Original Article

Status Consciousness

A Preliminary Construction of a Scale Measuring Individual Differences in Status-Relevant Attitudes, Beliefs, and Desires

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Abstract. This research examined individual differences in how people think about social status via a scale with eight proposed factors. Items designed to measure these factors were administered to an online sample (n = 1,009). A factor analysis revealed eight meaningful factors: *rejection of status, high-perceived status, respect for hierarchy, low-perceived status, status display, egalitarianism, belief in hierarchy*, and *enjoyment of status*. The 40 items forming these eight factors were then administered to a new sample of online participants (n = 303) alongside measures of self-esteem, social dominance orientation, competitiveness, assertiveness, social comparison orientation, narcissism, and hypersensitive narcissism. Confirmatory factor analyses from this subsequent study supported the model derived in the first study. A preliminary analysis of the construct validity of this new "Status Consciousness Scale" scale was undertaken by examining the correlations between the factors and other personality variables that were predicted to relate to each factor.

Keywords: social status, social rank, status hierarchies, status consciousness, personality

The topic of social status and status hierarchies has received attention from both psychologists (Anderson & Kilduff, 2009a; Fournier, Moskowitz, & Zuroff, 2002; Kalma, 1991) and sociologists (Berger, Cohen, & Zelditch, 1972; Faris & Felmlee, 2011; Lovaglia & Houser, 1996; Ridgeway & Diekema, 1989). They have studied power (Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003; Mast, 2010), dominance hierarchies in adolescents and children (Hawley, 2002; Lease, Musgrove, & Axelrod, 2002; Savin-Williams, 1979), and have explored who gains status in groups and how they do so (Anderson, John, Keltner, & Kring, 2001; Anderson & Kilduff, 2009b).

Evolutionary psychologists have noted the importance of status-related cognition and behavior, since social status is a matter of adaptive significance (Barkow, 1989; Buss, 2008; Cummins, 2006). Status hierarchies are a widespread element in human society and the primate social world more generally, and thus from an evolutionary perspective it is clear why humans should be concerned about their rank within the hierarchies that pervade our social world. High social status is associated with many reproductively relevant benefits (Cummins, 2006), and as such it is expected that evolution may have endowed us with evolved psychological mechanisms related to the social rank domain (Zuroff, Fournier, Patall, & Leybman, 2010). It is anticipated that there would be many of these mechanisms, each dealing with specific aspects of managing status concerns, such as those to do with assessing and protecting one's rank, and pursuing a higher rank. As such, there may be adaptively-relevant individual differences in these rank-related psychological mechanisms.

The following research studies this issue by examining individual differences in attitudes, beliefs, and desires associated with social status. While there is no existing scale that measures all these aspects together, there are a number of scales that measure some aspects of status-related preferences and motivations. For example, the Social Dominance Orientation (SDO) scale (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994) measures the preference for inequality among social groups, and thus the belief that social hierarchies are a good thing in society.

Other scales that do not directly address status concerns may nonetheless be related. The construct of competitiveness (Houston, Harris, McIntire, & Francis, 2002) may in part relate to the desire for high status, since someone with a strong desire to compete in order to win might also seek high status. Social comparison orientation, which is the degree to which individuals compare themselves with others (Gibbons & Buunk, 1999), may also relate to how much people care about where they rank in the social world.

Self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1965), since it is an evaluation of one's own worth, may be related to perceived status of oneself. Barkow (1980) argued that self-esteem is maintained as long as one can view oneself as superior at least to some others. Therefore it is possible that individuals with high self-esteem are also people who tend to view themselves as having high status.

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Similarly, narcissism may also be related to perceived status, since in its grandiose variant, it involves an individual's sense of feeling superior to others (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). The Narcissistic Personality Inventory measures this variant of narcissism as a general personality trait rather than the clinical form of narcissistic personality disorder (Raskin & Terry, 1988), and encompasses several elements relevant to status such as authority, superiority, and entitlement. In covert narcissism (Akhtar, 2000) the striving for, and appeal of high social rank may be less apparent, since it is more disguised in its expression, but we expect this variant of narcissism also to relate to status consciousness.

Interpersonal dominance, such as that measured by the Assertiveness scale (Goldberg et al., 2006), may also be relevant to perceived status since arguably it is a measure of how people behave according to how they believe they rank or how they feel they are entitled to rank.

The Present Research

While existing scales capture some aspects of status-relevant cognition, there has so far been no attempt to give a broad account of status-relevant attitudes, beliefs, and desires in one scale. Furthermore, there are aspects of status-relevant cognition that have not been captured by existing scales. The following research attempts to uncover more of these status-relevant attitudes, beliefs, and desires, and examine them together in a "Status Consciousness Scale." Potential factors will now be discussed.

First of all, there is the matter of whether status hierarchies are something that a person notices at all. It is anticipated that there are differences in the extent to which people pay attention to the hierarchies in the social world, since some individuals may be more attuned to this aspect of social life than others. The awareness of hierarchy also includes understanding of the consequences of occupying different positions within hierarchies, such as recognizing that having high status accrues certain benefits. Evolutionary theory would hold that there is adaptive relevance in how well humans are able to observe and understand hierarchies, since this affects their ability to negotiate those hierarchies. This first proposed factor addressing status consciousness will be called "awareness of hierarchy."

It is anticipated that there are also individual differences in how we position ourselves in relation to hierarchy, in terms of our attitudes and beliefs. In the proposed scale, a "belief in hierarchy" factor addresses the degree to which a person has a favorable view of status hierarchies, such that they believe that an individuals' rank within a hierarchy is a true reflection of their worth. This essentially entails a favorable view of hierarchies as being worthwhile and accurate measures of social value. Along similar lines, it is proposed that a "respect for hierarchy" factor measures how much people behave in a way that they believe is appropriate to their rank within hierarchies and relate to others in a way that they believe is appropriate to their relative standing. Both these factors are argued to have evolutionary significance in that these attitudes and beliefs would shape the extent to which people cooperate with or even attempt to take advantage of the system of hierarchy. This could have adaptive benefits if negotiated successfully, or potential survival and reproductive costs if objectionable attitudes lead individuals to struggle through a hierarchical social world unwillingly.

At a more personal level, an important factor associated with status consciousness is simply how much people want to rank highly in the social world, which could be called "status drive." This may be distinguished from the idea of "status anxiety," which is how much people worry about their rank in the world. We argue that these two factors are distinct, since it may be possible to desire high status, but not feel a great deal of anxiety about how one feels one currently ranks. Conversely, one might feel anxious about personal status but not have the drive or ambition to increase one's social rank. Another possible factor is how much people enjoy the idea of being in a high-status position and perhaps fantasise about being in a position of superiority, which is labeled here as "enjoyment of status." This is argued to form an independent factor because the degree to which individuals entertain such thoughts may still vary among those with different levels of status drive and status anxiety. In addition, the notion of "status display" refers to how much people like to present an image of themselves as conspicuously successful or superior. Once again, these factors are argued to have adaptive significance, since each of them reflects some aspect of an individual's relationship to status hierarchies, and their self-rated potential to succeed within them. The desire to obtain high status, anxiety about having low status, and delighting in and displaying signs of high status may all be ways in which evolved psychological mechanisms drive individuals to obtain higher rank. Finally "perceived status" is also a proposed factor in the scale. This is simply an individual's evaluation of their own rank within the social world, which would be informative alongside the other proposed factors of this scale.

Examining all these factors together will allow the development of a Status Consciousness Scale that is broad and multifaceted. One advantage of having all these potential factors accounted for in one scale is that the investigation can examine awareness of status, as well as attitudes and beliefs about status alongside status-relevant desires and motivation, and self-perceived personal standing. However, the construct of "status consciousness" is by no means argued to be exhaustively addressed here. These eight factors complement existing scales and are not argued to be a comprehensive characterization of all status-relevant cognitions and strivings. This exploratory study attempts to uncover important basic factors of status consciousness that will serve as a starting point for further research.

Study 1 administered a pool of questionnaire items to a large sample and used an exploratory factor analysis to select items for the Status Consciousness Scale. Study 2 further examined the components found in Study 1 with a confirmatory factor analysis in a new sample, and commenced initial construct validation of the scale.

Study 1: Initial Development of Items for the Status Consciousness Scale

This study involved the development of items addressing the eight proposed factors for the Status Consciousness Scale and their administration to a sample in order to select items for the scale. The aim here was to begin with a conceptualization of "status consciousness" that began with the proposed factors, and then narrowed down to key status-relevant factors through a data-driven approach.

Method

Participants

Participants were recruited through Amazon's MTurk website by inviting them to participate in a survey about social status for a psychology research project. Participation was restricted to people whose location was in the USA. Participants were offered payment of US$1 for the study, which they were told would take 30 min to complete. Initially there were 1,117 responses, but deleting all incomplete responses and those suspected to be spam left a sample of 1,009 participants. The sample was 58.3% female, 963 participants were US citizens and participants had an age range of 18–88 years (M = 31.39, SD = 11.54).

Materials and Procedure

Preliminary items were written by the researchers to address concepts within each of the eight proposed factors. Item generation for this study was informed by earlier pilot research involving an exploratory factor analysis of 50 original items about beliefs, attitudes, and desires relating to social status. For each of the eight proposed factors the researchers included 20 items, half of which were reversed-scored, creating a total of 160 items. Participants were asked to indicate the degree to which they agree with or disagree with each statement on a scale of 1 (= *strongly disagree*) to 7 (= *strongly agree*). Participants were also asked for their age, gender, country of citizenship and residence, and some other questions of interest to the researchers that will not be reported on here.

The questionnaire was administered using Qualtrics software by providing the link to the survey on the MTurk website. Participants were first presented with the information and consent form, then the 160 items with the order randomized by Qualtrics for each participant. After the questionnaire they were asked for their demographic information. Participants were paid US$1 through MTurk when they had successfully submitted their questionnaire.

Results

An exploratory factor analysis was performed using SPSS version 21 on the 160 items in order to examine whether the eight proposed factors were indeed present in the dataset. This data-driven approach was used due to the exploratory nature of this research, with consideration for the possibility that these items might be summarised more appropriately by alternative factors. Furthermore, this process aimed to reduce this large number of items by identifying the strongest-loading items on each factor to be examined in further analyses.

A maximum likelihood analysis with a Promax rotation (κ = 4) was used, since it was expected that some of these factors might correlate. This resulted in 13 factors with an eigenvalue greater than one, presented in Table 1. A parallel analysis of Principal Component Analysis (PCA) eigenvalues (Zwick & Velicer, 1986) was also conducted, which suggested that 17 factors should be retained. However, there were only two items with loadings above .3 on the ninth factor, and each subsequent factor also had few items with strong loadings. The scree plot indicated a definite "elbow" between the eighth and ninth factor, and the percentage of explained variance lowered substantially by the ninth factor. Therefore, we decided that only the top eight factors would be considered further. These top eight factors explained 39.49% of the variance. Since the purpose of this study was to select items for a scale of manageable length and a balanced scale was preferred, only the top five items for each of these eight factors were selected for inclusion. Selecting only the top five items for each factor allowed the selection of items with the strongest loadings and prevented the inclusion of items with weak loadings, since loadings weakened substantially beyond the fifth item for several factors. The loadings for these 40 items in the Status Consciousness Scale are presented in Table 2. The inter-factor correlations of these eight factors are shown in Table 3.

The means and other descriptive statistics for each of these factors are shown in Table 4. The mean scores were calculated by adding up the total score for each factor and dividing by the number of items on each factor. The factors appear in the same order as Table 2, and each one has been named according to the construct it appears to measure.

Table 1. Factors with eigenvalues greater than one in the maximum likelihood exploratory factor analysis of the 160 "Status Consciousness" items

Factor	Eigenvalue	% Variance explained
1	31.26	19.54
2	6.85	4.28
3	6.49	4.06
4	5.53	3.46
5	4.76	2.98
6	3.55	2.22
7	2.72	1.70
8	2.02	1.26
9	1.43	0.90
10	1.36	0.85
11	1.21	0.76
12	1.08	0.68
13	1.03	0.64

Table 2. Pattern matrix from the maximum likelihood exploratory factor analysis of the 160 "Status Consciousness" items with a Promax rotation showing the top five items of the top eight factors found in Study 1

Item	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. It doesn't matter to me where I stand in the social order.	**.83**	.01	.04	.04	.03	.06	−.02	.06
2. I'm not interested in trying to impress people.	**.78**	.18	−.07	.06	.05	−.01	−.11	−.12
3. I don't spend much time thinking about whether I'm good enough compared to others.	**.75**	.02	−.02	−.02	−.01	−.01	.02	−.02
4. If other people don't see me as something special, it's no big deal.	**.74**	−.07	.01	.05	.03	.03	.11	−.08
5. It doesn't really matter how you compare to others.	**.74**	−.05	.04	.10	.00	−.03	−.09	.19
6. The people lower than me in a hierarchy can expect that I will treat them as such.	.14	**.84**	.03	.15	−.05	−.02	−.11	−.05
7. When I meet someone I notice the ways in which I'm better than them.	−.11	**.75**	−.07	.03	.04	.01	.02	.02
8. If you aren't at the top, you are nothing.	.09	**.74**	−.05	.09	.03	−.03	−.08	−.11
9. When someone else does well, I can always think of a way in which I'm better than them.	−.06	**.72**	−.04	−.02	−.04	−.01	.03	−.03
10. I often feel as though others are beneath me.	.01	**.69**	−.06	.02	−.05	.01	−.12	−.06
11. Everybody should respect their superiors.	.05	−.06	**.74**	−.01	−.03	.01	.01	.03
12. Just because somebody ranks above you, it doesn't mean you owe them any extra respect.	.08	.03	**−.68**	.01	−.01	.01	.07	−.01
13. There is no obligation to treat those who rank higher than you as superior.	.05	.02	**−.60**	.00	−.02	−.02	.05	−.09
14. I do what is expected of me by those with a higher authority.	−.05	−.20	**.60**	.00	.04	-.01	.12	−.03
15. The people who rank above you in a hierarchy should be treated in a way that is appropriate to their higher position.	.06	**.35**	**.58**	.00	.01	.09	.12	−.16
16. I don't think I've ever achieved anything particularly extraordinary.	.06	.11	−.03	**.74**	.04	−.03	−.04	.02
17. I don't think I rank very high in the world.	.04	−.03	-.02	**.69**	.01	.04	.13	.11
18. I'm nothing special compared to everyone else.	.06	.13	−.03	**.67**	.04	.01	−.04	.02
19. When I compare my life to others peoples' lives, I sometimes feel like a loser.	−.11	.09	.00	**.66**	−.06	.03	.01	.05
20. I struggle to find anything that I'm the best at.	−.09	.24	.01	**.62**	.02	.00	−.01	.05
21. When I succeed at something, I like to tell people about it.	−.03	−.01	.02	.01	**.95**	.05	.01	.01
22. I like telling other people when something good happens to me.	−.06	.06	−.01	−.02	**.83**	.04	.08	−.07
23. I like telling other people about my achievements.	−.07	−.02	.03	.00	**.77**	.03	.02	−.05
24. When I achieve something, I tend to keep quiet about it.	−.13	−.14	−.01	.00	**−.74**	-.02	−.01	−.07
25. I don't need to go telling everyone when something good happens to me.	−.12	.02	.04	−.02	**−.67**	.01	−.01	−.09
26. I prefer it if everybody is equal.	.06	.02	−.02	.05	.00	**.83**	−.14	.00
27. Everyone should be striving to make the world a more equal place.	−.09	.02	.03	−.04	.01	**.82**	−.04	−.10
28. I wish there was true equality in the world.	.08	.03	−.04	.03	−.02	**.80**	−.10	.02
29. We don't need to try to make the world a more equal place.	.08	.25	.00	.00	.00	**−.75**	.06	.00
30. People who have more in life should sacrifice some of what they have to improve the lives of people who have less.	.08	.05	.06	.02	.09	**.47**	−.11	.02
31. The world is never going to be equal because some people will always do better than others.	.02	−.14	.01	.10	.05	−.16	**.69**	−.04
32. It's only natural that some people get ahead of others in life.	.08	−.04	.06	−.04	.01	−.08	**.61**	−.03
33. There's nothing wrong with the fact that some people are better off than others.	.11	.03	.00	−.01	.05	−.23	**.56**	.02
34. It's natural for people to want to be better than others.	−.08	.02	.04	.04	.09	.05	**.54**	.03
35. If I don't make something out of myself it's my own fault.	.10	−.22	−.01	−.01	.01	−.03	**.52**	.04
36. It feels good when other people are in awe of me.	.00	−.02	.00	−.02	.00	−.02	−.03	**.84**
37. It feels nice to be envied.	.02	.17	−.06	.02	.04	.00	.10	**.74**
38. I enjoy being the object of people's envy.	−.01	**.30**	−.06	.02	.02	.00	.05	**.70**
39. I get a rush out of feeling other people's admiration.	−.01	.08	.05	.07	−.10	.03	−.01	**.59**
40. I like the idea of being an important person.	−.15	−.03	−.03	−.04	.00	−.07	−.05	**.55**

Note. Items with loadings of .3 and above are shown in bold.

Table 3. Inter-factor correlations of the first eight factors from the maximum likelihood analysis

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	
2	−.47	1	–	–	–	–	–	
3	−.27	.39	1	–	–	–	–	–
4	−.02	−.03	.06	1	–	–	–	–
5	.37	−.21	−.12	.23	1	–	–	–
6	.18	−.21	−.17	.10	−.09	1	–	–
7	−.26	.28	.22	−.07	−.31	−.14	1	–
8	−.56	.48	.24	−.08	−.55	−.02	.52	1

Discussion

The eight factors that were expected to arise based on pilot data were: *awareness of hierarchy*, *belief in hierarchy*, *respect for hierarchy, status drive*, *status anxiety*, *enjoyment of status*, *status display*, and *perceived status*. After the analysis, eight factors were included: *rejection of status*, *high-perceived status*, *respect for hierarchy*, *low-perceived status, status display, egalitarianism, belief in hierarchy*, and *enjoyment of status*.

Some of the proposed factors arose as predicted, including *respect for hierarchy, status display, belief in hierarchy,* and *enjoyment of status*. It was predicted that *perceived status* would form a single factor, but surprisingly, *high-perceived status* and *low-perceived status* arose as two separate factors. The items in the "*egalitarianism*" factor came largely from the reverse-scored items in the proposed "*belief in hierarchy*" factor. *Rejection of status* included items from the proposed *belief in hierarchy, status anxiety, status drive* and *status display* factors. Neither the "*status drive*" nor the "*awareness of hierarchy*" factors were in evidence. There were two items that cross-loaded on factor 2, however neither of these were greater than .4 and were therefore not considered to be any cause for concern. The Cronbach's alphas for each factor (Table 3) suggest that the items in each of these factors reliably measure their respective underlying constructs.

In sum, half of the proposed factors emerged as expected, while items from some factors loaded in unexpected ways. The factors that arose are nonetheless meaningful, and worthy of further examination. These items were therefore administered to a new sample in order to determine whether this model would be supported by a confirmatory factor analysis, and to examine the relationship that these factors have with other personality traits.

Study 2: Preliminary Examination of Construct Validity of the Status Consciousness Scale

In order to further investigate the factors found in Study 1, the 40-item Status Consciousness Scale was administered to a new sample along with measures of self-esteem, social dominance orientation (SDO), competitiveness, social comparison orientation, narcissism, hypersensitive narcissism, and assertiveness in order to examine the scale's concurrent validity. This study also aimed to determine whether the scale derived in Study 1 would be supported by a confirmatory factor analysis.

Given that *rejection of status* entails a disinterest in social status and how one compares with others, it was predicted to correlate negatively with competitiveness and social comparison orientation. This factor was also predicted to correlate negatively with overt (Narcissistic Personality Inventory, NPI) narcissism, since narcissism involves a sense of superiority and grandiosity, and therefore narcissistic individuals should not reject status concerns. A measure of hypersensitive narcissism was also included, since these covert narcissists are also known to be preoccupied with status-concerns. However, covert narcissists tend to keep their grandiosity and concern with

Table 4. Descriptive statistics for the eight factors of the Status Consciousness Scale

	Study 1		Study 2	
Component	*M* (*SD*)	Cronbach's α	*M* (*SD*)	Cronbach's α
Rejection of status	4.72 (1.56)	0.83	4.76 (1.13)	0.81
High-perceived status	2.78 (1.08)	0.80	2.67 (1.08)	0.80
Respect for hierarchy	3.83 (1.02)	0.76	3.93 (1.12)	0.83
Low-perceived status	3.93 (1.22)	0.78	3.96 (1.29)	0.80
Status display	3.96 (1.14)	0.85	3.97 (1.17)	0.87
Egalitarianism	4.98 (1.28)	0.86	5.10 (1.28)	0.87
Belief in hierarchy	5.12 (0.91)	0.70	5.00 (1.01)	0.76
Enjoyment of status	4.04 (1.26)	0.85	3.88 (1.36)	0.90

status hidden, and may even avoid competitive situations (Akhtar, 2000). Therefore it was also expected to correlate with *rejection of status*. However this correlation was predicted to be weaker than that with overt narcissism, since overt narcissists should be less likely to reject status concerns than hypersensitive narcissists.

High-perceived status was predicted to correlate positively with self-esteem, overt narcissism, and hypersensitive narcissism, since this factor entails a feeling of superiority compared to others. Once again it was expected that the correlation with hypersensitive narcissism would be weaker than that with overt narcissism. This factor was also predicted to correlate positively with assertiveness, since those who see themselves as superior to others should be more likely to dominate others.

Low-perceived status was expected to correlate negatively with self-esteem and assertiveness, since those who view themselves as inferior to others are likely to have low self-esteem and be less likely to dominate others.

Status display was predicted to correlate positively with competitiveness since people with a competitive nature are likely to want to communicate their success to others. It was also predicted to correlate positively with overt narcissism, since those with a narcissistic sense of superiority and grandiosity are likely be motivated to display signs of high status. It was predicted to also correlate positively with hypersensitive narcissism, again to a slightly lesser degree.

Along similar lines, overt narcissism and hypersensitive narcissism were expected to correlate positively with *enjoyment of status*, since narcissistic individuals enjoy the idea of being considered special and superior. Once again, the correlation with hypersensitive narcissism was predicted to be weaker than that with overt narcissism. *Enjoyment of status* was also predicted to correlate positively with competitiveness, since the desire for status entailed in competitiveness is likely to be higher in those individuals who enjoy thoughts of having high status.

Since SDO is a preference for inequality among social groups, we predicted that it would correlate positively with *respect for hierarchy*, which is the belief that one should respect higher-ranking people. It was also predicted to correlate positively with *belief in hierarchy,* which involves the belief that inequality between groups is natural and good. For similar reasons, *egalitarianism* was expected to correlate negatively with SDO, since those who prefer equality between individuals are suggested to dislike inequality between groups.

Method

Participants

Participants in Study 2 were recruited through Amazon's MTurk website and again participation was restricted to people whose location was in the USA. Participants were offered payment of US$1 for participation in the study, which they were told would take 30 min to complete. There were 303 participants of whom 50.8% female and 298 were US citizens. The sample had an age range of 18–72 years (M = 38.23, SD = 13.54).

Materials and Procedure

Participants completed the 40 items of the Status Consciousness Scale from Study 1, as well as the Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale (Rosenberg, 1965), the SDO scale (Pratto et al., 1994), the Revised Competitiveness Index (Houston et al., 2002), the Assertiveness scale (Goldberg et al., 2006), the Iowa-Netherlands Comparison Orientation Measure (INCOM; Gibbons & Buunk, 1999), the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI; Raskin & Terry, 1988), and the Hypersensitive Narcissism Scale (Hendin & Cheek, 1997).

Participants were provided with the link to the survey on the MTurk website. They were first asked to complete the 40 items of the Status Consciousness Scale, followed by the personality scales presented in randomized order for each participant. The order of items within scales was randomized by Qualtrics for each participant. After the personality scales, participants were asked for their demographic information and were paid US$1 through MTurk when they had successfully submitted their questionnaire.

Results

A confirmatory factor analysis was performed on the Status Consciousness Scale using AMOS, where covariances were added between factors that had an intercorrelation greater than .3. The analysis found that the model fit was satisfactory, $\chi^2(731) = 1{,}678.69$, $p < .001$, $\chi^2/df = 2.296$, SRMR = .112, TLI = .834, CFI = .844, RMSEA = .066. The model is presented in Figure 1. All path coefficients were significant.

The means and other descriptive statistics for each of these factors are shown in Table 3. The correlations between the factors on the Status Consciousness Scale and the other personality scales are shown in Table 5.

Discussion

The confirmatory factor analyses show that this model is a satisfactory fit to the data, providing further support for the model discovered in Study 1, where items selected for the Status Consciousness Scale were modeled by eight factors.

Results for the correlations between the scale factors and other personality traits were reasonably consistent with expectations, and are discussed below. Unless relevant to hypotheses, weak correlations are not discussed.

As expected, there was a strong negative correlation between *rejection of status* and social comparison orientation. There were also moderate negative correlations between *rejection of status* with competitiveness, and overt and hypersensitive narcissism, as predicted. However, the correlation with hypersensitive narcissism was stronger than that with narcissism, contrary to predictions.

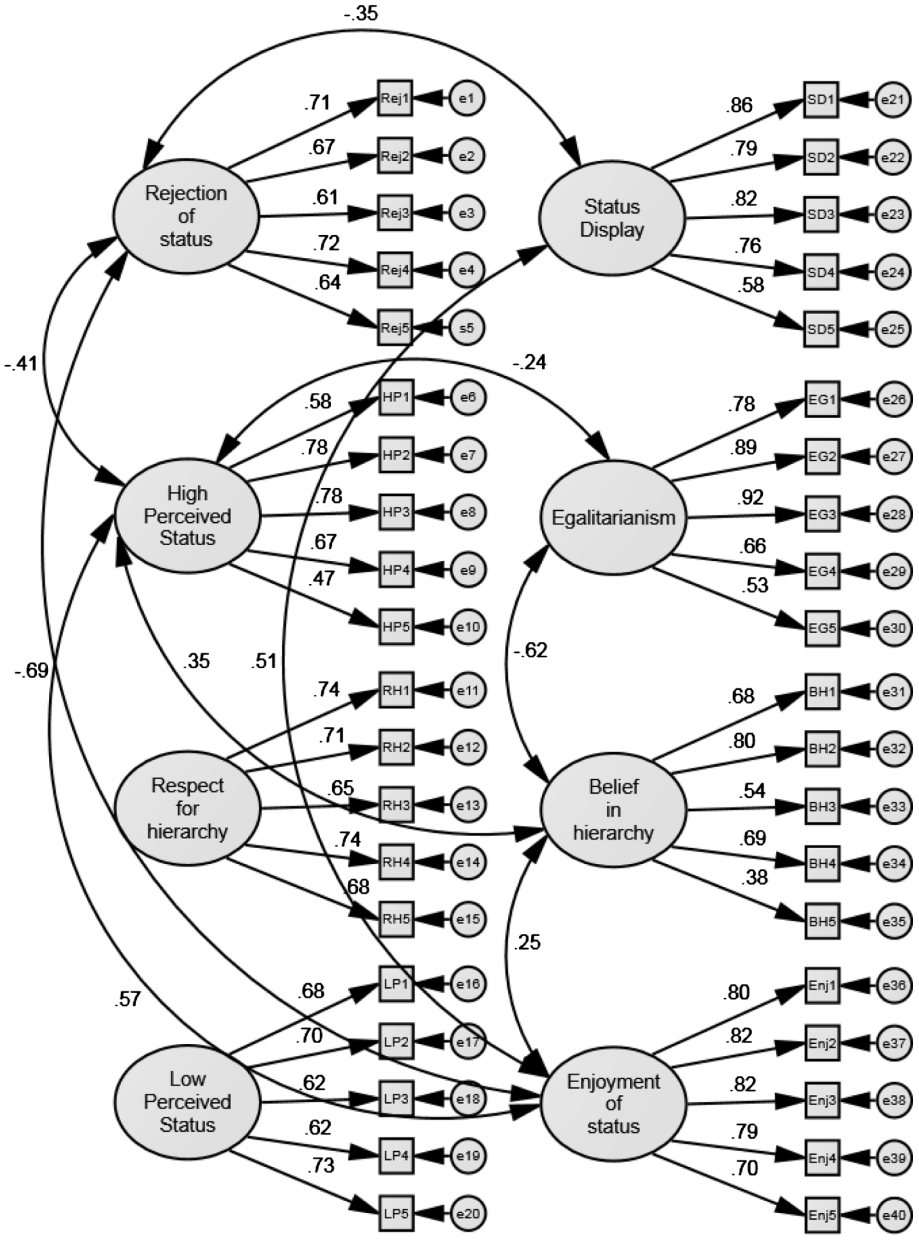

Figure 1. Path model for the "Status Consciousness Scale" in Study 2 showing standardized path coefficients.

This suggests that hypersensitive narcissists are less likely to reject status concerns than overt narcissists, which is contrary to the expectation that they should be less open about their concern with status than narcissists.

There was a strong positive correlation between *high-perceived status* and overt narcissism, and a moderate positive correlation with hypersensitive narcissism, as predicted. However, the predicted positive correlation between *high-perceived status* and assertiveness was very weak. This might be because the sense of superiority entailed in this factor does not necessarily extend to the tendency to control or lead others that is measured in the assertiveness scale. Contrary to predictions, *high-perceived status* did not correlate with self-esteem, suggesting that high self-esteem does not necessarily entail a belief in one's own superiority. The strong positive correlation between *high-perceived status* and SDO was not predicted. However, previous research found that SDO correlated negatively with concern for others (Pratto et al., 1994), supporting the notion that SDO entails a sense of superiority that is also inherent within *high-perceived status*. This factor also had moderate positive correlations with competitiveness and social comparison orientation, which while they were not predicted, form a coherent pattern; people who view themselves as being high-status are more likely to be competitive and be concerned with how they compare to others.

As predicted, there were strong negative correlations between *low-perceived status* and both self-esteem and assertiveness. There was also a moderate negative correlation with competitiveness that was not predicted, which

Table 5. Correlations between factors on the Status Consciousness Scale and personality traits in Study 2

	Rejection of status	High-perceived status	Respect for hierarchy	Low-perceived status	Status display	Egalitarianism	Belief in hierarchy	Enjoyment of status
Rejection of status	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
High-perceived status	−.41**	1	–	–	–	–	–	–
Respect for hierarchy	−.15**	.19**	1	–	–	–	–	–
Low-perceived status	−.04	−.02	.02	1	–	–	–	–
Status display	−.37**	.24**	.10	−.16**	1	–	–	–
Egalitarianism	.14*	−.34**	−.11	.07	−.08	1	–	–
Belief in hierarchy	−.19**	.35**	.27**	.00	.22**	−.55**	1	–
Enjoyment of status	−.61**	.58**	.22**	−.09	.56**	−.21**	.43**	1
Self-esteem	.22**	−.06	.03	−.67**	.09	−.08	.05	−.03
SDO	−.22**	.48**	.21**	−.04	.14*	−.77**	.49**	.29**
Competitiveness	−.28**	.41**	.00	−.38**	.29**	−.22**	.35**	.43**
Assertiveness	−.05	.12*	−.04	−.54**	.25**	−.09	.20**	.29**
INCOM	−.55**	.33**	.26**	.11	.38**	.04	.24**	.55**
Narcissism	−.28**	.48**	.02	−.47**	.34**	−.19**	.23**	.53**
Hypersensitive Narcissism	−.38**	.33**	.02	.32**	.23**	−.11	.19**	.36**

Notes. *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$ (two-tailed).

may be the case because competitiveness perhaps requires a degree of self-confidence that those who perceive themselves to have low status lack. There was a strong negative correlation with overt narcissism that was not predicted; however it makes sense that such narcissists, being grandiose, do not see themselves as inferior to others. On the other hand, *low-perceived status* had a moderate positive correlation with hypersensitive narcissism that was also not predicted. This suggests that while overt narcissists do not tend to feel inferior to others, hypersensitive narcissists do have a sense of inferiority, at least on the surface.

There was a moderate positive correlation between *status display* with overt narcissism and competitiveness, as predicted. Also as predicted, the positive correlation with hypersensitive narcissism was weaker than that with overt narcissism. *Status display* also had a moderate positive correlation with social comparison orientation that was not expected. This suggests that people who like to display signs of high status are also quite concerned with making social comparisons, perhaps to check how they compare with others to justify this display.

Enjoyment of status had a strong positive correlation with overt narcissism and a moderate positive correlation with hypersensitive narcissism, as expected. As predicted, it also had a moderate positive correlation with competitiveness. The strong positive correlation with social comparison orientation was not predicted, but it forms a coherent picture that those who enjoy the thought of high status are also preoccupied with making social comparisons, since this is one means by which they acquire information about their status. *Enjoyment of status* also had moderate positive correlations with assertiveness and SDO that were not predicted, suggesting that these individuals also have the tendency to be interpersonally dominant and endorse inequality between groups.

SDO had a strong negative correlation with *egalitarianism* and a strong positive correlation with *belief in hierarchy*, as predicted. As predicted, there was a positive correlation between SDO and *respect for hierarchy,* however this correlation was weak. The "*respect for hierarchy*" factor measures respect for one's superiors within a hierarchy. If, as discussed above, SDO entails a sense of superiority, people high on SDO might not feel they have superiors to respect; thus there may be a ceiling effect restricting correlation. *Belief in hierarchy* also had a moderate positive correlation with competitiveness that was not predicted, however competitiveness is consistent with the belief that high status in hierarchies is rightfully earned by those who are skilled in obtaining it.

Gender Differences

In both studies, men scored significantly higher on *high-perceived status, belief in hierarchy*, and *enjoyment of status*, and significantly lower on *egalitarianism* than women, as reported in Table 6. Evolutionary theory predicts that

Table 6. Gender differences on scale factors and personality measures in both studies

Measure	Females *M (SD)*	Males *M (SD)*	*df*	*t*	*d*
High-perceived status					
Study 1	2.60 (1.02)	3.02 (1.13)	1,007	−6.19***	−0.39
Study 2	2.41 (1.06)	2.95 (1.03)	301	−4.49***	−0.52
Egalitarianism					
Study 1	5.19 (1.17)	4.68 (1.37)	1,007	6.35***	0.41
Study 2	5.31 (1.20)	4.90 (1.32)	301	2.83**	0.33
Belief in hierarchy					
Study 1	5.04 (0.88)	5.24 (0.95)	1,007	−3.50***	−0.22
Study 2	4.82 (1.00)	5.17 (0.99)	301	−3.04**	−0.35
Enjoyment of status					
Study 1	3.92 (1.28)	4.20 (1.21)	1,007	−3.45***	−0.22
Study 2	3.70 (1.41)	4.07 (1.29)	301	−2.39*	−0.27
Study 2					
SDO	2.34 (1.12)	2.68 (1.21)	301	−2.53*	−0.29
Competitiveness	2.70 (0.80)	3.20 (0.78)	301	−5.51***	−0.63
Assertiveness	3.24 (0.82)	3.44 (0.76)	301	−2.11*	−0.25
Narcissism	10.12 (8.06)	13.60 (8.30)	301	−3.70***	−0.43

Notes. *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$ (two-tailed).

men should be more status-oriented than women, since high-status is likely to increase a man's reproductive output, but unlikely to make much difference for a woman (Buss, 2008), which may contribute to these differences.

There were also some significant gender differences on a number of the personality variables measured in Study 2. In Study 2, males scored significantly higher than females on SDO, competitiveness, assertiveness, and overt narcissism (Table 6). Given that some of these measures correlated reasonably well with some of the scale factors that also had gender differences, these correlations were reexamined while controlling for gender. All except one of the correlations between *enjoyment of status*, *belief in hierarchy, egalitarianism*, and *high-perceived status* with SDO, competitiveness, assertiveness, and narcissism that were significant in Study 2 remained significant after controlling for gender. The only exception was that between assertiveness and *high-perceived status*, which was very weak to begin with. This suggests that for the most part, these significant relationships were not simply due to gender differences.

General Discussion

This study has established a new Status Consciousness Scale, which consists in eight factors that are meaningful and internally consistent. Confirmatory factor analyses supported the model that was deduced from the initial analysis. Study 2 showed that the factors on the scale are distinct from the other personality traits measured, with the possible exception of the factor *egalitarianism*, which had a strong negative correlation with SDO, and *low-perceived status*, which had a strong negative correlation with self-esteem. The correlations between the factors on the Status Consciousness Scale and other personality traits suggest that the factors have good concurrent validity.

The distinction between the two factors *high-perceived status* and *low-perceived status* became clearer through their pattern of correlations with the personality variables. For instance, *low-perceived status* correlated negatively with self-esteem, whereas *high-perceived status* did not correlate with self-esteem. This suggests that self-esteem entails not seeing oneself as inferior to others, but does not necessarily entail seeing oneself as superior to others. Similarly, assertiveness correlated negatively with *low-perceived status*, but had a very weak positive correlation with *high-perceived status*. Thus *low-perceived status* captures the element of submissiveness, but *high-perceived status* has little relation to interpersonal dominance. *High-perceived status* correlated positively with SDO and social comparison orientation, but *low-perceived status* did not correlate with either variable. Competitiveness and overt narcissism both correlated positively with *high-perceived status* suggesting that this factor taps into competitiveness and grandiosity, while *low-perceived status* had the opposite pattern. Interestingly, hypersensitive narcissism correlated positively with both *high-perceived status* and *low-perceived status.* This is consistent with knowledge of hypersensitive narcissists, who, on one level have a sense of grandiosity, but who also display insecurity (Akhtar, 2000). In every other case, the correlations that narcissism and hypersensitive narcissism had with the scale factors showed a reasonably similar pattern to one another.

These explorations of status consciousness provide new information about existing personality constructs, and offer a valuable starting point for further research. While the Status Consciousness Scale's comprehensiveness is a strong point, future research might also simply make use of particular factors rather than the entire scale. Individual factors of interest could also be expanded and developed into fully validated scales. The correlations presented in Study 2 give a preliminary picture of the nature of these factors, which could guide future research in selecting those factors of

interest. Once specific factors are expanded and clarified, the next steps would involve establishing test-retest validity and discriminant validity.

Once this scale or particular factors within the scale are fully validated and established, they could be applied in experimental studies which will enhance the capacity to predict status-related behavior. Future research might investigate further relevant dimensions (known to relate to SDO; Pratto et al., 1994), such as how status consciousness relates to political preferences, values, and career choices. The scale may also relate to emotion and well-being, since previous research has found that concern with social rank (particularly avoiding social inferiority) relates to psychopathology (Gilbert, McEwan, Bellew, Mills, & Gale, 2009).

Overall, these results suggest that the factors on the Status Consciousness Scale relate in predictable ways with allied variables, and open up a new comprehensive way of assessing individual differences in views of and concern for personal social standing.

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