



## **The effect of the support of supporting organizations in improving the status of head-of-household women in Arak city<sup>1</sup>**

**Zahra Farzizadeh<sup>2</sup>; Somayeh Haghi<sup>3\*</sup>**

*2. Assistant Professor, Department of Social Planning, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Tehran., Iran.*

*3. Assistant Professor, Farhangian University, Lorestan, Iran.*

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### **Abstract:**

The present study was conducted to investigate the effect of the support of supporting organizations in improving the status of head-of-household women in Arak City in terms of some social indicators of development. For this purpose, 350 female heads of the household were selected as samples. The research data was collected by survey method and using the questionnaire technique, and the results were analyzed through two-sample t-test and regression. According to Findings, the studied women had little satisfaction with their lives. They had moderate social vitality, social deprivation, feeling of social alienation and social acceptance. According to the findings, female heads of households who had economic support experienced more vitality in their lives. Receiving social support has increased the social acceptance of women. Having social and economic support has had a positive effect on the quality of life of women. Also, women with economic support experienced less deprivation in their lives. According to the results, the social vitality of head-of-household women has had a positive effect on their life satisfaction. On the other hand, the impact of the quality of life of head-of-household women on their life satisfaction has been evaluated positively. Finally, the feeling of deprivation of head-of-household women has been effective in increasing their sense of social alienation.

**Keywords:** *supporting organizations, social vitality, quality of life, social acceptance, feeling of social alienation, feeling of social deprivation.*

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### **1. Introduction**

Development as an attribute is intricately tied to a society's capacity to enable individuals to thrive through the provision of essential resources, conducive environments, and equitable opportunities. In contemporary times, there is a concerning trend where certain women, assuming the role of household heads, despite doubling their efforts, face challenges in meeting the economic and social needs of their families. In the most societies, the traditional role of the father involves being the primary provider for the family members' needs. When providing livelihood for family members is considered as one of women's responsibilities, they will face many social-economical-psychological problems. In recent years, we have seen a growing trend in the number of women who are responsible for providing for themselves and their children. The prevalence of women heading households is on the rise not only in Iran but also in various countries worldwide. "The growth in the number of head-of-household women in developing countries raises important challenges in formulating policies to improve their situation. In general, head-of-household women are poorer, and have less access to work and government services such as credit" (Kennedy & Peters, 1992: 1077). In Iran, head-of-household women constitute 7.1% of the Iranian heads of households in 2015. This ratio reached 8.4% in 1385 and the growing trend of head-of-household women has continued until this ratio reached 9.5% in 2006 and with a

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<sup>2</sup> Email: farzizade@ut.ac.ir

<sup>3</sup> Email: s.haghi@ut.ac.ir (Corresponding Author)

rapid growth in 2011 it reached 12.1%. According to the latest census of Iran Statistics Center in 2015, the ratio of head-of-household women to all households in the country was 12.7% (Iran Statistics Center, 2015). The rising prevalence of women assuming the role of head of households can be viewed as a significant social concern. This demographic faces not only economic challenges but also a myriad of social, psychological, and cultural issues that increasingly manifest adverse effects on their well-being. They are considered as vulnerable groups who are forced to take care of their own lives and their children due to various reasons such as death or desertion of spouse, divorce, addiction of spouse, imprisonment of spouse, etc.

Women who find themselves as the head of their households often face the burden of navigating multiple, and at times, conflicting roles in the absence of their spouses. Many of them are faced with poverty and powerlessness, especially in economic matters, because they are not able to manage their own and family's economic issues, and they have to make do with occasional aid and meager pensions from support organizations. Many women in female-headed households are employed in precarious, part-time, or informal jobs that provide meager incomes. This is often due to a lack of education and skills on their part. Since most of their time is spent on providing for the economic needs of the family, there is no time left for women to improve their mental and physical health. The incidence of mental disorders, especially depression, etc., is more evident in this group of women.

The widespread recognition of the vulnerabilities faced by women who have become heads of their households has prompted numerous local, national, and global organizations to actively engage in addressing the challenges confronting this demographic and their families. These efforts aim to empower and provide support to this marginalized groups. until reaching the desired economic and social level (Moeidfard and Nafisi, 2007: 132). In Iran, the most supportive measures are carried out in order to expand social justice to support the deprived and vulnerable sections of the society, especially women heads of households, through the Imam Khomeini Relief Committee and welfare organization, etc., and the trustees have always tried to make these ideals a reality by formulating a set of policies and using different mechanisms. In this section, a set of services is provided, the purpose of which is to support families and people who lack the necessary abilities to manage their personal, family, and social lives for various reasons, including livelihood problems, etc. Providing various economic and non-economic support can play a significant role in improving the situation of such women. In this study, the question is that "the provision of social, economic, cultural and psychological support by supporting organizations to head-of-household women in Arak city, what change has been made in the status of this group of women in terms of some social indicators of development?"

## **2- A review of the literature**

### ***1-2- A review of empirical literature***

The heightened awareness surrounding the precarious circumstances of women who have assumed the role of household heads, as well as the escalating number of individuals within this demographic, has elevated the issue to a prominent topic of scholarly investigation. Some studies have described the unfavorable conditions in which female heads of households live. Ahmadnia and Kamel Qalibaf (2016) concluded in their research that being in charge of the family has increased the level of stress and anxiety of head-of-household women in Tehran. The extent and severity of multi-dimensional poverty in urban and rural areas among women heads of households is greater compared to men (Fitras and Qudsi, 2017). Snyder, McLaughlin & Findeis (2006) concluded that poverty is highest in head-of-household women with children. According to Shadi-Talab et al. (2004), women are more exposed to poverty because they are women. Women's poverty is not merely an economic phenomenon; the psychological, social, and cultural dimensions of women's poverty are equally significant. Women heading households experience greater mental health pressures compared to other women. Kashaninia and Olya (2018) found that head-of-household women endure more stress in terms of economic, social, legal, physical, mental and family issues than women who are not heads of the household.

A group of researchers have concluded that the given support to women heads of households has been effective in improving their living conditions. Allah Yaari and Asadi (2014) concluded that providing

services to women heads of households has played a significant role in their social and economic empowerment. Mehra (1997) has stated that the self-employed women's association has been successful in increasing the options available to women and empowering them to implement and apply the options economically and politically. According to the research results of Chowdhury and Chowdhury (2011), women participating in microfinance programs had achieved better results at the individual and household level compared to non-participants. According to Malik et al.'s research results (2011), microfinance services have been very effective in empowering rural women and poverty alleviation by influencing women's decision-making power and improving their social economic base. Women's engagement in income-generating activities correlates with a rise in household income, amplifying their authority and significance in household decision-making.

Despite the increased attention and research efforts focused on the challenges faced by women heading households, numerous studies have concluded that the support provided has largely been case-specific, with limited impact on fostering the self-sufficiency and long-term employment prospects of this demographic. Kamali (2013) found that support organizations only provide superficial and partial support to the poor and are not very successful in removing them from the circle of poverty. This issue, along with the increasing trend of poverty of the general public, especially female-headed households, during different years, indicates the increase in the scope of poverty, especially its feminization in the coming years. Ramezani (2006) concluded in his study that there is a gap between the expectations of the clients covered by the Imam Khomeini Relief Committee of Kermanshah city and the services of this organization. This indicates that client satisfaction fell below their expectations, and the organization failed to meet client expectations. According to the results of the Najafi Asli research (2005), the Zainab Kobra project implemented by the Imam Khomeini Relief Committee has not been able to create employment for women in the villages of Buin Zahra, and the credit paid has not necessarily led to productive activity because spending on the essentials of women's lives. Jafari Mehtash (2007) also concluded that the services of the Imam Khomeini Relief Committee, which are only financial assistance, have no effect on the empowerment of women heads of households, and only services that are aimed at strengthening women's agency, including self-employment loans and technical training, and professionals are able to empower these women economically and psychologically.

According to the results of Bahrami's research (2007), the people protected by the Imam Khomeini Relief Committee welcome the services of this organization more in terms of receiving pension and monthly salary, and they do not want to be self-sufficient. According to Behjat (2007), if the necessary training is also given to the clients in addition to the services provided, it will have more lasting effects and the allocated budgets will not be spent on other things such as buying household appliances, etc., and it will have an impact on their employment. Mousavi (2013) has stated that although the Imam Khomeini Relief Committee has achieved some social economic goals of social entrepreneurship in the form of its support programs, it is not recognized as a social entrepreneur organization, because all the aid and services provided are not considered for the empowerment of people, and in most cases, their needs are met on a case-by-case basis, and basic measures for their self-sufficiency and empowerment have not been taken. Alizadeh et al. (2013) concluded that many of the goals and indicators related to reducing poverty among head-of-household women have not been realized despite the great efforts of two welfare organization and the Imam Khomeini relief committee. Joudi Ghasem Kennedy (2013) also concluded in his research that the aid committee's self-sufficient loans have not been able to make the implementers of their projects self-sufficient, and most of them need the continuation of this organization's support.

Women heading households require, above all, access to education, skills, and the capacity to sustain their livelihoods. Acquiring education and skills makes them more capable in managing life better. As Jamali et al. (2012) found that head-of-household women have more risk and vulnerability compared to the women who have a head. Therefore, their participation in communication, problem-solving and decision-making skills training courses can increase their psychological well-being and growth and excellence. According to the results of Idrisi and Hatemvand's research (2013), creating employment gives women the opportunity to get a source of income that directly affects their quality of life, enter a

network of social relationships and receive some types of social support. Kimiaei (2011) concluded that the implementation of empowerment programs not only leads to employment and increase in income level and promotion of head-of-household women to higher social and economic class levels of the society, but also reduces their dependence on support organizations with the help of vocational training. Furthermore, the implementation of the psychological empowerment plan has empowered women heads of households in various psychological areas such as self-efficacy, self-esteem and self-esteem, control over life, decision-making power, and problem solving, and increasing adaptability, which is an endless capital. Malik & Courtney (2011) also concluded that economic independence and improving the position of women in the family and society are considered as the main advantages of participation in higher educational levels. Participation in higher levels of education empowers head-of-household women to challenge discriminatory practices, thereby facilitating positive change and improvements in their overall living conditions.

Investigating the impact of support organizations' services on the status of head-of-household women in terms of four social development indicators, namely quality of life, life satisfaction, social acceptance, vitality and social happiness, is the difference between the present study and previous researches in Iran. Some previous studies have sometimes focused on one of the above four indicators (mainly quality of life or empowerment), but in this study, it is important to examine the status of all the above four indicators, which themselves include several components. It is crucial to examine the impact of the services of support organizations on the quality of life, life satisfaction, social acceptance, vitality and social happiness of this group of women, and it can make it possible to adjust, revise and reform the approach and strategies of poverty alleviation of these support organizations in order to be more effective, while identifying the strengths and weaknesses, by specifying the feedbacks resulting from the provision of support services.

### ***2-2- A review of theoretical literature***

In this section, using theoretical perspectives, we will explain why enhancing the circumstances of women who have become heads of their households can lead to significant improvements in their overall well-being. Women are often categorized as a vulnerable demographic within society, where factors such as divorce, spousal death, addiction, disability, or abandonment can thrust them into precarious situations, ultimately jeopardizing their physical and mental health. Since in this type of households, the mother is responsible for making decisions to deal with the psychological, social, emotional, economic, family, educational and behavioral problems of the children, it is necessary to pay attention to the head-of-household women to prevent many problems.

In fact, the economic issue is the most important issue faced by female-headed households, and the pressure of this issue is to such an extent that sometimes other groups of people basically identify the head-of-household women with this particular concern. This problem becomes more acute with the increase in the number of people under the care of women (Hemati et al., 2012: 47-49). Head-of-household women can be broadly categorized into three main groups based on the quantity and quality of the husband's presence: the first group refers to households in which the man is not permanently present and the women are widowed due to the death of their husbands or divorce, or girls who are not married and live alone, and are guardians; The second group includes households in which the man is temporarily absent due to migration, being missing, being a fugitive or prisoner, being a soldier, etc., and the women have to provide for themselves and their children. The third group refers to households in which a man is present, but does not play a role in livelihood due to unemployment, disability, addiction, being a soldier, etc., and women are responsible for managing their own lives and, in some cases, their children lives (Roshani et al., 2019: 696).

Diverse perspectives exist regarding women who are heads of households, and examining these viewpoints is essential for gaining a comprehensive understanding of the studied categories. Therefore, these approaches are stated in this section briefly, but there is no specific theory as the basis and desired framework; Because what is being paid attention to is the meta-analysis of the researches in the field of female heads of the household in order to identify the conditions affecting the life of this group of women and to provide solutions to mitigate adverse effects and harm.

The theory of feminization of poverty or vulnerability of female heads of households is one of the theories in the domain of female heads of households. This theory emphasizes gender discrimination. This theory emphasizes the conditions governing the lives of female-headed households, such as low level of literacy, low level of access to resources and assets, low level of access to supporting people and organizations, sexual abuse and vulnerability at the level of society and family, not having access to Equal job opportunities with men, lower wages and the issue of time poverty. According to the functional structural theory, the injuries and problems faced by female heads of households are not due to their being women, but because head-of-household women have gone out of the normal state, that is, the active role of men and women in life, and the family has become dysfunctional and all kinds of harms.

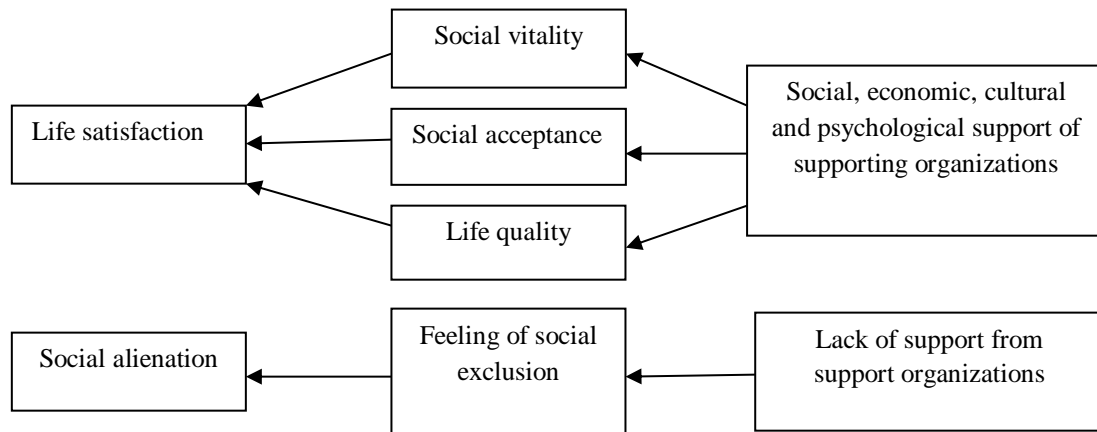
According to the theory of reciprocity, no general law and rule can be stated about the vulnerability of female-headed households; since their individual or collective reaction to the change and improvement of their conditions is ignored, in this case, each of these theories explains a part of the situation of female-headed households, and none of them provide a comprehensive analysis in this field. Simultaneously paying attention to the above theories can provide a more holistic understanding of the economic, social, cultural, familial, and psychological challenges faced by female-headed households. (Darban Astaned et al. 2018: 172). Supporting head-of-household women can lead to the improvement of their situation due to the problems they face. The types of support provided to head-of-household women can include the following:

1. Social support: Marriage Assistance Schemes for head-of-household women and self-headed daughters, payment of social insurance premiums for female-headed households, implementation of a plan to improve nutrition and distribute suitable food in the supported family. 2- Economic support: self-employment loan payment, tuition payment to students of covered families, rent payment and housing deposit payment, payment of necessary loans. 3- Psychological and cultural support: provision of counseling services, expansion of social services through employment clinics, technical and professional trainings based on community facilities, family members literacy. Receiving these supports can solve some of the problems in the lives of women in the household.

Female-headed households confront a wide range of problems and necessities, necessitating a multifaceted approach to support. Access to such support from support organizations can be effective in improving social and cultural development indicators, and lead to the improvement of their lives. Furthermore, the absence of support for female heads of households can potentially result in feelings of social deprivation, ultimately culminating in their social alienation. There is the tendency for Social Comparison in human, and in this situation, when they feel poverty and injustice, they do strong emotional reactions such as changing jobs, breaking work, committing suicide, etc., and when this feeling if it reaches a high degree, it leads to a feeling of social conflict, and it leads to severe conflicts (Rafipour, 1999: 45). In some cases, social exclusion is Specifically associated with social exclusion of women. The feeling of social exclusion can lead to the dimensions of alienation, i.e. feeling of isolation and powerlessness, feeling of abnormality, feeling of alienation from oneself and meaninglessness, and feeling of cultural alienation.

The present study seeks to measure the effect of various types of social, economic, cultural and psychological support of support organizations on social vitality, social acceptance, quality of life (environmental and social dimension) and also the level of satisfaction with women's lives in order to investigate the effect of support organizations' support in improving the situation. Head-of-household women in Arak city in terms of some social indicators of development. Also, this study measures the effect of the lack of support from support organizations on the feeling of social deprivation (deprivation of social relationships and activities, deprivation of basic services, deprivation of neighborhood relations) and then social alienation (feeling of isolation and powerlessness, feeling of abnormality, feeling of alienation from self and meaninglessness, and the feeling of cultural alienation). The analytical model depicting the relationship between the variables is illustrated in the figure below.

*Diagram (1): Analytical model of the research*



### 3- Methodology

The current research is considered as a survey study. This study is descriptive and cross-sectional<sup>1</sup> in terms of time. It is also practical in nature and extensive in terms of scope.

#### *1-3- Statistical population and sampling method*

The statistical population for this study encompasses all women heads of households residing in Arak city, aged 19 to 85 years old, who are recipients of support from various organizations. The number of 350 head-of-household women was selected as a sample using Cochran's sampling formula. As the next step, proportional sampling was used in order to include all age groups in the research sample, and an effort was made to include all the mentioned age groups in the sample so that the results are a correct reflection of the observed reality and the results can be generalized to other women in the mentioned age groups.

#### *2-3- Questionnaire (operational definition of variables) and its validity and reliability*

Questionnaire was used as a research data collection tool, which was presented in the form of open, closed and semi-open questions.

##### *2-3-1- Operational definition of variables*

- **Female-headed households:** In this study, head-of-household women are women who manage their own lives.

- **Support for female-headed households:** Types of support provided to head-of-household women include the following items that were asked to women in the form of open and semi-open questions.

\**Social supports:* marriage assistance scheme for women heads of households and self-supporting girls, payment of social insurance premiums for women heads of households, implementation of a plan to improve nutrition and distribute suitable food in supported families.

\**Economic support:* self-employment loan payment, tuition payment for students from covered households, rent payment and housing deposit payment, payment of necessary loans.

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<sup>1</sup> Collecting information from 350 female heads of households was the result of the authors' 6-month presence among women.

\* *Psychological and cultural supports*: provision of counseling services, expansion of social services through employment clinics, technical and professional trainings based on community facilities, literacy of family members:

- **Social vitality**: The Oxford Happiness Questionnaire<sup>1</sup>, the experience of happy behavior, and neurosis have been used to measure social vitality. The Oxford Happiness Questionnaire has 29 questions. In the questions related to pessimism, dimensions 1- Desire for internal anxiety, 2- desire for external anxiety, 3- Despair, 4- Personal disbelief and 5- Impersonal disbelief have been measured. The experience of happy behavior has been measured with two components: the experience of happy leisure and the experience of attending happy events.
- **Social alienation**: It was measured with 15 items through examining the dimensions of feeling of isolation and powerlessness, feeling of abnormality, feeling of alienation from self and meaninglessness and feeling of cultural alienation.
- **Life satisfaction**: Various tools have been designed to measure life satisfaction. But the most widely used tools are the life satisfaction scale designed by Diener et al. (1985) to measure a person's overall judgment of his life, and it was also used in this research, which has 5 items.
- **Social acceptance**: In measuring the variable of social acceptance, the social acceptability scale prepared by the Marlowe–Crowne Social Desirability Scale (MC–SDS)<sup>2</sup> was used. The said scale includes 33 questions that are answered as true or false. The score derived from responses to this questionnaire indicates the individual's level of social acceptance.
- **Quality of life**: Quality of life was also measured through environmental (environmental quality) and social dimensions (quality of education, quality of health, quality of residential environment and quality of infrastructure). This part of the questionnaire had 18 items.
- **The feeling of social deprivation**: It was measured by examining the dimensions of deprivation from social relationships and activities, deprivation from basic services, and deprivation from neighborhood relations, which has been measured with 11 items.

### **2-3-2- Validity and reliability of the questionnaire**

The method of judges' agreement or "content validity" has been used to measure the validity of the questionnaire, so that the validity of the measurement tool has been obtained by the confirmation of experts and experts about its generality and desirability in order to answer the research questions. The inter-item correlation technique or Cronbach's alpha has been used to measure the reliability of the questionnaire that measures social vitality, social alienation, life satisfaction, social acceptance, quality of life and feeling of social deprivation, and the results indicate that the alpha value for these variables is 0.75, 0.71, 0.71, 0.72, 0.74, 0.72 respectively, That is an acceptable value in human sciences, and as a result, it can be said that The questionnaire exhibited strong reliability.

### **3-3- Data analysis method**

The collected data was analyzed with SPSS software using regression and two-sample t-test<sup>3</sup> and the effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable was checked.

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<sup>1</sup> The Oxford Happiness Questionnaire: a compact scale for the measurement of psychological well-being. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 33, 1073–1082.

<sup>2</sup> The Marlowe–Crowne Social Desirability Scale (MC–SDS) is a 33-item self-report questionnaire that assesses whether or not respondents are concerned with social approval. The scale was created by Douglas P. Crowne and David Marlowe in 1960 in an effort to measure social desirability bias, which is considered one of the most common biases affecting survey research. The MC–SDS has been listed in more than 1,000 articles and dissertations.

<sup>3</sup> The two-sample t-test (Snedecor and Cochran, 1989) is used to determine if two population means are equal. A common application is to test if a new process or treatment is superior to a current process or treatment. There are several variations on this test.

#### **4- Research findings**

##### ***1-4- Descriptive findings***

The results obtained through the questionnaire indicated that:

The 350 women heads of households who participated had a mean age of 43 years. Most of the head-of-household women (194 people) protected by support organizations were divorced, 32 of them were reported as married, 94 people were separated from their spouse due to death, and 12 persons were separated from their spouse due to the absence of a spouse. 35.7% of head-of-household women had an education level of reading and writing. Also, 31.7% of head-of-household women protected by support organizations had a diploma and 72 women were illiterate.

According to 102 female heads of the household, they live in their own homes. The data also showed that 153 of the women headed households lived in rented homes and 85 resided in their parents' house. 217 out of 350 sample women in this research stated that they are housewives. Also, 133 people stated that they are employed.

According to the evidence, most of the women covered by support organizations (106 people) support their living expenses through the support organizations' assistance. Considering that the aid received is insignificant, either in the form of cash, or in the form of goods and consumer items, and even in many cases, it does not provide the basic and daily needs of women (food and clothing), they have to ask for help from family, friends and acquaintances, well-wishers and neighbors too. Working women are also trying to meet the needs of the family with their small income<sup>1</sup>. Also, the findings show that most of the sample women (192 people) in addition to financial aid, receive non-financial aid in the form of goods and items from the relevant support organization.

The support provided by organizations for head-of-household women includes social aspects (providing services in the form of helping women marry, paying insurance premiums, improving nutrition considering the basket of goods), economic (paying self-employment loans, paying loan loans, paying rent and housing deposit, payment of education fees), cultural (paying attention to women's education and literacy) and psychological (conducting psychological classes, counseling services and social services). The findings show that although women believe that the aid received from support organizations is very insignificant, and this help has not had a positive and significant impact on their lives, but in some cases, it has been stated that receiving this little help has caused not be too dependent on others to fulfill their basic needs, and to be able to live their daily lives with them.

According to table (1), out of 350 female-headed households, 183 of the women participants reported low levels of life satisfaction.

Women's social vitality is made up of three dimensions of happiness, the personality neuroticism, and the experience of happy leisure. Most of the head-of-household women (214 people) had moderate level of social vitality. According to the theoretical and operational definition of the variable of social vitality, women have vitality who are happy, and then there is no pessimism in their personality, and they have the experience of happy leisure.

The quality of life (QOL) consists of six dimensions, namely education, residential environment, infrastructure, environment, health, and employment and income. Most of the head-of-household women evaluated their quality of life at an average, low and even unfavorable level.

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<sup>1</sup> This issue shows that women spend their lives hard despite the unfavorable economic situation and inflation, and in many cases, they are not able to provide some of their basic needs. They claim that in addition to their own low-income employment, they have to use the help of other people such as family, benefactors, friends and neighbors, etc., so that they can meet the needs of their lives. The cost of living for such women is high due to their or their children's illness, the need to provide medicine, pay for a specialist doctor's visit, surgery, etc.



The feeling of social deprivation encompasses three dimensions, that is, the feeling of deprivation from neighborhood relations, the feeling of deprivation from social relations and activities, and the feeling of deprivation from basic services. Women stated that they feel deprived in an average level from the three dimensions of neighborhood relations, social activities and basic services, therefore, their level of social deprivation is also reported in an average level based on the results.

The concept of social alienation is comprised of four distinct dimensions, that is, the feeling of isolation and powerlessness, the feeling of cultural alienation, the feeling of alienation from oneself, meaninglessness, and the feeling of abnormality. According to the results, 213 women stated that they experience a moderate feeling of isolation and powerlessness, a feeling of cultural alienation, a sense of alienation from themselves, and a sense of meaninglessness in their lives.

Finally, most of the head-of-household women (246 people) reported an average level of social acceptance. Social acceptance as a spiritual need can play a pivotal role in the development of a person's personality. When women feel accepted within their social circles, including friends, acquaintances, and family, they can then take empowered steps to determine their own future by relying on their own capabilities.

*Table (1): Frequency distribution of respondents based on the main research variables*

Responsiveness		Categories	Variable
Percentage	Frequency		
2.9	10	High levels of life satisfaction	Life satisfaction
44.9	157	Moderate levels of life satisfaction	
52.2	183	Low levels of life satisfaction	
20	70	High levels of social vitality	Social vitality
61.4	214	Moderate levels of social vitality	
18.6	66	Low levels of social a vitality	
5.7	20	High levels of quality of life	Quality of Life
46.3	162	Moderate levels of quality of life	
48	168	Unfavorable levels of quality of life	
35.1	123	High levels of social deprivation	Social deprivation
55.7	196	Moderate levels of social deprivation	
9.1	32	Low levels of social deprivation	
13.7	48	High levels of social alienation	Social alienation
60.8	213	Moderate levels of social alienation	
25.4	89	Low levels of social alienation	
14.2	50	High levels of social acceptance	Social acceptance
70.2	246	Moderate levels of social acceptance	
15.4	54	Low levels of social acceptance	

**2-4- Analytical findings (hypotheses testing based on two-sample t-test)**

This section examines the effect of support or lack of support from supporting organizations on the variables (social vitality, social acceptance, quality of life and feeling of social deprivation). The two-sample t-test (also known as the independent samples t-test) was used, because the independent variable in this section was two-dimensional.

The results related to each of the hypotheses according to the t two-sample t-test (receiving or not receiving support) are as follows.

**Hypothesis 1: There exists a significant difference in the level of social vitality between head-of-household women who received psychological support and those who did not receive such support.** The significance level of Levin's test is equal to (0.779), which is higher than the error level of 0.05, and it indicates the equality of variances in the two investigated groups. According to the results of the two-sample t-test, the significance level is equal to (0.834), which is higher than the error

level of 0.05. There was no significant difference between the level of vitality in head-of-household women who received psychological support and women who were not supported, and both groups had almost equal levels of vitality, which indicates that this hypothesis was rejected.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is a significant difference between the level of social acceptance in head-of-household women who received psychological support and unsupported women. According to the findings, the significance level of Levin's test is equal to (0.530), which is higher than the error level of 0.05 and indicates the equality of variances in the two groups under investigation. According to the results of the two-sample t-test, the significance level is equal to (0.190), which is higher than the error level of 0.05. No significant difference was found between the level of acceptance in female heads of households who received psychological support and unsupported women, and perceived acceptance was almost equal in both groups, which indicates that this hypothesis was rejected.

**Hypothesis 3:** There is no significant difference between the level of quality of life in head-of-household women who received psychological support and unsupported women. According to the findings, the significance level of Levin's test is equal to (0.021), which is less than the error level of 0.05, and therefore it indicates the inequality of variances in the two groups under investigation. The results of the two-sample t-test show that the significance level is equal to (0.001), which is less than the error level of 0.05. Therefore, head-of-household women who received psychological support had a better quality of life than unsupported women. Therefore, it can be said that this hypothesis has been confirmed.

**Hypothesis 4:** There is no significant difference between the level of social exclusion in head-of-household women who received psychological support and unsupported women. The findings show that the significance level of Levin's test is equal to (0.035), which is lower than the error level of 0.05, which indicates that the variances in the two groups are not equal. The results of the two-sample t-test show that the significance level is equal to (0.237), which is higher than the error level of 0.05. There is no significant difference between the level of deprivation in head-of-household women who received psychological support and unsupported women, and both groups had almost the same level of deprivation, which shows that this hypothesis was rejected.

**Hypothesis 5:** There is a significant difference between the level of vitality in head-of-household women who received social support and unsupported women. The significance level of Levin's test is equal to (0.191), which is higher than the error level of 0.05 and indicates the equality of variances in the two groups under investigation. According to the results of the two-sample t-test, the significance level is equal to (0.069), which is higher than the error level of 0.05. There is no significant difference between the level of vitality in head-of-household women who received social support and unsupported women, and both groups had almost equal levels of vitality, which indicates that this hypothesis was rejected.

**Hypothesis 6:** There is a significant difference between the level of acceptance in head-of-household women who received social support and unsupported women. According to the findings, the significance level of Levin's test is equal to (0.083), which is higher than the error level of 0.05, and therefore indicates the equality of variances in the two groups under investigation. According to the results of the two-sample t-test, the significance level is equal to (0.005), which is less than the error level of 0.05. Head-of-household women who did not receive social support had more acceptance than supported women, so the results show that this hypothesis is confirmed.

**Hypothesis 7:** There is a significant difference between the level of quality of life in head-of-household women who received social support and unsupported women. According to the findings, the significance level of Levin's test is equal to (0.072), which is higher than the error level of 0.05, and therefore, it indicates the equality of variances in the two investigated groups. According to the results of the two-sample t-test, the significance level is equal to (0.025), which is less than the error level of 0.05. Head-of-household women who received social support had a better quality of life than unsupported women. Thus, it can be said that this hypothesis has been confirmed.

**Hypothesis 8:** There is a significant difference between the level of feeling of deprivation in head-of-household women who received social support and unsupported women. The significance level of Levin's test is equal to (0.173), which is higher than the error level of 0.05 and indicates the equality of variances in the two groups under investigation. According to the results of the two-sample t-test, the significance level is equal to (0.173), which is more than the error level of 0.05. There is no significant difference between the level of feeling of deprivation in head-of-household women who received social support and women who were not supported, and both groups had almost the same level of feeling of deprivation. Thus, this hypothesis has also been rejected.

**Hypothesis 9:** There is a significant difference between the level of vitality in head-of-household women who received economic support, and women who were not supported. According to the results, the significance level of Levin's test is equal to (0.781), which is higher than the error level of 0.05 and indicates the equality of variances in the two groups under investigation. According to the results of the two-sample t-test, the significance level is equal to (0.000), which is less than the error level of 0.05. Therefore, the head-of-household women who did not receive economic support had less vitality than the supported women, so based on the results, this hypothesis was confirmed.

**Hypothesis 10:** There is a significant difference between the level of acceptance in head-of-household women who received economic support and unsupported women. According to the findings, the significance level of Levin's test is equal to (0.003), which is less than the error level of 0.05, and it indicates that the variances are not equal in the two investigated groups. The results of the two-sample t-test show that the significance level is equal to (0.695), which is higher than the error level of 0.05. There is no significant difference between the level of acceptance in head-of-household women who did not receive economic support and supported women. Thus, this hypothesis is rejected.

**Hypothesis 11:** There is a significant difference between the level of quality of life in head-of-household women who received economic support and unsupported women. According to the table, the significance level of Levin's test is equal to (0.548), which is higher than the error level of 0.05, and therefore it indicates the equality of variances in the two groups under investigation. According to the results of the two-sample t-test, the significance level is equal to (0.000), which is less than the error level of 0.05. Therefore, head-of-household women who received economic support had a better quality of life than unsupported women. Therefore, the mentioned hypothesis has been confirmed.

**Hypothesis 12:** There is a significant difference between the level of feeling of social deprivation in head-of-household women who received economic support and unsupported women. According to the results, the significance level of Levin's test is equal to (0.001), which is less than the error level of 0.05, and it indicates that the variances in the two groups are not equal. The results of the two-sample t-test show that the significance level is equal to (0.012), which is less than the error level of 0.05. Head-of-household women who received economic support felt less deprived than unsupported women, and thus, this hypothesis was confirmed.

**Hypothesis 13:** There is a significant difference between the level of vitality in head-of-household women who received psychological-cultural support and unsupported women. According to the results, the significance level of Levin's test is equal to (0.994), which is higher than the error level of 0.05, and therefore, it indicates the equality of variances in the two groups under investigation. According to the results of the two-sample t-test, the significance level is equal to (0.124), which is higher than the error level of 0.05; There is no significant difference between the level of vitality in head-of-household women who did not receive psychological-cultural support compared to supported women. Thus, this hypothesis is rejected.

**Hypothesis 14:** There is a significant difference between the level of social acceptance in head-of-household women who received psychological-cultural support and unsupported women. The results show that the significance level of Levin's test is equal to (0.225), which is higher than the error level of 0.05, which indicates the equality of variances in the two groups under investigation. The results of the two-sample t-test show that the significance level is equal to (0.454), which is higher than the error

level of 0.05. The level of acceptance in head-of-household women who did not receive psychological-cultural support was not significantly different from the supported women, and thus, this hypothesis was also rejected.

**Hypothesis 15:** There is a significant difference between the level of quality of life in head-of-household women who received psychological-cultural support and unsupported women. The significance level of Levin's test is equal to (0.109), which is higher than the error level of 0.05, which indicates the equality of variances in the two groups under investigation. According to the results of the two-sample t-test, the significance level is equal to (0.201), which is higher than the error level of 0.05; There is no significant difference between the level of quality of life in head-of-household women who did not receive psychological-cultural support and supported women. Therefore, based on the results, this hypothesis is rejected.

**Hypothesis 16:** There is a significant difference in the level of feeling of deprivation in head-of-household women who received psychological-cultural support and unsupported women. Considering that the significance level of Levin's test is equal to (0.572), which is lower than the error level of 0.05, which indicates the non-equality of variances in the two investigated groups. The results of the two-sample t-test show that the significance level is equal to (0.785), which is higher than the error level of 0.05; There is no significant difference between the level of feeling of deprivation in head-of-household women who did not receive psychological-cultural support compared to supported women. Therefore, according to the results, this hypothesis is rejected.

*Table (2): The effect of support or lack of support of supporting organizations on the main research variables*

Two-sample t-test							Levine test		Test mode	Hypothesis
Upper limit	lower limit	Standard error	mean difference	The significance level	Degrees of freedom	T statistic	The significance level	F statistic		
0.06784	-0.05480	0.03118	0.00652	0.834	348	0.209	0.779	0.079	Equality of variance	Hypothesis 1
-0.06787	-0.05482	0.03116	0.00652	0.834	276.905	0.209			Inequality of variance	
0.01720	-0.08614	0.2627	-0.03447	0.190	348	-1.312	0.530	.395	Equality of variance	Hypothesis 2
.01782	-.08676	.02656	-0.03447	0.195	266.881	-1.298			Inequality of variance	
-.07711	-.31596	.06072	-.19654	.001	348	-3.237	0.021	5.355	Equality of variance	Hypothesis 3
-.08169	-.31138	.05837	-.19654	.001	310.632	-3.367			Inequality of variance	
.14655	-.04019	.04747	.05318	.263	348	1.120	0.035	4.489	Equality of variance	Hypothesis 4
.14154	-.03518	.04491	.05318	.237	323.043	1.184			Inequality of variance	
.00483	-.12821	.03382	-.06169	.069	348	-1.824	0.191	1.719	Equality of variance	Hypothesis 5
.00095	-.12433	.03176	-.06169	.054	191.827	-1.942			Inequality of variance	
.13545	.02380	.02838	.07963	.005	348	2.805	0.083	3.015	Equality of variance	Hypothesis 6
.14138	.01788	.03124	.07963	.012	142.341	2.549			Inequality of variance	
-.01896	-.28126	.06668	-.15011	.025	348	-2.254	0.072	3.257	Equality of variance	Hypothesis 7
-.00868	-.29154	.07157	-.15011	.038	148.256	-2.097			Inequality of variance	
.17218	-.03117	.05170	.07051	.173	348	1.364	0.710	.138	Equality of variance	Hypothesis 8
.17273	-.03172	.05178	.07051	.175	167.908	1.362			Inequality of variance	
-.09793	-.21968	.03095	-.15880	.000	348	-5.130	0.781	.177	Equality of variance	Hypothesis 9
-.09787	-.21974	.03093	-.15880	.000	229.945	-5.135			Inequality of variance	
.06397	-.04267	.02711	.01065	.695	348	.393	0.003	8.988	Equality of variance	Hypothesis 10
.06961	-.04831	.02988	.01065	.722	180.130	.356			Inequality of variance	
-.10433	-.34930	.06228	-.22682	.000	348	-3.642	0.548	0.362	Equality of variance	Hypothesis 11
-.10119	-.35244	.06374	-.22682	.000	215.963	-3.559			Inequality of variance	
.20857	.01744	.04859	.11300	.021	348	2.326	0.001	11.47	Equality of variance	Hypothesis 12
0.20097	0.02504	.04469	0.1130	0.12	286.093	2.528			Inequality of variance	

Two-sample t-test							Levine test		Test mode	Hypothesis
Upper limit	lower limit	Standard error	mean difference	The significance level	Degrees of freedom	T statistic	The significance level	F statistic		
.01599	-.13133	.03745	-.05767	.124	348	-1.540	0.994	0.000	Equality of variance	<b>Hypothesis 13</b>
.01428	-.12962	.03632	-.05767	.115	112.817	-1.588			Inequality of variance	
.03860	-.08615	.03171	-.02378	.454	348	-.750	0.225	1.479	Equality of variance	<b>Hypothesis 14</b>
.03876	-.08631	.03155	-.02378	.453	109.089	-.753			Inequality of variance	
.05084	-.24064	.07410	-.09490	.201	348	-1.281	0.109	2.576	Equality of variance	<b>Hypothesis 15</b>
.06078	-.25058	.07848	-.09490	.229	101.329	-1.209			Inequality of variance	
.12835	-.09711	.05731	.01562	.785	348	.273	0.572	0.320	Equality of variance	<b>Hypothesis 16</b>
.12635	-.09511	.05588	.01562	.780	111.989	.279			Inequality of variance	

According to table (2), two groups of women who had psychological-cultural and social support and those who did not benefit from this support, had the same level of social vitality, but the head-of-household women who had economic support, they experience a higher level of social vitality in their lives. According to the results, receiving and not receiving psychological-cultural and economic support has not created a difference in women's social acceptance, but receiving social support has made this group of women understand a higher level of social acceptance and acceptance compared to women. Similarly, they were deprived of social support. Also, the research findings show that women who benefited from social and economic support had a higher quality of life. On the other hand, receiving and not receiving psychological-cultural support has not affected the quality of life of sample women. Finally, according to the findings of the research, psychological-cultural and social support did not affect the level of social deprivation of women, but women who had economic support experienced less deprivation in their lives.

**3-4- Analytical findings (hypotheses testing based on regression)**

The second part of findings analysis deals with hypotheses testing based on regression.

a) The results of the regression equation related to the variable of social vitality and life satisfaction are presented in the form of the following table.

*Table (3): The results of the regression equation*

Adjusted coefficient	Coefficient of determination (R <sup>2</sup> )	R
.626	.615	0.710

The results of the regression equation according to the results of the F-test indicate that the regression equation is a significant equation in the 99% confidence interval. Also, according to the correlation between these two variables, as can be seen, the value of the determination coefficient is equal to 615. That is, the independent variable, that is, social vitality, has the ability to explain the variable of life satisfaction, and considering that this level of explanation coefficient is strong, it can be said that 61% of the changes in social vitality are made by the variable of life satisfaction, and 39% of the explanation of the variable of social vitality is made by other factors. Its line equation is also equal to:

$$y = -1.555 + 2.809(x_2)$$

According to this equation, the constant value with the y-intercept is equal to a = 1.555 and the influence coefficient of the variable of social vitality is equal to 2.809, in other words, for one standard deviation of change in the independent variable by 2.809, the dependent variable increases by one unit.

b) In the form of the following table, the results of the regression equation related to the variable of social acceptance and life satisfaction are presented.

**Table 4- The results of the regression equation**

Adjusted coefficient	Coefficient of determination (R <sup>2</sup> )	R
0.311	0.310	0.312

The results of the regression equation according to the results of the F-test indicate that the regression equation is not a significant equation in the 99% confidence interval. Also, according to the correlation between these two variables, as can be seen, the coefficient of determination is equal to 0.310. Considering that this level of explanatory coefficient is weak, it can be said that the independent variable did not have the ability to explain the dependent variable (satisfaction with life) in the study.

c) The results of the regression equation related to the variables of quality of life and life satisfaction are presented in the form of the following table.

**Table (5): The results of the regression equation**

Adjusted coefficient	Coefficient of determination (R <sup>2</sup> )	R
0.691	.0690	0.720

The results of the regression equation according to the results of the F test indicate that the regression equation is a significant equation in the 99% confidence interval. Also, according to the correlation between these two variables, as can be seen, the coefficient of determination is equal to .0690, that is, the independent variable, quality of life, has the ability to explain the variable of life satisfaction by 0.69, and considering that this amount of the explanation coefficient is strong, it can be said that 69% of the changes in the quality of life are explained by the variable of life satisfaction, and 31% of the explanation of the quality of life is done by other factors. Its line equation is also equal to:

$$y = 1.326 + 1.160 (x_2)$$

According to this equation, the constant value with the y-intercept is equal to a = 1.326 and the influence coefficient of the variable of social vitality is equal to 1.160, in other words, for one standard deviation of change in the independent variable by 1.160, the dependent variable increases by one unit.

D) The results of the regression equation related to the variable of feeling of social deprivation and feeling of social alienation are presented in the form of the following table.

**Table (6): The results of the regression equation**

Adjusted coefficient	Coefficient of determination (R <sup>2</sup> )	R
0.640	0.656	0.690

The results of the regression equation according to the results of the " F" test indicate that the regression equation is a significant equation in the 99% confidence interval. Also, according to the correlation between these two variables, as can be seen, the coefficient of determination is equal to 0.656, that is, the independent variable, the feeling of social deprivation, has the ability to explain the feeling of social alienation to the extent of 0.65, and according to That this level of explanation coefficient is strong, it can be said that 65% of the feeling of social deprivation is explained by the feeling of social alienation variable, and 35% of the explanation of the feeling of social deprivation is done by other factors. Its line equation is also equal to:

$$y = 2.123 + 2.307 (x_2)$$

According to this equation, the constant value with the y-intercept is equal to a = 2.123 and the influence coefficient of the variable of social vitality is equal to 2.307, in other words, for one standard deviation of change in the independent variable by 2.307, the dependent variable increases by one unit.

## 5- Conclusion

Women who are heads of their households represent a vulnerable social group, facing numerous challenges and obstacles in their daily lives. Paying close attention to their issues and problems and formulating solutions to support this group are among the duties of social service organizations in every country. The research investigation focused on evaluating the effect of support from different organizations in improving the conditions experienced by female heads of households in Arak city. For this purpose, 350 female heads of households covered by supporting organizations were requested to complete the research questionnaire. The research findings show that the studied women had little satisfaction with their lives. They had moderate social vitality. The level of quality of life of female-headed households was low and unfavorable, and the level of social deprivation and social alienation was also moderate. Also, female heads of the household had an average moderate of social acceptance.

Based on the research findings, the aid received by women from supporting organizations in many cases has not provided their basic needs. Of course, although some women consider the aid received from support organizations to be very insignificant and believe that this help has not had a positive and significant impact on their lives, it has also been stated in some cases that receiving this little help has led to they should not be dependent on others to fulfill their basic needs and be able to spend their daily life with it. Also, in many cases, only economic assistance does not meet the needs of women, and the need for social, cultural and psychological support is also felt. The existence of all these supports together has the potential to enhance the living conditions of women. Relying only on one aspect of these supports (economic support) besides being ineffective, turns women into passive beings. As Shadi Talab, Wahabi and Varmarziyar (2004) stated, women's Poverty encompasses not only economic challenges but also significant psychological and social dimensions that are equally crucial. In fact, although the payment of financial aid is needed, and it is considered very pioneering and an undeniable necessity in the first place, but not paying attention to the empowerment of women, which means the actualization of their potential capacities in all objective, mental, spiritual and moral dimensions, will have adverse effects. Is. The increasing dependence of women heads of households on economic support reduces their productivity and efficiency and stabilizes their current poverty status. These results are consistent with the research findings of Rezaei Ghadi (2008), who believes that the granting of pensions and case-based assistance helps to continue women's dependence. Therefore, a support organization should pay more attention to the growth of women's agency by providing technical and professional educational services and creating their employment in order to empower head-of-household women (Jaafari Mehtash, 2016). Also, Salarzahi and Naseri (2013) also stated that the services provided by these organizations cannot help the development of women's empowerment. It should be noted that the elderly and people over 60 years of age welcomed the services of these organizations more in terms of receiving pensions and monthly salaries, and they did not want to be self-sufficient, because most of them were mostly sick, disabled and homeless (Bahrami, 2017). Concurrently, extant research findings suggest that the provision of such support services has contributed to fostering self-sufficiency among the target population of head-of-household women. (Alah-Yari and Asadi, 2014). Furthermore, in most cases, women's needs do not match with the type of support they receive, so that some of them cannot use the clothes and other supplies provided. According to the results of Ramazani's research (2005), in fact, there has been a gap between the expectations of the covered clients and the services of the support organization. Furthermore, financial aid in the form of loan payments or self-employment loans is not effective for them due to the lack of a guarantor and the inability of female heads of households to repay the loan installments. In many cases, ad hoc grants and small loans are used to pay women's previous debts, and due to their inability to repay loans, their small pension is also cut off and used to repay loan debts, which makes their conditions more unfavorable.

The results of the research show that the head-of-household women in Arak city are at a medium and low level in terms of having some development indicators such as quality of life, life satisfaction, social vitality, etc. These results align with findings from other studies conducted in similar contexts. Kashaninia and Olya (2008) also reached the conclusion that women heads of households have a lower quality of life.

Many of the studied women have to do simple and low-income jobs such as sales, product processing, house cleaning, etc., which, in addition to numerous physical problems, has affected their lives in terms of some social indicators. In addition, female heads of the household were relatively deprived. Moreover, women heading households experienced a notable sense of relative deprivation, as highlighted in Adrisi and Hatem Vand's 2012 study. The existence of such a situation is considered a significant obstacle to the happiness and vitality of women. Finally, it can be said that if the process of empowerment goes beyond the objective level (i.e. provision of objective and concrete needs such as provision of food, clothing, payment, etc.), and includes the mental dimension, we will witness a greater impact, depending on which of the above dimensions is the priority from the point of view of the policy makers, the policies and measures will be focused on the same dimension. Of course, the mentioned dimensions are necessary and necessary for each other. Also, obstacles and limitations increase in moving from lower levels to higher levels. At lower levels, specifically addressing objective needs, recognition, access, and provision are more straightforward. However, as individuals progress to higher levels, particularly the mental and spiritual realms, acquiring knowledge and achieving personal growth become increasingly challenging.

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