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Effect of social capital and support, and the Internet use on empowering women working in the Tehran RCS with the mediating role of socioeconomic status

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Original Article

Abstract

INTRODUCTION: Women's empowerment has been introduced as a mechanism to improve the quality of women's work and personal life, one of the basic principles of protecting human rights and eradicating poverty. This study aimed to investigate the effect of social capital, social support, and Internet use on the empowerment of working women with a mediating role in socioeconomic status.

METHODS: In this descriptive survey study, 4,000 women were studied working in the RCS of Tehran province, Iran. About 384 samples were selected due to Cochran's formula by a simple random method. The required data were collected using some questionnaires, namely the Social Capital (Hoff and Heisman, 2009), Subjective evaluation of the socio-economic base (Nabavi et al., 2007), Social Support (Sherburne and Stewart, 1991) and Questionnaire designed by the researcher under the title of Internet usage and women's empowerment.

FINDINGS: The results showed that social capital, social support, and the use of the Internet had a direct impact on the empowerment of women, and socioeconomic status played a mediating role in the relationship between social capital and empowerment. It was also found that socioeconomic status played a mediating role in the relationship between social support and the empowerment of working women.

CONCLUSION: According to the results, attention to the components of social capital, social support, and the use of the Internet and cyberspace provided the basis for the empowerment of working women, while in this process the key role of women's socioeconomic status should not be overlooked. However, managers' attention to strengthening organizational trust and women's participation in decision-making, providing conditions for good communication, training, and promoting women's media literacy, would increase the socioeconomic status proportionately and improve women's empowerment.

Keywords: Internet use; Social capital; Social empowerment; Social support; Socioeconomic status

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Introduction

In recent years, women's empowerment has been introduced as a mechanism to improve the quality of women's work and personal life, and some consider it one of the basic principles of protecting human rights and eradicating poverty (1). Empowerment means helping people to improve their self-esteem and overcome unpleasant feelings of helplessness. When a person is empowered, his passion for activities increases and his motivation to perform activities improves. In other words, empowering people leads them to change their attitudes and thoughts toward themselves (2). According to the United Nations, empowerment includes a sense of worth, as well as the right to make decisions and ownership, access resources and opportunities, and control one's life inside and outside the home; it also defines it as a power of influence in the course of social changes to create a fairer socioeconomic system in the national and global scope (3). Empowerment is a

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process in which women find the ability to improve their self-esteem by knowing themselves and their abilities better, to choose with freedom of action. Empowering women means improving women's quality of life, and their social, financial, political, and legal status, as well as ensuring a suitable level in society for them in such a way that they can be sure they can defend their rights; have a sense of self-confidence, respect, and attention; have control over their lives inside and outside the house and adopt a suitable job; right to choose; continue their favorite sport; have their beliefs; have equal rights with men in financial and social matters; have the opportunity to learn and study; and have a safe and comfortable work environment (4). Besides, women's continuous improvement, promotion of competence, change in behavior, and improvement in performance are associated with increasing their empowerment (5). Empowerment of women is referred to as a social issue that is affected by various factors. The effect of some existing social structures (6-8) and some economic factors have been reported on empowerment (9-11).

Meanwhile, from the point of view of sociology, the study gap is still felt. So far, Iranian researchers have only mentioned the relationship of one variable with empowerment, and they have rarely investigated this issue in a comparative way among women, regardless of their socioeconomic status. It is worth mentioning that socioeconomic status is the base that a person has among a group and it is interpreted as the social economic rank of a group in comparison with other groups. Socioeconomic status is the position that an individual or family obtains by referring to common average standards regarding cultural characteristics, effective income, material assets, and participation in group-social activities (12).

Sarkit expressed that socioeconomic status is of great importance and the presence and continuation of the presence of disadvantaged groups in society is the result of socioeconomic, environmental factors as well as individual-emotional factors, and the main reason for continuous deprivation is the transmission of deprivation by families to future generations. Socioeconomic status encompasses not just income but also educational acquirements, financial coverage, and subjective perceptions of social status and class. Socioeconomic status can encompass quality of life attributes as well as the opportunities and privileges afforded to people within society. Socioeconomic status is a steady and reliable determinant of an extensive arrangement of outcomes across a lifetime, including mental and physical health. Hence, socioeconomic status is applicable to all areas of behavioral and social science, including research, practice, education, and advocacy (13), and it seems that this importance can have an impact on women's empowerment in society. On the other hand, it seems that social capital is one of the factors that can be effective in empowering women. The concept of social capital was initially defined by sociologists in the 1980s as the aggregated value of connections between individuals and the norms of reciprocity developed from the network. Several definitions of social capital have been advanced, most of which include similar concepts. Social capital is a commonly identified trait of social organization and includes trust between individuals, standards of correspondence, and interpersonal connections that could increase the efficiency of society and create platforms that could be beneficial to many parties. Based on Bourdieu, Coleman defined social capital from its specific functions and pointed out that social capital is not a single entity, but rather different entities with various forms. Social capital is a resource embedded in social networks and social relationships, which can be acquired or flowed through purposeful actions. To sum up, the definition of social capital has not been unified (14). Studies in this field show that people who have close friends, close neighbors, and supportive colleagues feel less uncomfortable and lonely, have more self-esteem, and report more satisfaction with life (15).

Another variable that will be related to women's empowerment in this research is social support. Social support is conceptualized as received and perceived support. Received social support includes the actions that members of social networks provide to help a person in need. Based on Sarason et al. (1990), the fact that a person believes in his mind how much support he receives from family, friends, relatives, and society is interpreted as perceived social support (16).

In the era of technology, it seems that the amount of use of the Internet has an effect on the empowerment of women because, with its emergence, other types of relationships and societies are formed as linear relationships and

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societies, which are sometimes difficult for them today. Some people, especially women, give more importance than genuine relationships in communities, so they spend a lot of time on it.

Moreover, the use of virtual space has positive consequences, such as better communication and interaction with friends, participation in social activities, participation in cultural activities, better communication with relatives, participation in sports activities, better communication with family, participation in political activities, participation in It has followed educational activities for individuals (17), and the sum of these positive consequences can have an impact on the empowerment of women. Considering that the empowerment of working women brings better economic prosperity for the country, and considering that women are the mothers of this society and their empowerment can lead to the strength of families and having better families and a better society, identifying the factors that can affect the improvement of women's empowerment and efforts to improve these components can reduce the problems and social harms of women in life.

This research aimed to investigate the factors affecting empowerment among women working in the Red Crescent Society considering that this organization is particularly vital during natural disasters, such as earthquakes, floods, and unexpected events. Meanwhile, the role of women in responding to incidents and accidents and preparing for crises is highly important.

Therefore, it can be said that empowered women can reduce the severity of these harms in the society, and since the mission of the Red Crescent Society is to reduce the sufferings of displaced persons, refugees and displaced people, to provide rehabilitation and social services to sick and disabled people, and to create a sense of cooperation and understanding. , friendship and benevolence among people will relieve pain and help the health of society and defend human values. The more capable are women in this organization, the better the organization will perform in crisis, and the more the Red Crescent Society can overcome crises. By reducing and managing the crisis, the society will face fewer social damages. Therefore, conducting research on this community is of particular importance.

So far, Iranian researchers have only mentioned the relationship of one variable with empowerment, and they have rarely investigated this issue in a comparative way among women, regardless of their socioeconomic status. Most of the research, with an economic approach, has examined the empowerment of women, while from the sociological point of view, the gap in studies is still felt. Therefore, this research is of an innovative type and aims to answer the question whether capital and social support and the amount of internet use have an effect on the empowerment of working women and in this regard, whether there is a role in their economic and social status had? And in this regard, whether the socio-economic status plays a mediating role, whether social support has a role in the amount of internet use and empowerment of working women.

Dehghan Niri et al. (2016) reported that according to the silent group theory, language and communication methods are affected by social conditions in which men have more power and facilities, whereas women, due to deprivation, are considered silent groups (18). However, recent technological developments and access to virtual spaces have led to the reduction of social inequalities and the strengthening of weak social groups, including women. They analyzed that the effect of virtual spaces (sites related to medical care during pregnancy and childbirth) on the empowerment of pregnant women as silent groups. The results of the study showed that by using virtual space, women have been able to overcome the limitations caused by gender and express pregnancy issues without worry, and virtual spaces have helped to empower pregnant women's communication. In addition, women have been able to play an active role in their medical care process with the help of the information obtained from the Internet; therefore, virtual spaces have led to the adjustment of power in the doctor-patient relationship. Montazer Qaim and Shaaban Kaseger (2015) in their research addressed the importance of women's ability in cyberspace because this space provides the necessary conditions for women's participation regardless of some limitations of the real world, which can lead to individual empowerment. They can pave the way for using the Internet for their own benefit and content creation by having the necessary set of skills and motivation. In addition, by bringing their voices to the ears of others, they make it possible to change and modify stereotypes

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and images that are attributed to them. However, they need components to operationalize the possibility of using the Internet for whatever they want. For this reason, to identify these components and their effect on women's personal empowerment in using cyberspace, an online questionnaire was designed, organized, and given to women who engaged in various activities in cyberspace. After completing the questionnaires, 429 questionnaires were analyzed. Findings showed that such variables as the targeting of activities, the amount of familiarity with active women, the amount of activity, and critical media literacy in the consumption and production sectors increased the ability of women to use cyberspace (19).

Kermani et al. (2012) in their research investigated and qualitative meta-analysis of studies in the field of empowerment of rural and urban women. Based on this, in the first step, all the scientific research articles with the keyword of empowerment were extracted from the scientific information database of Jihad University and the Noormagz reference database, which included 60 articles. Afterward, 42 articles that included the words rural women or urban women in the title, abstract, or keywords were selected for data extraction and further investigation. According to the findings of this research, the studies in this field had two general orientations. A group of them sought theoretical analysis and presentation of intervention models to empower the target groups. Another group paid attention to the investigation of women's empowerment process, empirically, considering different samples of rural and urban women. In general, factors, such as education, employment, social skills, self-confidence, self-worth, and benefiting from public education have been effective factors in empowering rural and urban women. These findings are consistent with the results emphasized in many non-Iranian pieces of research in the field of women's empowerment (20).

Astin Feshan et al. (2017) investigated the effect of social awareness on the empowerment of rural women in the Zanjanroud district of Zanjan city. The qualitative-quantitative research method was used to carry out this research. The community of the qualitative part of this research was formed by people who were experts in the field of social awareness of rural women. The researchers interviewed these people to design the social awareness items of the questionnaire. The statistical population of the quantitative part of this research consisted of 15,455 rural women in Zanjan city, of which 386 were randomly selected as samples. The data were collected using a researcher-made questionnaire tool, the validity of which was confirmed by the faculty members of the department of agricultural extension and education of Razi University, Kermanshah, Iran, and its reliability in the social awareness and empowerment dimensions was also confirmed by using the pre-test and calculating the Cronbach's alpha coefficient (α=0.79). According to the results, the amount of social awareness of 58% of women was moderate. Rural women had the least knowledge in such issues as when a woman had the right to use the right of imprisonment and compensation; nevertheless, they had the highest amount of knowledge in such issues as determining the place of residence and the amount of inheritance received by the daughter. The findings indicated that the average amount of empowerment of rural women was 2.8 out of 5. To determine the effect of the independent variable of social awareness on the dependent variable of ability, linear regression was used. The research results showed that the independent variable had the ability to explain 43% of the changes in the dependent variable, that is, empowerment (21).

Zahedi Asl and Tavakoli (2016) in their research examined the effect of family factors on the social ability of girls. For this purpose, 192 girls referring to Omid Mehr Charity Foundation, Tehran, Iran, were selected by random sampling method. The theoretical framework of this research consisted of Blud and Wolf's resource theory, Sara Lange's empowerment theory, and Anthony Giddens' family management model theory. The data collection tool was a structured questionnaire, and the data were analyzed using Pearson and Spearman correlation coefficients. Descriptive results showed that the social ability of 82% of the studied girls was at an average level. The hypothesis test showed that the family management model and mothers' opinions about gender roles had a direct and significant relationship with the level of social empowerment of girls; however, there was no significant relationship between the social status of the father and the level of social empowerment of girls. Due to the significant correlation between the variable of mothers'

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opinions towards gender roles and the type of family management model with the dependent variable, a simultaneous multivariate regression method was used. The results of this study indicated the significance of the effect of the theoretical model on the dependent variable. In this way, mothers' opinions about gender roles could explain more than 30% of the variance in girls' social ability. It should be mentioned that the family management pattern variable had no significant effect. The results showed that socio-cultural policies needed to give special emphasis on the development and expansion of educational and cultural programs in line with the effect of the role of mothers on the social capabilities of girls (22).

Qodsian et al. (2015) investigated the relationship between technical and vocational training and women's empowerment from the perspective of female skill learners in technical and vocational training centers in Kerman, Iran. The research was a survey type. A researcher-made questionnaire was used to collect data. To check the validity of the questionnaire, the opinions of experts were used, and the reliability of the questionnaire was calculated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient method. Inferential statistics methods, Pearson correlation coefficient, and regression were used to analyze the data. The findings of this study showed that the relationship between the effect of technical and professional training and the empowerment of women was positive and significant. Therefore, focusing on women's skill training in manpower education was one of the policies that the government is required to pay special attention to (23).

Weda (2013) in research investigated the factors affecting the empowerment of women in the management of team projects in Kenya. In this research, four factors were investigated as influencing factors, which were education, society, and culture, the infrastructure of information and communication technology, and access to financial resources. In this research, 8,133 women formed the society, of which 299 were studied by a simple random method using questionnaires. According to the results, 67% of women considered the level of education to be influential, and 66% considered the role of information and communication technology to be very influential. In addition, financial support from the government and the provision of facilities to women were reported as influential factors in 40% of women. In addition, the reduction of inequalities and equal opportunities for women was reported by more than 60% of the respondents as an effective factor in empowering women.

This research was based on Giddens' Theory of Structuration, Sara Lange's Theory (1991), the Social Capital model of Nahapit and Goshal (1998), and Sarafino's Social Support (1998).

Methods

In this descriptive survey, 4,000 working women of the Red Crescent Society of Tehran Province were studied. According to Cochran's formula, 384 people formed the samples by stratified random method and based on the vices (Administrative and Support Deputy, Relief and Rescue Deputy, Education and Research Deputy, Volunteers Deputy, Youth Deputy, Treatment and Rehabilitation Deputy, Treasury and Security Department) was divided, and it was determined how many women were working in each unit, and finally, the samples were taken by lottery. In this research, the data collection tools were questionnaires. The Social Capital Questionnaire of Heisman and Hoff (2009) was used to measure social capital (25).

This 16-item questionnaire measured knowing colleagues and their needs in the workplace, Optimizing the customer's problem by referring to the relevant colleague, the optimal working relationship with colleagues and correct referral when needed, understanding each other's job needs in the work environment, a feeling of unity and oneness with colleagues, sense of belonging to the organization, reliability of colleagues in times of need, and trust in colleagues. The items were scored on a 5-point Likert scale (from 1=very low to 5=very high), which was reversed according to the instructions of the scoring questionnaire for items (9-11). The total score of the respondents for this questionnaire varied from 16 to 80, and a higher score indicated women's higher social capital; therefore, a higher social capital in the organization.

Karami and Shafiei (2016) confirmed the content validity of the questionnaire and reported its reliability through Cronbach's alpha of 0.865 (25). To subjectively evaluate the socioeconomic status, the questionnaire of Nabavi et al. was used,

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which has 12 questions, while confirming the content validity, they reported the reliability coefficient through Cronbach's alpha of 0.78 (26). A higher score on this questionnaire means higher socioeconomic status. The measurement was done through the evaluation of the person's educational status, employment status, income status in the family, housing status, and economic class. These responses to these subscales were rated on a 5-point Likert scale of 1=very low value, 2=low value, 3=somewhat valuable, 4=valuable, and 5=very valuable, and a higher score in all six subscales indicated a higher socioeconomic status of women. In other words, the total respondents' scores for this questionnaire varied from 6 to 30, and a higher score indicated their higher socioeconomic status.

To measure the empowerment of women, a researcher-made questionnaire was used, which included 10 items, namely the ability to spend free time, mastery of job skills, confidence in one's abilities, ability to participate in social activities, ability to communicate with others, ability to make decisions in family financial matters, How to do the work process, participation in training classes, ability in charitable and humanitarian activities, ability to provide solutions in case of problems in the family. Each item was assigned a score from one to five, and the lowest score for each individual was obtained at 10 and the highest score at 50, and the higher score indicated the greater empowerment of women.

In this research, social support was assessed through the 19-item Social Support Scale of Sherbourne and Stewart (1991). This scale measures a person's support in expressing empathy, love, trust, and care; expressing tangible help and services; perceived support from interactive networks; positive social interaction with others and those around them; support during illness; support during empathy and the need to be heard; support during a crisis; expressing interest and feelings; talking together; support in understanding issues; talking about problems or oneself; bringing comfort, food, and guidance; delegating responsibility to another; and support when needed for everyday life. The replies to these to each of these 19 items were scored on a 5-point Likert scale of 1=never, 2=rarely, 3=sometimes, 4=often, and 5=always. The total score of the respondents for this questionnaire varied from 19 to 95, with a higher score in each of the 19 items indicating higher social support for women.

Perceived social support for women's social capital was measured through the individual's score from the 16-item Standard Social Capital Questionnaire of Hoff and Heisman (2009). This questionnaire assesses such subscales as knowing colleagues and their needs in the workplace, the optimal problem of the client with appropriate reference to the relevant colleague, the optimal working relationship with colleagues and correct referral when needed, understanding each other's job needs in the work environment, a feeling of unity and oneness with colleagues, sense of belonging to the organization, reliability of colleagues in times of need, and trust in colleagues. The items were scored on a 5-point Likert scale of 1=very low, 2=low, 3=moderate, 4=high, and 5=very high, which was reversed according to the instructions of the scoring questionnaire for items (9-11). The total score of the respondents for this questionnaire varied from 16 to 80, with higher scores in all 16 items indicating a higher social capital of women. Sherbourne and Stewart (1991) reported a reliability coefficient of 0.96 while standardizing the questionnaire. In Iran, Jahan Bakhshian and Vezandian (2010) confirmed the content validity and reported a reliability coefficient of 0.94 for this questionnaire (27).

In this research, the amount of women's use of virtual space, the Internet, and virtual social networks was measured based on a questionnaire. The Internet and virtual space were assessed with 7 items, in which the amount of time spent on using the Internet and virtual space, the amount of time spent on the type of use, including entertaining, scientific, and educational materials, communication with others, exchange of information and experiences, participation on social issues were investigated. Each item was rated by choosing one of the options of 1=very low, 2=low, 3=medium, 4=high, and 5=very high by the respondents. The scores of the respondents for this questionnaire ranged from 7 to 35, with a higher score indicating more use of the Internet. The validity of the questionnaires was checked through the calculation of content validity and the opinions of 5 experts were asked and confirmed. The reliability of the questionnaires was also calculated after piloting the questionnaires on 30 people from the samples and calculating

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Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which was obtained 0.83 for social capital, 0.80 for social health, 0.80 for social support, 0.72 for the amount of internet use, and 0.76 for women's empowerment. Accordingly, its reliability was confirmed considering that it was higher than 0.70.

To comply with the principles of ethics in the research, the participants were free to complete the questionnaires. To eliminate bias, they were told that there was no need to write the name and surname, and that this information was only for the purpose of conducting the research. Besides, if they had any questions while completing the questionnaire, those questions would be answered by the interviewer. Data analysis was performed in SPSS software for descriptive statistics and in Amos software for inferential statistics. Structural equation modeling method, correlation coefficient, and standardized regression coefficients obtained from structural equations were used.

Research hypotheses

1. Social capital has an effect on the empowerment of working women.
2. Social support has an effect on the empowerment of working women.
3. The amount of Internet use has an effect on the empowerment of working women.
4. Social economic status plays a mediating role in the relationship between social capital and the empowerment of working women.
5. Social economic status plays a mediating role in the relationship between social support and the empowerment of working women.
6. Social economic status plays a mediating role in the relationship between the amount of Internet use and the empowerment of working women.

Findings

In this study, 153 (39.8%) respondents were single, 204 (53.1%) were married, and 27 (7%) were divorced. Considering the educational level, 13 (3.4 %) subjects had a diploma, 30 (7.8 %) a post-graduate degree, 124 (32.3 %) a Bachelor Degree, 208 (54.2 %) a master's degree, and 9 (2.3 %) a PhD degree. Regarding occupation status, 212 (55.2 %) respondents were public employees, 63 (16.4 %) were contract workers, and 109 (28.4 %) were non-contract workers.

As the contents of Table 2 show, CR can be calculated for each variable from the following formula:

$$CR = \frac{(\sum_{i=1}^{n} \lambda_i)^2}{(\sum_{i=1}^{n} \lambda_i)^2 + (\sum_{c=1}^{n} \delta_i)}$$

where λ_i is the factor load and ∂_i is the error value of each variable.

The results of the regression coefficients of the variables show that all existing relationships are significant due to the significance level of lower than 5%, except for the relationship between socioeconomic status and the amount of Internet use.

According to Table 3, the results of the data analysis obtained from the path analysis method indicate that the variable of social capital with a factor loading of 12% has a significant effect on the variable of women's empowerment. Therefore, the first hypothesis was confirmed, and the findings from the output of the AMOS showed that the standard direct effect coefficient (BETA) of social capital on women's empowerment was 17% and its indirect effect was 18%. Finally, according to the coefficient of the total impact of the standard, it can be concluded that the social capital variable had positive (increasing) effects on the variable of women's empowerment by a total of 35%.

Table 1. Testing the assumption of the normality of data

Variable	Mean	SD	Max	Min	Kurtosis	CR	Skew	Composite reliability(CR)
Social support	53.760	11.458	71	21	0.118	0.473	-0.714	-5.715
Internet usage rate	21.73	3.568	29	14	-0.448	-1.790	0.170	1.360
Social capital	53.635	6.946	69	42	-0.759	-3.037	0.122	0.977
Social economic status	20.411	2.934	30	15	1.376	5.506	0.825	6.601
Empowerment	38.437	5.274	49	27	-0.420	-1.679	-0.411	-3.285
Multivariate					2.534			

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Table 2. Regression coefficients of variables

			Factor loadings	SD	Composite reliability (CR)	Sig
Social capital	--->	Social economic Status	0.089	0.020	4.579	***
Social support	--->	Social economic Status	0.080	0.011	7.406	***
Internet usage rate	--->	Social economic Status	-0.033	0.038	-0.888	0.375
Social capital	--->	Empowerment	0.129	0.024	5.290	***
Social support	--->	Empowerment	0.090	0.014	6.435	***
Internet usage rate	--->	Empowerment	0.209	0.046	4.581	***
Social economic status	--->	Empowerment	0.679	0.062	10.922	***

Table 3. Path analysis of research variables

Independent variable	Dependent variable	Factor loadings	Result	Standard direct effects	Standard indirect effects	Effects of the standard total
Social capital	Empowering women	0.129	Significant effect	0.17	0.18	0.35
Social support	Empowering women	0.09	Significant effect	0.19	0.14	0.33
Internet usage rate	Empowering women	0.21	Significant effect	0.14	0.10	0.24

The results of the data analysis from the path analysis method show that the social support variable with a factor loading of 9% has a significant effect on the women's empowerment variable; therefore, the second hypothesis was confirmed, and the findings from the output of the AMOS showed that standard direct effect coefficient (BETA) of social support on women's empowerment was 19% and its indirect effects were 14%.

Finally, according to the coefficient of the total effect of the standard, it can be concluded that the variable of social support had a positive (increasing) effect of 33% on the variable of women's empowerment. The results of the data analysis obtained from the path analysis method showed that the variable of the amount of Internet use with a factor loading of 21% had a significant effect on the variable of women's empowerment. Therefore, the third hypothesis was confirmed, and the findings from the output of the AMOS program showed that the standard direct effect coefficient (BETA) of Internet use on women's empowerment was 14% and its indirect effect was 10%. Considering the coefficient of the total effect of the standard (standard direct effect + standard indirect effects), it can be concluded that the variable of the amount of Internet use has a positive (increasing) effect of 24% on the variable of women's empowerment.

As shown in Table 4, the results of the analysis of the data obtained from the path analysis method indicate that the socio-economic base variable has a direct effect on the empowerment variable through its influence on the social capital variable with a coefficient of 20%. In addition, 38% has a mediating role and effect in connection with social capital and empowerment of working women with a coefficient of 0.076% (confirmation of the fourth hypothesis).

Table 4. Test of variables with the mediation of socioeconomic status

Relation	Factor loadings	Result
Social capital ---> social economic status ---> empowerment of working women	0.38*0.20=0.076	Significant effect
Social support ---> social economic status ---> empowerment of working women	0.38*0.30=0.11	Significant effect
Amount of internet use ---> social economic status ---> empowerment of working women	0.04*0.42=0.014	Significant effect

In addition to the direct effect of 30% on the variable of women's empowerment, the socioeconomic status variable has a 38% coefficient on the social support variable in the relationship between social support and the empowerment of working women, and has a mediating effect with a coefficient of 0.114% (confirmation of the fifth hypothesis).

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Furthermore, according to Table 2, there is no significant relationship between socioeconomic status and the amount of Internet use (rejection of the sixth hypothesis).

Discussion and Conclusion

In this research, 384 working women of the Red Crescent Society of Tehran province were studied. The results of the data analysis obtained from the path analysis method indicated that the variable of social capital with a factor loading of 12% had a significant effect on the variable of women's empowerment. The findings from the output of the AMOS showed that the standard direct effect coefficient (BETA) of social capital on women's empowerment was 17% and its indirect effect was 18%. Finally, according to the coefficient of the total impact of the standard, it can be concluded that the social capital variable had positive (increasing) effects on the variable of women's empowerment by a total of 35%. In this context, it should be noted that social capital refers to institutions, relationships, and norms that show the quality and quantity of social interactions in society (14). The results of studies by Charmchian Langroudi (2016) on the women of Sari, Iran (29), and Naderi Mahdei & Vahdat Moaddab (2018) on rural women with domestic jobs in Razan County, Iran (30) are also consistent with the findings of the present study.

Social capital is a set of norms existing in social systems that increases the level of cooperation of members of that society and decreases the level of exchange and communication costs. This concept refers to the links and communication between the members of the network as a valuable resource, which by creating norms and mutual trust leads to the realization of the goals of the members and lays the foundation for empowerment.

The results of the analysis of the data obtained from the path analysis method showed that the variable of social support with a factor loading of 9% had a significant effect on the variable of women's empowerment, and the findings from the output of the AMOS program revealed that the standard direct effect coefficient (BETA) of social support on women empowerment was 19% and its indirect effects were 14%.

Finally, according to the coefficient of the total effect of the standard, it can be concluded that the variable of social support had a positive (increasing) effect of 33% on the variable of women's empowerment. The findings of research by Navabakhsh et al. (2015) are in line with those of the present research (30). This finding of the present research is consistent with the direct effect model of social support (Sarafino, 1998) of social support theories.

People with an increased understanding of social support have higher self-esteem and an optimistic attitude, which can make them better empowered (31). These findings are all in line with the results of the present research, and it seems that with social support for women and issues such as eliminating discrimination, traditional beliefs, and patriarchy, a step can be taken to improve women's empowerment.

The results of the data analysis from the path analysis method showed that the variable of Internet use with a factor loading of 21% had a significant effect on the variable of women's empowerment, and the findings from the output of the AMOS program showed that the standard direct effect coefficient (BETA) of the use of the Internet on the empowerment of women was 14% and its indirect effects were 10%. Finally, according to the coefficient of the total effect of the standard (standard direct effect + standard indirect effects), it can be concluded that the variable of the amount of Internet use had a positive (increasing) effect of 24% on the variable of women's empowerment.

The findings of previous studies have shown that an increase in the use of technology (31-37) has led to an increase in the empowerment of women, and these findings are in line with the findings of the present study. Presence in virtual space has caused more movements of women in society and in some ways has led to their mental and intellectual advancement in different social categories (38). The research findings of Saeei Ersi and Valipour (2009) (39), Astin Feshan et al. (2017) (21), and Montazer Qaim and Shaaban Kasegar (2015) (19) are also consistent with the findings of the current research.

The results of the analysis of the data obtained from the path analysis method indicated that the social economic status variable, in addition to having a 20% direct effect on the women's empowerment variable, through the effect on the social capital variable with a coefficient of 38% in the relationship between social capital and the

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empowerment of working women with The role and influence of the mediator was 0.076%.

It seems that the socioeconomic status of people increases their participation in society. For example, educated women have more job opportunities in society, and they believe less than others in the traditional role of women, which is the presence of women at home. In fact, using education as a component related to socioeconomic status provides the basis for more participation, and as a result, more social capital. Before these studies, education was introduced as a facilitator (1, 40, 41), and accordingly, women's employment was introduced as a facilitator of women's empowerment (1, 42, 43).

It is also expected that educated women will be more aware because of their greater presence in society and some kind of social economic participation, and it is reported that increasing the awareness of women has an effect on improving their capabilities (40-43). These findings are in agreement with the findings of the current research, and this can explain the role of the intermediary of the social economic status in the relationship between social capital and empowerment. More education, more knowledge, and more participation in society owing to better job opportunities and training offered to working women in professional and specialized fields will increase their skills, which apart from positive psychological effects, such as self-esteem, will lead to their greater independence. These will provide more opportunities for more social partnerships and social capital, and ultimately more empowerment.

It is not surprising that social behavior will improve as people's knowledge increases. This means that by improving awareness and information, acquiring new information, and changing lifestyles, we can witness the emergence of healthier behaviors, and this important groundwork creates better empowerment of women.

In addition to the direct effect of 30% on the variable of women's empowerment, the socioeconomic status variable had a 38% coefficient on the social support variable in the relationship between social support and the empowerment of working women, and had a mediating effect with a coefficient of 0.114%. In many countries, education is recognized as a tool for uplifting societies and making the world a better place. However, many people in the world are still deprived of the possibility of education. Through education, our people turn into questioning beings with analytical minds. The mind of an educated person looks for logic and scientific evidence behind all actions. With the help of education, disability and weakness become abilities. An educated person makes decisions with more ability, is more dynamic, and has more access to social bases. These social bases increase people's access to information and allow them to observe and experience accepted and correct behavior styles common among their peers.

It seems that the connection of higher socioeconomic status for women is due to the social and cognitive skills acquired in the environments, as well as participation and presence in organizations and civil groups due to having education and being able to receive higher social support. Similarly, the probability of women being accepted into a job with suitable conditions (including health insurance, paid leave, and pension) is much higher for an educated one. Women who have higher education levels usually experience fewer economic difficulties; they are placed in jobs with higher social status. Conversely, people with less education are more likely to be in high-risk jobs with few benefits. Lower incomes and less access to resources for people from a lower socioeconomic status mean that these people are more likely to live in low-income and marginal neighborhoods and areas, where there is less access to resources and reduced social support.

It is worth mentioning that a person's family socioeconomic status is the result of several factors, the most important of which are education, family income, household size, and occupation, as well as living in more or less prosperous areas. In Iran, people who are at a higher level than any of the above, belong to a higher socioeconomic status. People who belong to a higher socioeconomic status have more access to facilities, which can ultimately be associated with more success.

Some studies in the field of social economic status have introduced education as a facilitator (1, 48), and some have introduced employment as a facilitator of women's empowerment (1, 42, 43). Some other ones have also mentioned women's education and awareness as components

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influencing empowerment (40-43); these findings are consistent with the findings of the present study.

Empowerment is not only in having and accessing high levels of various benefits but also in benefiting from the freedom to choose between different functions in different areas of life, which simultaneously depicts the desired way of life from an individual's point of view, and an image in which a person's consciousness has played a decisive role in its formation (20). With an increase in education, it is expected that social awareness will increase, the increase in which would lead to more empowerment of women (21, 39); these results are also in line with those of the current study.

The results showed that according to Table 2, there was no significant relationship between socioeconomic status and the amount of Internet use. Any reason for this finding can be explained by the target community, which was only women working for the Red Crescent Society, who all had a relatively similar amount of access to virtual space and the Internet, and then the socioeconomic status in this community was not very impressive. It seems that with an increase in the use of the Internet and virtual space today, all sections of society and women have access to this space, and it is natural that just using this space is not effective, but the proper use of the Internet and virtual space provides the basis for women's empowerment. Since the present study was conducted among working women in the Tehran Red Crescent Society, the generalization of the results to other groups of society must be done with caution. Another limitation was related to the self-reporting nature of the questionnaire.

Considering that this research was conducted with a quantitative method and using a questionnaire, it is suggested to conduct qualitative research through interviews with the employees and compare the results with the findings of the present research. It is recommended that similar research be conducted among female employees of other public and private organizations. Considering that one of the sub-branches of social work is the job of social work, which, by emphasizing social work theories, helps people and structures to face the challenges of life and promote well-being, based on the results of this research, it is suggested that social workers Relying on their knowledge and experience, they can play an important role in empowering working women.

Considering the role of social capital in the empowerment of women, planning to strengthen the social and organizational culture was suggested to the managers of the Red Crescent Society. These suggestions included:

- Creating a sense of group identity with the participation of employees in various matters.
- Creating grounds for building mutual trust between the employees and the group of hospital managers by delegating some tasks to the employees.
- Creating a context for employees to participate and exchange opinions with each other as well as with managers.
- Strengthening behavioral patterns, especially on the part of managers, such as honesty and keeping promises.
- Promoting common values and behaviors.
- Strengthening existing cultures in the workplace.
- Paying attention to women's social abilities and using them in various matters.
- Paying attention to group rewards to encourage the use of social capital.
- Using training to change the way employees think to create and use social capital.

For higher social support, women need to spend time building relationships with people. Learning and acquiring the skill of meeting people can help them get closer to others. The more people women meet and know in their lives, the more support they will have when they need others. To have supportive friends and acquaintances, it is important for women to spend time with their friends. Women may feel that they lack enough time for this; however, time management techniques can help them balance between working and spending time with their friends.

Of course, some things that show their attention to their friends do not need to spend time, for example, remembering birthdays, wedding anniversaries, and other important events in their friends' lives. The important thing in getting social support is to pay attention to other person's needs, for example, when women have had a difficult day, they want to talk to a friend about their feelings. Our listening and understanding can be very effective.

When women talk to their friends, try to understand their feelings by asking questions and

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listening carefully to their answers, rather than simply directing the conversation to their own experiences and events.

Being a good listener for women can provide them with a listening ear for their words when they need support.

Note that in the first stage, you must have a good feeling of being in the company of people to communicate with them. To get social support, women hang out with people who are constantly in conflict with them, and definitely, they do not get the result they want. These skills should teach to women employees, which can include:

- Facilitating communication between employers and employees with their managers to establish more appropriate communication.

According to the role of the Internet Moreover, for its safe use and the need for female users to be aware of the limitations and privacy protection, things such as training and promotion of media literacy in the type of use of Iranian female users, training on the dangers and threats of cyberspace are recommended.

Empowerment is a process during which people become aware of their inner needs and desires, strengthen the courage to achieve their goals, and have the necessary ability to implement their desires. By identifying supportive resources and communication networks to increase social support and social capital, social workers in the organization are able to provide tangible resources that include financial support and services as well as informational support, such as social skills training and emotional support to personnel. Women should play a role in the organization as a consultant. One of the most important roles of social work is the role of educator because it is an inherent part of social work. However, in some conditions and situations, it is considered the main task of social work. Since one of the important approaches of education in social work is the dissemination of information, informing the target community on how to deal with problems and issues, when a social worker works with women working in the organization, it helps them to have a better understanding of themselves and gain awareness, or when they are encouraged to participate in different groups, they act as educators. If a social worker is not able to play the role of an educator optimally, he will not be able to be effective in empowering women because the most obvious, fundamental, and primary goal of empowerment lies in this change of attitude. After improving the attitude of women, they can enter the empowerment process and take joint actions, exchange, and mutual support with others, take action in the practical field, and acquire new skills.

Considering the effect of social capital, social support and the role of the Internet in this matter, social workers should try to help women in using their individual and family capacities in this direction and give working women life skills, problem solving, participation Active in the path of empowerment, identify abilities and teach strengthening.

In this context, it is effective in increasing the empowerment of women. In addition, while providing a context for strengthening organizational trust, managers should provide the opportunity for more women to participate in the decisions and plans of the organization. At the same time, respect for collective decisions can increase the sense of belonging in the organization, which will become the basis for better empowerment of women. Encouraging and supporting women, providing educational opportunities, and improving the job skills of working women are among other measures that should be considered by managers in the workplace. Considering the mediating role of the social economic status in relation to social capital and social support with women's empowerment, it is suggested that policymakers and planners try to increase the grounding of empowerment in disadvantaged and vulnerable people through appropriate programs for these sections of society, to reduce the gap between the rich and poor groups in the society, and to establish a positive and all-round partnership for all socioeconomic strata. Policymakers' attention to this matter can be a step toward the country's development.

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None

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare that there were no conflicts of interest in this study.

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