistically significant ($t = 23.32$, $Beta = 0.692$; $p = 0.001$). This suggested Self-image was the significant predictor of socio-economic status. For the second independent variable (Expectation), the test was statistically significant ($t = 7.47$, $Beta = 0.352$; $p = .000$) and Expectation is the significant predictor of socio-economic status. For the third independent variable (Prediction), the test was statistically significant ($t = -8.89$, $Beta = -.242$; $p = .000$). This suggested Prediction was the significant predictor of socio-economic status. This Prediction variable had a negative significant relationship with the dependent variable.

As depicted in Table 6, the largest beta coefficient belonged to the Self-image dimension ($\beta = 0.692$). This means that this variable makes the strongest unique contribution to explaining the socio-economic status. The Beta value for "Expectation" is the second highest (0.352), and the lowest Beta value is for "Prediction" (-0.242). The results showed that the hypotheses 1a, 1b, 1c were supported and the estimated equation for analysis presented as:

$$Y (\text{Socio-economic status}) = -0.466 + 0.692 (\text{Self-image}) X_1 + 0.352 (\text{Expectation}) X_2 - 0.242 (\text{Prediction})$$

We tested hypotheses 2a, 2b, 2c, and 2d with Pearson r correlation coefficient for the variables. As depicted in Table 7, relationships exist between self-image ($r = 0.287$, $N=1553$, $p < 0.01$), Expectation ($r = 0.329$, $N=1553$, $p < 0.01$), Prediction ($r = 0.283$, $N=1553$, $p < 0.01$) and Socio-economic status ($r = 0.123$, $N=1553$, $p < 0.01$) with status inconsistency. Correlation analysis showed that the

Expectation has the strongest linear relationship among variables.

The regression analysis indicated a significant relationship between four dimensions (Self-image, Expectation, Prediction, Socio-economic Status) and Status Inconsistency ($R^2 = 0.129$, $F(4, 1548) = 57.507$, $P = .000$). R^2 value of .127 implies that the four aforementioned predictors explain around 13% of variance/variation in the socio-economic status.

The ANOVA table [$F(4, 1548) = 32.99$, $P < .001$] indicates that a significant relationship exists between the weighted liner composite of the independent variables and the dependent variable.

Based on data presented in Table 10, Beta of Self-image was statistically significant ($t = 3.883$, $Beta = 0.188$; $p = 0.001$) with status inconsistency. For the second independent variable (Expectation), the test also was statistically significant ($t = 6.113$, $Beta = 0.295$; $p = .000$) and this suggested Expectation was the significant predictor of status inconsistency. However, the third independent variable was not a significant predictor ($t = 0.326$, $Beta = 0.013$; $p = 0.745$) of status inconsistency. For the fourth independent variable (Socio-economic status), the test was statistically significant ($t = -5.772$, $Beta = -0.206$; $p = .000$) and Socio-economic status was the predictor (with negative effect) of status inconsistency.

By analyzing the result of the research, we proved that the hypotheses 2a, 2b, and 2d were supported but 2c was not supported and estimated equation for analysis is:

$$Y (\text{Inconsistency}) = 0.945 + 0.188 (\text{Self-image}) X_1 + 0.295 (\text{Expectation}) X_2 + 0.013 (\text{Prediction}) - 0.219 (\text{Socio-economic status})$$

Discussion and Recommendation

Regarding the two obtained equation and significant relationships, we can present the final linear regression model for status inconsistency of women in Hamadan province as follows;

As the Figure 1 makes clear, Expectation had the highest influence on status inconsistency while Self-image had the strongest relationship with Socio-economic status. Another important finding is the significant relationship between Prediction, Expectation and Self-image. An interesting point is Prediction and Self-image had a negative relationship with each other. Finally, it is important to note that Socio-economic status has the lowest relationship with status inconsistency. Absence of adaption between different dimensions of the Socio-economic status such as wealth, power, dignity and knowledge caused status inconsistency and conflict between the Self-image and Prediction and Expectation of socio-economic status of people. The results of this research support other findings of other studies about roots and dimensions of status inconsistency (Brown,

et al., 1988; Chelbi & Azadeh, 2000; Moghaddas, 1994; Tamin, 1994; Treiman, 1966).

Results of the research also showed that we should consider status inconsistency as a real threat and crisis among women in Hamadan province. The percentage of the people with high status inconsistency is more than 70 percent, which shows the severity of this social problem. We believe adopting mechanisms for balancing between psychological factors of status; most importantly Expectation, and Socio-economic status, could be a helpful way to overcome this social problem. The simplest way to achieve this is to provide a situation of fair and equal chances for everyone to pursue their desire and expectations.

Fair distribution of wealth, countering the discrimination against women, and increasing the level of the power and dignity of women are considered as the most important solutions for this social problem. This effort should be doubled when in the case of women in rural areas, because the severity of the problem in these areas is much higher than the cities.

Corresponding Author:

Dr. Sarjit S. Gill
Department of Social & Development Science,
Faculty of Human Ecology, University Putra
Malaysia
E-mail: sarjit@putra.upm.edu.my

Table 1, Descriptive Statistics of Variables

Community Items	Urban		Rural		Total	
	Fi ¹	%	Fi	%	Fi	%
Socio-Economic Status						
Very low	422	55.0	606	77.1	1028	66.2
Low	256	33.4	167	21.2	423	27.2
Average	34	4.4	11	1.4	45	2.9
High	41	5.3	1	.1	42	2.7
Very high	14	1.8	1	.1	15	1.0
Self-image						
Very low	33	4.3	89	11.3	122	7.9
Low	274	35.7	379	48.2	653	42.0
Average	306	39.9	235	29.9	541	34.8
High	147	19.2	80	10.2	227	14.6
Very high	7	.9	3	.4	10	.6
Expectation						
Very low	1	.1	1	.1	2	.1
Low	12	1.6	7	.9	19	1.2
Average	173	22.6	200	25.4	373	24.0
High	435	56.7	456	58.0	891	57.4
Very high	146	19.0	122	15.5	268	17.3
Prediction						
Very low	8	1.0	12	1.5	20	1.3
Low	80	10.4	74	9.4	154	9.9
Average	75	9.8	125	15.9	200	12.9
High	460	60.0	408	51.9	868	55.9
Very high	144	18.8	167	21.2	311	20.0

¹ frequency

Table 2, Inconsistency Status

Inconsistency Status	Amplitude Variation	Frequency	Percent
Low	0 - .50	316	20.4
Average	.99 - .51	141	9.1
High	+1	1095	70.6

Table 3, Pearson Correlation between Dimensions and Socio-economic Status

	Socio-economic status	Self-image	Expectation	Prediction
Socio-economic status	1			
Self-image	.730 ***	1		
Expectation	.630 ***	.816 ***	1	
Prediction	-.436 ***	-.696 ***	.776 ***	1

*** $p \leq 0.01$ level (1-tailed)

Table 4, Standard Regression Model Summary

R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate	R ² Change	Change Statistics			
					F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
.747 ^a	.559	.558	.50816	.016	653.67	3	1549	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Prediction, Self-image, Expectation

b. Dependent Variable: Socio-economic status

Table 5, ANOVA: Regression Significance

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	505.389	3	168.79	653.67	.000 ^a
Residual	399.993	1549	.258		
Total	906.38	1552			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Prediction, Self-image, Expectation

b. Dependent Variable: Socio-economic status

Table 6, Estimates of the Coefficients for the Model

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	-.466	.084		-5.562	.000
Self-image	.618	.027	.692	23.32	.000
Expectation	.483	.038	.352	7.47	.000
Prediction	-.204	.023	-.242	-8.89	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Socio-economic status

Table 7, Pearson Correlation between Dimensions and Inconsistency

	Inconsistency	Self-image	Expectation	Prediction	Socio-economic status
Inconsistency	1				
Self-image	.287***	1			
Expectation	.329***	.816***	1		
Prediction	.283***	.696***	.776***	1	
Socio-economic status	.123***	.730***	.630***	.776***	1

*** $p \leq 0.01$ level (1-tailed)

Table 8, Standard Regression Model Summary

R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate	R ² Change	Change Statistics			
					F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
.360a	.129	.127	.75750	.129	57.507	4	1548	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Prediction, Self-image, Expectation, Socio-economic status

b. Dependent Variable: Inconsistency

Table 9, ANOVA: Regression Significance

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	131.992	4	32.998	57.507	.000 ^a
Residual	888.250	1548	.574		
Total	1020.242	1552			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Prediction, self-image, Expectation, Socio-economic status

b. Dependent Variable: Inconsistency

Table 10, Estimates of the Coefficients for the Model

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.945	.126		7.498	.000
Self-image	.178	.046	.188	3.883	.000
Expectation	.351	.057	.295	6.113	.000
Prediction	.011	.035	.013	.326	.745
Socio-economic status	-.219	.038	-.206	-5.772	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Socio-economic status

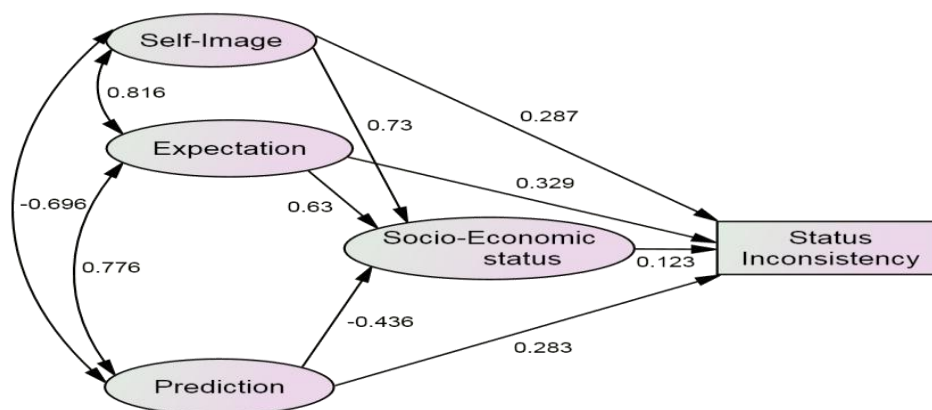


Figure 1, Relationship between Self-image, Expectation, Prediction, Socio-economic and Status Inconsistency

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