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**TEACHER SOCIAL STATUS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF FIRST YEAR MIDDLE
SCHOOL AND SECOND YEAR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS OF ARSANJAN IN THE
SCHOOL YEAR 2014-2015**

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to explore teacher social status and factors affecting it from the perspective of first year middle school and second year high school students. To this end, a descriptive-survey research method was used. The instrument used in this study was Social Status Inventory with a five-point Likert scale. The research population consisted of 2071 high school students, of whom 320 students were selected as the respondents in the research sample using cluster sampling method. The collected data were analyzed by independent samples t-test and chi-square test. The results indicated that there were no significant differences between the first year middle school and second year high school students' attitudes towards the impact of teacher respect, influence, income, and wealth on teacher social status. However, significant differences were found in the respondents' attitudes about the impact of value and significance on the teacher social status. The results also indicated that there is a significant relationship between the variables at all three subscales used in the study.

**Keywords: Teacher Social Status, Students' Attitudes, Teachers, First year middle school
and second year high school students**

INTRODUCTION

Human education and training received attention since the very first days of the creation of man. However, its significance has been increasingly evident in recent centuries. At the moment, education is the key to the development of communities and the success and prosperity of nations depends on the quality of their education. Undoubtedly, the future of any country can be predicted based on the current position of its educational system. As such, the significance of teachers is because of the role played by them in the community as a source of scientific knowledge, awareness, and insight. Therefore, teacher monitoring, control, and guiding power in in any society, especially in new societies and for new generations is known to everyone. In addition, teachers are the main element and the spirit of the educational system in all countries as the sublime goals of the system are realized through teachers' intellectual efforts. More importantly, what is learned by children in school is influenced by teachers' characteristics, qualities, and their scientific, cultural, religious, social, moral and spiritual competencies. Now it seems that profound changes made in the structure of the school curricula and student population have created

a crisis in the professional identity of teachers. The lack of the needed competencies to deal with this new situation has made many teachers see their professional identity at danger with a consequence that teachers' professional identity is in an urgent need to rebuild. In addition, since teachers in Arsanjan lack a high economic position and do not have a high level of professional motivation and given the students' maltreatment with their teachers and the lack of sufficient research in the two recent decades, the present study is going to explore teacher social status and factors affecting it from the perspective of first year middle school and second year high school students. Accordingly, the main question addressed in this study is whether there is any significant difference in high school students' attitudes towards the impact of teacher respect, influence, income, wealth, education and significance on teacher social status or not.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Jahangir Shah, Arshad Ali, and Ltabar Khan (2012) critically evaluated the social status of teachers. The public perceptions about teachers and their social status compared with other jobs in Peshawar, Pakistan. They

used a descriptive research method and interviewers were selected randomly from teachers and students. The results showed that most people are not satisfied with professional and social status of teachers and the teaching profession was perceived not to be satisfactory as compared with other jobs.

Jerome and Gale (2004) studied teacher expectations on a sample with 77 teachers. It was noted that some features such as the attractiveness of pupils and the accumulated information that could include anything, such as parents' race and social status can change teacher expectations. Student age, the number of their parents, and houses were among student characteristics that had no relationship with teacher expectation.

Abdullahi, Dadju Tavakoli, and Youseliani (2014) conducted a study to identify and validate professional competences of teachers. Based on the results of the factorial analysis, 98 competencies with 7 dimensions including teacher prerequisites, teacher personal characteristics, planning, preparation, classroom management and organization, teaching style, monitoring students' progress and ability, and professional responsibilities were identified. In addition, having verbal skills to convey information to students as one of teacher

prerequisites, clear explanation of assignments to monitor students' progress, having respectful behavior and interaction with parents as a component of professional responsibilities, expressing the results of lessons in a clear language in terms of planning and preparation, beforehand preparation of materials for classroom use in terms of classroom management and organization, creation of opportunities for the success of all students as a component of teacher characteristics, and the use of appropriate concepts and language based on students' age and level of understanding as a component of teaching style were found as the most important competencies that effective teachers should possess.

Sam Aram and Ghaempour (2011) measured pre-university students' perceptions about teacher social status in Qom Province. The results showed that teachers had a moderate to high social status as perceived by the students. In addition, teacher professional skills and their personal characteristics including their physical and behavioral qualities were found to be correlated with teacher social status and this relationship was significant at the confidence level of 99%. It was also noted that teacher social status was higher among female students than male

students, showing a significant difference at the confidence level of 99%.

METHODOLOGY

A descriptive-survey method was used in this study to explore teacher social status in Arsanjan. The research population consisted of 2071 first year middle school and second year high school students, of whom 320 students were selected as the respondents in the research sample by Cochran formula and using cluster sampling method. The instrument used to collect the data was Teacher Social Status Inventory with 11 items and 3 subscales: 1) Respect and Influence, 2) Income and Wealth, and 3) Value and Significance. The responses provided to each item were scored using a Likert scale (totally agree = 5, agree = 4, partially agree = 3, disagree = 2, and totally disagree = 1).

The reliability and validity of the instrument were previously determined by psychology practitioners and its internal validity was reported to be acceptable. Besides, the reliability of the instrument via Cronbach's alpha was 0.87. Table 1 shows the reliability values of the instrument:

Table 1: Cronbach's alpha coefficients and number of items

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
0.730	0.728	11

As can be seen, the value of Cronbach's alpha is 0.73% for 11 items in the questionnaire. As the reliability value ranges from 0 (no reliability) to +1 (perfect reliability), the obtained reliability value shows that the questionnaire possessed an acceptable level of reliability. The internal validity of the questionnaire was also confirmed by a number of psychology professionals. The collected data were analyzed by SPSS-20 using descriptive statistics including indices such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation as well as inferential statistics including independent samples t-test and chi-square test.

RESULTS

This section presents the results of data analysis used to test the research hypotheses.

4.1 Hypothesis I: There is a significant difference between the attitudes of first year middle school and second year high school students towards the impact of teacher respect and influence on teacher social status. Table 2 shows the results of independent samples t-test to compare the first year middle school and second year high school students. As can be seen the significance level is greater than 0.05 ($P > 0.05$), so the alternative hypothesis is rejected and the null

hypothesis is confirmed. Therefore, there is no significant difference between the attitudes of first year middle school and second year high school students towards impact of teacher respect and influence on teacher social status as shown in Fig.1:

As can be seen in Fig. 1, there is a considerable difference between the mean scores of both groups. However, as the value of F statistic shows ($P > 0.05$), this difference is not significant.

4.2 Hypothesis II: There is a significant difference between the attitudes of first year middle school and second year high school students towards the impact of teacher income and wealth on teacher social status.

Table 3 shows the results of independent samples t-test to compare the first year middle school and second year high school students. As can be seen the significance level is greater than 0.05 ($P > 0.05$), so the alternative hypothesis is rejected and the null hypothesis is confirmed. Therefore, there is no significant difference between the attitudes of first year middle school and second year high school students towards the impact of teacher income and wealth on teacher social status as shown in Fig.2:

As can be seen in Fig. 2, there is a considerable difference between the mean

scores of both groups of high school students concerning their attitudes about teacher income and wealth. However, as the value of F statistic shows ($P > 0.05$), this difference is not significant.

4.3 Hypothesis III: There is a significant difference between the attitudes of first year middle school and second year high school students towards the impact of teacher value and significance on teacher social status.

Table 4 shows the results of independent samples t-test to compare the first year middle school and second year high school students. As can be seen the significance level is less than 0.05 ($P < 0.05$), so the alternative hypothesis is confirmed and the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant difference between the attitudes of first year middle school and second year high school students towards the impact of teacher value and significance on teacher social status as shown in Fig.3:

As can be seen in Fig. 3, there is a considerable difference between the mean scores of both groups of high school students concerning their attitudes about teacher value and significance. Besides, as the value of F statistic shows ($P < 0.05$), this difference is significant.

4.4 Hypothesis IV: There is a significant difference between the attitudes of first year middle school and second year high school students towards teacher social status.

Table 5 shows the results of independent samples t-test to compare the first year middle school and second year high school students. As can be seen the significance level is less than 0.05 ($P < 0.05$), so the alternative hypothesis is confirmed and the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant difference between the attitudes of first year middle school and second year high school students towards teacher social status as shown in Fig.4:

As can be seen in Fig. 4, there is a considerable difference between the mean scores of both groups of high school students concerning their attitudes about teacher social status. Besides, as the significant level shows ($P < 0.05$), this difference is significant.

4.5 Results of chi-square test for the two research subscales

4.5.1 Respect and Influence Subscale

In the table 6, (Test Statistics), the chi-square value is two times greater than 186.826^a with a degree of freedom of 15 and P-value of 0.000. Since the P-value is less than 0.05, it follows that there is a significant relationship between the variables and thus the alternative hypothesis is confirmed.

4.5.2 Income and Wealth Subscale

In the table 7, (Test Statistics), the chi-square value is two times greater than 179.279^a with a degree of freedom of 12 and P-value of 0.000. Since the P-value is less than 0.05, it follows that there is a significant relationship between the variables and thus the alternative hypothesis is confirmed.

4.5.3 Value and Significance Subscale

In the table 8, (Test Statistics), the chi-square value is two times greater than 132.505^a with a degree of freedom of 15 and P-value of 0.000. Since the P-value is less than 0.05, it follows that there is a significant relationship between the variables and thus the alternative hypothesis is confirmed.

Table 2: Respondents' attitudes towards the impact of teacher respect and influence on teacher social status

Level of Education	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. E. Mean	F	Sig.
First year	9.98	2.89	0.234	2.475	0.117
Second Year	10.74	3.39	0.269		

Table 3: Respondents' attitudes towards the impact of teacher income and wealth on teacher social status

Level of Education	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. E. Mean	F	Sig.
First year	8.43	2.46	0.198	0.136	2.229
Second Year	8.91	2.30	0.182		

Table 4: Respondents' attitudes towards the impact of teacher value and significance on teacher social status

Level of Education	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. E. Mean	F	Sig.
First year	9.87	3.10	0.255	0.037	4.388
Second Year	10.33	3.55	0.281		

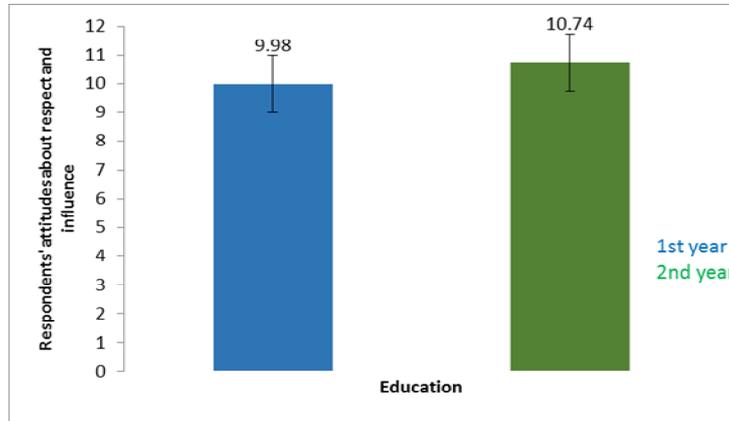


Fig. 1: Respondents' attitudes towards teacher respect and influence on their social status

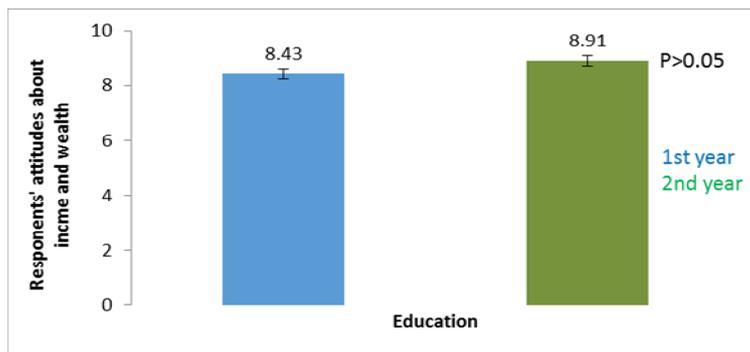


Fig. 2: Respondents' attitudes towards teacher income and wealth on their social status

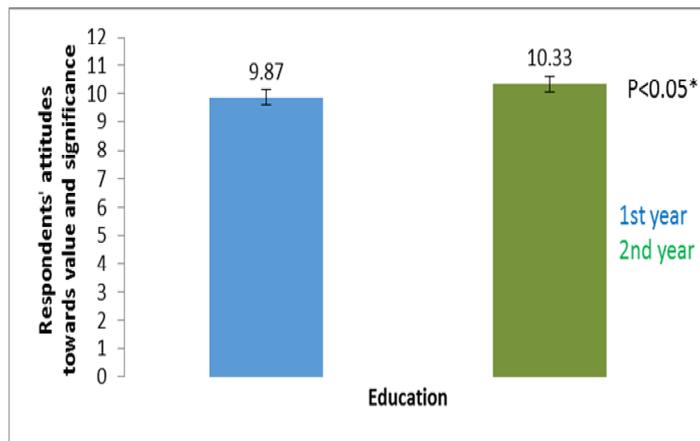


Fig. 3: Respondents' attitudes towards teacher value and significance on their social status

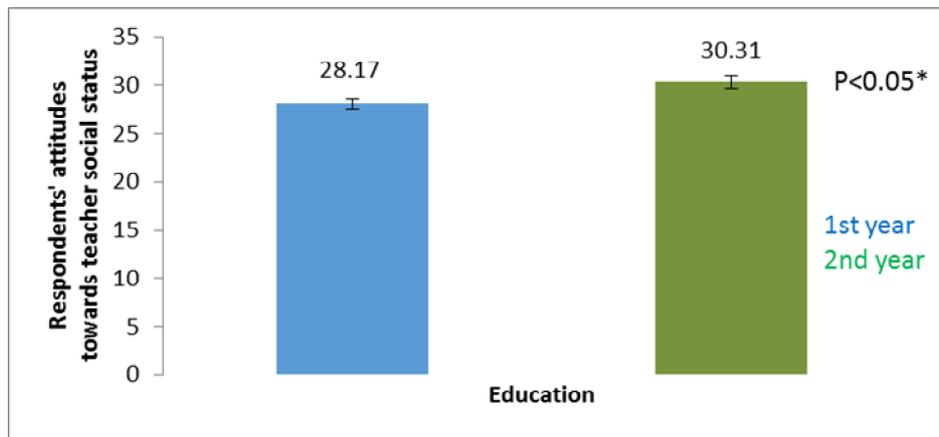


Fig. 4: Respondents' attitudes towards teacher social status

Table 5: Respondents' attitudes towards teacher social status

Level of Education	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. E. Mean	F	Sig.
First year	28.17	6.14	0.517	0.029	4.837
Second Year	30.31	7.67	0.626		

Table 6: Descriptive statistics for respect and influence subscale

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Min	Max
t1	320	10.3677	3.16947	4.00	20:00

Test Statistics	
	t1
Chi-Square	186.826 a
df	15
Asymp. Sig.	.000
a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 19.4.	

Table 7: Descriptive statistics for income and wealth subscale

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Min	Max
t2	320	8.6773	2.38479	3.00	15.00

Test Statistics	
	t2
Chi-Square	179.297a
df	12
Asymp. Sig.	.000
a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 19.4.	

Table 8: Descriptive statistics for value and significance subscale

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Min	Max
t3	320	10.1140	3.34557	4.00	20.00

Test Statistics	
	t3
Chi-Square	132.505a
df	15
Asymp. Sig.	.000
a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 19.4.	

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to explore teacher social status and factors affecting it from the perspective of first year middle school and second year high school students in Arsanjan. To this end, a main research hypothesis and three sub-hypotheses were formulated, as will be discussed follows.

The first research hypothesis indicated that there is a significant difference between the attitudes of first year middle school and second year high school students towards the impact of teacher respect and influence on teacher social status. The results of data analysis indicated that there was a considerable difference between the mean scores of the two groups of respondents. However, as the significance level ($P > 0.05$) indicated, this difference was not significant and thus the null hypothesis was confirmed showing that there was no significant

difference between the attitudes of first year middle school and second year high school students towards the impact of teacher respect and influence on teacher social status. Accordingly, it can be suggested that the first year middle school and second year high school students had the same level of awareness concerning teacher respect and influence and they may have been interested in the teaching profession and considered teachers as their role models. However, given the mean difference of 78% in the attitudes between the groups of the respondents, it can be said that the second year high school students hold a higher respect for teacher status than the first year guidance school students. This is significant in terms of their age and sensitivity. This finding is in line with the results of Sam Aram and Ghaempour (2012).

The second research hypothesis indicated that there is a significant difference between the attitudes of first year middle school and second year high school students towards the impact of teacher income and wealth on teacher social status. As the significance level ($P > 0.05$) indicated, this difference was not significant and thus the null hypothesis was confirmed, showing that there was no significant difference between the attitudes of first year middle school and second year high school students towards the impact of teacher respect and influence on teacher social status. Therefore, it can be suggested that the first year middle school and second year high school students had the same level of awareness concerning the impact of teacher respect and influence on teacher social status. This finding is consistent with the results of Sam Aram and Ghaempour (2012).

The third research hypothesis stated that there is a significant difference between the attitudes of first year middle school and second year high school students towards the impact of teacher value and significance on teacher social status. As the significance level ($P > 0.05$) indicated, this difference was significant and thus the null hypothesis was confirmed showing that there was a significant difference between the attitudes of

first year middle school and second year high school students towards the impact of teacher value and significance on teacher social status. This suggests that the first year middle school and second year high school students did not have similar attitudes concerning teacher value and significance. Therefore, given the mean scores of the two groups, it can be said that the second year high school students attached more importance to the impact of teacher value and significance on teacher social status as indicated by Alizade and Rezaei (2009).

The fourth research hypothesis suggested that there is a significant difference between the attitudes of first year middle school and second year high school students towards teacher social status. The results of data analysis indicated that the null hypothesis was rejected ($P < 0.05$) showing that there was a significant difference between the attitudes of first year middle school and second year high school students towards teacher social status. In addition, a difference of 2.14 between the mean scores of the two groups suggested that the second year high school students gave more weight to teacher social status as shown by Jahangir Shah, Arshad Ali and Altbar Khan (2012).

Generally, the findings indicated that the first year middle school students underestimated the impact of the variables under study on teacher social status. This can be explained from a number of perspectives:

1. The second year high school students in this study passed two years of their adolescent age and thus they looked upon the issues more critically.
2. According to Jean Piaget's theory, abstract thinking occurs from the age of thirteen. So the child education starts from the age of 6, the first year middle school students are at two initial years of abstract thinking and so their level of thinking is not as mature as that of older age groups.
3. Finally, if we accept that the first year middle school students get familiar with the basics of different jobs in the community, it is natural to expect that in the second part of high school, jobs and their positions are assessed with a more realistic view.

SUGGESTIONS

- Given the impact of appreciating the social status of teachers, it is suggested that the public awareness of the status of the teaching profession be raised using practical ways including helping the mass

media and change possible apathetic mentalities in this regard.

- Revising teacher selection and employment practices and taking actions to attract and develop competent and qualified teachers.
- Implementing decentralization policies and providing the context for full participations of teachers in the educational process.

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