

## Designing a Model for Measuring the Amount of Young Individuals' National Identity

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**Abstract:** With the objective to design a model for measuring the amount of national identity, this study explains the relationship between the common beliefs, historical continuity, active identity, common land and location and common public culture with national identity in the community of students at Golestan University. This applied study collects the descriptive information by Delphi survey technique as well as investigating the significant correlation or lack of correlation of main hypotheses. Statistical population of this study consists of 130 students at Golestan University and 124 students were selected for questioning by random sampling and through Cochran's formula. In this study, the normality test for dependent and independent variables, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test has been used. Given the amount of computational significant level, the variables of common beliefs, historical continuity, active identity, common land and location, common public culture, the hypothesis of normal distribution of sample is not rejected. The Pearson correlation coefficient has been used in order to test the hypotheses. All variables had the significant and direct correlation with the national identity and this correlation was confirmed at significant level 99%. The Factor Analysis Method based on new and advanced method of Partial Least Squares Structural equation (VPLS) has been used in order to analyze and investigate the more important coefficients and factors, estimate the coefficients of independent variables and determine the effectiveness of each of independent variables on each other. The amount of computational coefficient of determination indicates that changes in dependent variable with independent variables are explained and described in this study with estimation 89%. Result of conducting this study has indicated that there is a significant correlation between the national identity and independent variables (common beliefs, historical continuity, active identity, common land and common public culture).

**Key words:** National identity, ethnic identity, social identity, acculturation, analysis

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### INTRODUCTION

Based on the sociology, the national identity is important because it is considered as one of the important factors of social cohesion and national consensus in each society. The more a nation has stronger and coherent identity, the more it will be successful in strengthening the correlation and social consensus bases. Increased international exchanges and particularly the globalization discussion which today is considered as one of the important issues of various economic, political and cultural areas are challenging to the concept of national identity. Will the increased cultural communication and globalization and international process reduce the cohesion of national identity in countries? Will the countries, where have integrated national cohesion and identity and consensus, stand against the globalization or not? It is not easy to answer these kinds of questions and it takes time to follow up and study the process of national and global events in the realistic and objective conditions. There are two viewpoints among the thinkers

about the subjects of national identity and increased international communication and globalization. Some of the experts believe that the globalization process destabilizes the national identity bases and all countries are more or less forced to be flexible towards this process. Some of other theoretical thinkers have opposite viewpoints. They believe that the globalization causes that the countries, where seek to maintain their identity, to react and seek to strengthen the native bases of unity, identity and cohesion of their own society. For this purpose, first we define the identity and national identity by considering the researchers' viewpoints and try to obtain the national identity components by the help of contemporary thoughts.

Some of the scholars have defined the identity by focusing on the "Individuated aspect" like what Sheikhavandi has been presented: "Identity indicates a set of characteristics which provide the possibility to define an object or a person explicitly". Some thinkers have considered the identity as the meaningfulness of society; in this regard, each society considers a meaning

for itself and acts according to its framework and in case of losing this meaning or dissociation in the meaningfulness for any reason, it will be faced with an identity crisis. Some other sociologists have defined the identity category with its polemical and conflicting aspect. Based on the view of this group, the identity is essentially in opposite to the non-proposal. If the space is uniform, the identity element will not show itself. Based on this perspective, the identity means the existence and essence which is the tool for identifying the person in order to distinguish him from others. Humans define their identity in removing something or against something. Our purpose for applying the word "Identity" in this study is the people's self understanding which distinguishes themselves from others. National identity means a sense of belonging and loyalty to the common elements and symbols in the national community (total society) and among defined political boundaries. The most important national elements and symbols which cause the identification and differentiation are: "land, religion, customs and rituals, history, language and literature, people and government". Based on Yousefi's view, each members' amount of loyalty and belonging to each of mentioned elements and symbols within a national community indicate the intensity of their feeling of national identity. Ahmad Ashraf believes that instead of national character concept this phenomenon has become popular since the second half of current century and has been among the results of social sciences. According to Mackenzie's view, the national identity is one of four types of identity remained from the 19th century and observed along with three other kinds including: religious, class and ethnic identity. Some of the definitions of national identity emphasize on the integrating elements of an independent political unit and define it as a set of positive trends and attitudes towards the identity-making and integrating elements, factors and models as a political unit in the country (Hajiani, 2000). Others emphasize on its psychological aspect. Other thinkers have considered the national commonalities and attachment for them as the main element for defining a national identity and define it as a set of features and dependence and geographical, historical and cultural, ethnic and social commonalities which form the human life and the members of community are proud and honored of it. According to different types of definitions of national identity, Razazifar Said: "According to the sociology, the national identity is like a kind of emotional commitment and belonging feeling to a set of sociology national commonalities which causes the unity and cohesion and has various aspects of

national, religious, social and human sub-cultures and its main feature is the flexibility of its components and its native constituent".

In this study, we seek to design a model for measuring the amount of national identity in target communities. Then, we investigate the issue literature including the theoretical principles, research background and necessity for conducting research.

**Literature review:** In this study, the theoretical principles and research background are presented, respectively.

**Theoretical principles:** Social cohesion and preservation and continuity of stability, discipline and integrity have been the most important social science thinkers' usual concerns and several topics and theories have been introduced and reproduced about it and the concept of identity has always been proposed in this regard. Social importance of national identity is considered as a general issue in all communities. Importance of ethnicity in terms of policy is a new phenomenon which some of the communities have been faced with since the end of Second World War. There are three dominant approaches in the studies about the national identity:

- Social identity approach which is mainly proposed by social psychologists
- Acculturation approach as the study framework of national identity which becomes possible in this approach by group participation during the time
- Ethnic identity approach through the active process of decision making and self evaluation

With another approach, David Miller discusses about both sides of national identity and private and group Id identities. According to Miller's view, the nationality and national identity has 5 aspects including the common believes, historical continuity, active identity, common land and location and common public culture. Ahmadi has classified the theories related to the ethnicity into two groups, first the theories related to the nature of ethnicity; these theories describe the way of ethnicity creation and second, the theories related to the political ethnicity. Others have raised the renovation theories which are classified into two groups; first, the theories which pay attention to the effect of renovation on the reduction of ethnic identity and then, the theories which consider the effect of renovation on increase of ethnic identity. In this research, the renovation theory is used with emphasize on the first category. This approach

promises the reduction of ethnic conflicts. Thinkers like Ferdinand Tonnies, Carl Deutsch, Clifford Geertz and McCormack have emphasized on the reducing process of ethnic conflicts by considering a positive role for the modernity elements (Maghsoudi, 1379). Theoretical principles of this research investigate the research variables (common believes, historically continuity, active identity, common land and location and common public culture) based on the approaches including the social identity, acculturation and ethnic identity.

**Research background:** Expressed views are not applicable for all societies, therefore a new viewpoint can be proposed based on different needs and in terms of environment and time. Some of the most important theories about classification of life skills are the following theorists' ones which are presented in following Table 1 based on the historical comparisons.

Contemporary views have considered the identity as a social affair which is the result of individuals' interactions with each other and thus, it is flowing, changeable and diverse. Based on this perspective, the identity is the results and outcome of two features including the self similarity with others and differentiation or difference from others; in other words, people need to understand their own commonalities with others and differentiations from others at the same time (Jenkins, 2004). Based on the socialization theories and the symbolic interaction theory, people give their own main believes, views and trends about the social issues from the family and friends and then enter the society and are faced with the re-socialization which strengthens some of those believes and trends and redefines the others. Henry Tajfel believes that he has evaluated the social identity within the framework of group attachments (within the group-outside the group). He believes that people have a need of internal belonging to the group and dividing the

individuals to "We" and "They" and by this approach they can make the large and complex world relatively simple and understandable for themselves. Tajfel's proposed innovation considers the identity within three aspects; first, the knowledge (cognitive aspect), second, the emotion (emotional aspect) and third the preparation for action (behavioral aspect). Some studies indicate that there is not always a complete coordination and symmetry among the aspects but aspects usually affect each other. In a research conducted about the social factors affecting the young individuals' national-religious identity in Mashhad, Akhondi found that: higher participation of young individuals and also their families in the national and religious ceremonies leads to their strengthened national identity. Watching the Persian programs so much through the television causes the strengthened young individuals' national identity. Watching the foreign programs too much through the television causes the weakened young individuals' national identity. Family and friends are the factors affecting the young individuals' national identity. In investigating the rate of belief to the national identity among the 3rd year high school students in Tehran province during the years 1378-79, Rabbani found that although the students' tendency toward their own national identity is not favorable and expected, it is not disturbing. Also, the tendency to the national identity is higher in middle classes of society than the wealthier classes but the gender had no effect on the belief to the national identity. In a research about the female primary, secondary and high school students' evolution of national identity in Shiraz, Talebi found that there was no significant correlation between the educational course and the national identity. Also, the educational system had no effect on crating the national identity. In Baluchi students' tendency toward the national identity of Iran,

Table 1: Comparison of conducted studies

Researchers	Classification of life skills
Tajfel and Henry	The context of social psychology, a critical assessment, London, Academic press
Vander	Social Psychology, 4th edition. New York: Random House, Inc.
Smelser and Neil	Sociology, 4th edition, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, Inc.
Akhondi and Bagher	Evaluating the national-religious identity among Mashhadi young people and effect of social relations on it
Rabbani and Jafar	National Identity
Talebi and Sakineh	Evolution of national identity in elementary to secondary and high school students in Shiraz
Abdollahi	Baluchi Students' tendency toward the national identity in Iran
Fakouhi and Naser	Creation of identity and local, national and global models
Tavassoli	Ethnic relations and its relation with evolution of collective identity
Jenkins (2004)	Social Identity, 2nd edition London and New York, Rout Ledge
Abedi	Normalization of Oxford Happiness questionnaire among the students of Isfahan universities
Aminian and Bahador	Effect of National identity on connecting the generation, young people and the generational relations
Hamid and Najmeh	Evaluating the relationship between the religious attitude and mental health and body immune system function (T adjuvant cells, T inhibitory/destroying cells and NK anti-cancer cells)
Safiri and Khadijeh	Evaluating the young individuals' religious and national identity in Tehran with emphasis on the effect of family

Abdollahi and Hosseinbor considered four groups of variables: socialization, social status, needs and knowledge. Results of research indicated that if the Baluchi students are more affected by their own family and friends and if the feeling of ethnic deprivation and discrimination is stronger among them, their national identity will be weaker as the most general collective identity and vice versa (Mohammad and Osman, 1381). In a study about the models for creating the identity of senior-year high school students' and local students of Khorramabad and Boroujerd cities according to the assumption and behavior aspects, Fakouhi found that the variables including the language, historical-political attachments, political, cultural and social participation, Media such as Television and Press and family have a significant effect on young individuals' identity-making (Fakouhi, 1381). By applying a systemic approach inspired of Talcott Parsons functioning approach, Tavassoli and Ghasemi investigated the effect of social relations and communication among the ethnic groups on the regional and national collective identity. Major findings of study represent that by increasing the among-group relations (among the ethnic groups) in four areas of livelihood relations, political relations, social or emotional relations and intellectual-cultural relations, the possibility to access to the intermediate (regional) collective and national identity will be provided. In other words, if the social relation is increased at the among-group level, the possibility to access to the more macro social cohesion will be higher (Tavassoli and Yarmohammad, 1381). Safiri and Ghafouri have investigated the religious and national identity among the young individuals of Tehran by emphasizing on the effect of family (Safiri and Masoumeh, 1388). Aminian and Bahador has evaluated the effect of national identity on connecting the generations and especially the young people and relations among the generations in communicating with each other (Aminian, 1386). The subject of research conducted by Hamid and Najmeh was based on evaluating the relationship between the religious attitude and the mental health and body immune system function according to the medical and Psychological Studies aspects. Mohammadreza *et al.* (1385) tested the normalization of Oxford Happiness Questionnaire among the students of Isfahan Universities. Table 1 represents the comparison of conducted studies chronologically.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

Methodology of research in the present study is applied based on the objective and a kind of descriptive and Delphi survey based on the data collection and its objective is to achieve a consensus of experts familiar with the subject of research.

This study has first collected the literature of issue in the field of national identity by providing the research plan and then designed a questionnaire for statistical population by designing a conceptual proposed model. Finally, the conclusion and suggestion are presented after distributing and collecting the questionnaires and experts comments and based on analysis of resulted data. Major tasks and activities carried out in this study include determining the research hypotheses, statistical population and sampling methods, data analysis, data collection tool as well as determining the validity and reliability of questionnaire, hypotheses test and conclusion and providing the suggestions which are discussed as follows.

**Research hypotheses:** Research hypotheses obtained from the main question/questions. Main questions of this research are:

- Is there a significant correlation between the common believes and the national identity?
- Is there a significant correlation between the historical continuity and the national identity?
- Is there a significant correlation between the active identity and the national identity?
- Is there a significant correlation between the common land and the national identity?
- Is there a significant correlation between the common public culture and the national identity?

The dependent variable is the national identity and the independent variables defined in this study are the common believes, continuity, historical identity, active identity, common land and location and common public culture. Therefore, 5 main hypotheses have been proposed in this study. The conceptual model of research is presented as follows.

**Research model:** Conceptual model of research is presented based on 5 main hypotheses as in Fig. 1.

**Statistical population, sample and sampling method:** Statistical population in this study consists of Golestan University students in all academic courses at the university. In this study, the gender, age and job separation and any kind of statistical population grouping have been refused because designing the measurement model of national identity is the criterion for action. The 184 students have been chosen. The sampling has been random and the number of samples has been estimated 124 by using Cochran's equation:



Fig. 1: Conceptual model of correlation between the national identity and the independent variables

$$\begin{aligned}
 n_{\text{cochrans}} &= \frac{\frac{P(1-p) z_{1-\alpha/2}^2}{d^2}}{1+1/N \left( \frac{P(1-p) z_{1-\alpha/2}^2}{d^2} - 1 \right)} \\
 &= \frac{0.5 \times 0.5 \times (1.96)^2}{(0.05)^2} \\
 &= \frac{1+1/184 \left( \frac{0.5 \times 0.5 \times (1.96)^2}{(0.05)^2} - 1 \right)}{3.0824} \cong 124
 \end{aligned}$$

Where:

P = 0.5 = Possibility of a trait occurrence in the society has been considered equal to 0.5 due to the unavailability

$Z_{1-\alpha/2}$  = 1.96 ( $\alpha = 0.05$ )

d = 0.05 = Maximum acceptable error

N = 410 = Population size

$n_{\text{cochrans}}$  = Sample size

Since, it was predicted that some respondents did not complete their questionnaires, 6 people were added to the number of statistical sample, so the total number of questionnaires was increased to 130 of which 130 answer sheets were completed.

**Data analysis methods:** The Pearson correlation coefficient has been estimated by using the software SPSS in order to determine the significant correlation between the dependent variable (national identity) and the independent variables. It should be noted that the questionnaire responses have been qualitative and

optional and the average questions of each indicator which has been quantitative and numerical have been considered as the results of independent variables. Therefore, the Pearson correlation test has been used.

**Data collection tool validity and reliability of questionnaire:** As noted, the questionnaire is considered as the data collection tool in this study. In this study, data has been collected by using the seven-choice questionnaire. First, the questionnaire was distributed among the preliminary samples (30 people) of statistical sample and after survey its defects were modified by using the experts' comments. At the next stage, two standardized final questionnaires were distributed and collected for measuring the correlation between the national identity as the dependent variable and the independent variables of common believes, historical continuity, active identity, common land, common public culture after determining the validity.

The validity of a study means the accuracy of indicators and criteria which have been provided for measuring the target phenomenon. Spreitzer questionnaire has been used in order to measure the national identity (Spreitzer, 1995) and it has been developed by Thomas and Wolt Haas empowerment model in order to measure the psychological empowerment. Moreover, Neefe (2001) questionnaire has been used for measuring the organizational learning. Since, both questionnaires are standard, their validity has been confirmed in numerous domestic and foreign studies.

Durability or credibility means to have the features of reproducibility, stability and consistency in the measurement tool and assess that to what extent the measurement tool measures the needed concept certainly at any time. In this study, the Cronbach's alpha is calculated by the help of software SPSS in order to test the reliability:

$$\alpha = \left( \frac{j}{j-1} \right) \left( 1 - \frac{\sum s_j^2}{s^2} \right)$$

Where:

$\alpha$  = The estimation of test validity

j = The number of test questions

$s_j^2$  = The variance of subset j and  $s^2$  is the total variance of test

This value is calculated over 75%r for both questionnaires.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Evaluating the normality of sample distribution by using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test:** Kolmogorov-Smimov test

Table 2: One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test

Test	Common believes	Historical continuity	Active identity	Common land and location	Common public culture
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z	1.925	1.341	1.485	1.586	1.736
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.086	0.075	0.069	0.081	0.088

Table 3: Pearson correlation coefficients of main hypotheses

Independent variables	Correlation coefficient	Sig.	Test results
Common believes	0.038	0.001	A significant direct relationship
Historical continuity	0.062	0.010	A significant direct relationship
Active identity	0.022	0.008	A significant direct relationship
Common land	0.074	0.002	A significant direct relationship
Common public culture	0.030	0.011	A significant direct relationship

Table 4: Estimation of model coefficients (Jack Knife)

Indexes	Estimated model coefficients	Student's t	Results
Common believes-National identity	0.029	2.1687	Significant direct relationship
Historical continuity-National identity	0.046	1.9942	Significant direct relationship
Active identity-National identity	0.039	2.6521	Significant direct relationship
Common land-National identity	0.064	2.1275	Significant direct relationship
Common public culture-National identity	0.025	1.9755	Significant direct relationship

has been used in order to examine the hypothesis of normal independent and dependent variable. Results have been shown in Table 2.

Given the significant level >5%, the hypothesis of normal sample distribution is not rejected for each of the variables of common believes, historical continuity, active identity, common land and location and common public culture.

**Results of Pearson correlation coefficient for main hypothesis:** Pearson test has been used in order determine the significant correlation between the main hypothesis and the correlation coefficients.

- $H_0$ : there is a significant correlation between the students' national identity at Golestan University and common believes, historical continuity, active identity, common land and common public culture
- $H_1$ : there is no significant correlation between the students' national identity at Golestan University and common believes, historical continuity, active identity, common land and common public culture (Table 3)

Their coefficient value of common believes was equal to 0.038, historical continuity equal to 0.062, active Identity equal to 0.022, common land equal to 0.074, common public culture equal to 0.030 and the significant level <5% and this suggest that all variables have a significant direct correlation with the national identity and this correlation is confirmed at significant level 99%.

**Factor analysis for variables and main factors:** In this study, the Factor Analysis Method has been used based

on new and advanced method of Partial Least Squares structural equation (VPLS) in order to analyze and evaluate the major coefficients and factors, estimate the coefficients of independent variables and determine the effectiveness of each of other independent variables on each other. Graph of sub-output of VPLS Software containing the coefficients of variables their significance is presented as follows.

As observed in Fig. 2, the coefficient of determination is equal to ( $R^2 = 0.89$ ) and this indicates that the changes of dependent variable (national identity) with aspects of common believes, historical continuity, active identity, common land, common public culture are explained and described in this study with estimation 89%.

Table 4 represents the effectiveness coefficient of each of independent variables on the dependent variable and also t statistic in order to the significance of variables. Value of estimated student's t for each of model coefficients is higher than the significance level 95% (1.96), thus, it can be concluded that the research hypotheses are confirmed as follows:

- With one unit increase in common believes, the national identity is increased equal to 0.029
- With one unit increase in historical continuity, the national identity is increased equal to 0.046
- With one unit increase in active identity, the national identity is increased equal to 0.039
- With one unit increase in common land, the national identity is increased equal to 0.046
- With one unit increase in common public culture, the national identity is increased equal to 0.025

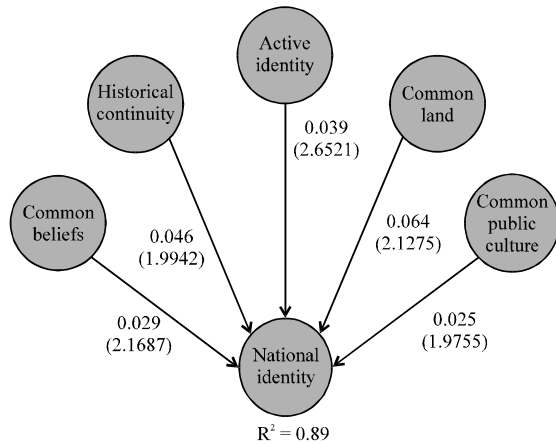


Fig. 2: Structural equations of software VPLS output

### CONCLUSION

Kolmogorov-Smirnov test has been used in order to test the normality of dependent and independent variables. Given the significant level >5% for each of variables including the common believes, historical continuity, active identity, common land and location and common public culture, the hypothesis of sample normal distribution is not rejected.

Their coefficient value of common believes was equal to 0.038, historical continuity equal to 0.062, active Identity equal to 0.022, common land equal to 0.074, common public culture equal to 0.030 and the significant level <5% and this suggest that all variables have a significant direct correlation with the national identity and this correlation is confirmed at significant level 99%.

The Factor Analysis Method has been used based on new and advanced method of Partial Least Squares structural equation (VPLS) in order to analyze and evaluate the major coefficients and factors, estimate the coefficients of independent variables and determine the effectiveness of each of other independent variables on each other.

The coefficient of determination is equal to (R<sup>2</sup> = 0.89) and this indicates that the changes of dependent variable (national identity) with aspects of common believes, historical continuity, active identity, common land, common public culture are explained and described in this study with estimation 89%.

Value of estimated student's t for each of model coefficients is higher than the significance level 95% (1.96), thus, it can be concluded that the research hypotheses are confirmed. With one unit increase in common believes, historical continuity, active identity, common land and common public culture, the national identity is increased equal to 0.029, 0.046, 0.039, 0.064 and 0.025, respectively.

### SUGGESTION

Determining the values of correlation coefficients between the dependent and independent variables is among the main results of this study. It is suggested that the other researchers test other variables for determining the structural equations and complete the following equation in their future studies in order to enhance and develop the identification factors affecting the national identity. The proposed model in this study for measuring the amount of national identity is presented as follows:

$$Y = a + 0.029x_1 + 0.046x_2 + 0.039x_3 + 0.064x_4 + 0.025x_5$$

Where:

- Y = The dependent variable or national identity
- a = The constant value (y-intercept in coordinate axis) in the regression equation

Model

- parameters = The effect coefficient of independent variables in the model
- x<sub>1</sub> ... x<sub>5</sub> = The common believes, historical continuity, active identity, common land and common public culture

Above equation indicates the research values in tested statistical population. Obviously, distribution of questionnaire and conducted tests in this study has been done based on the statistical population and in the limited pre-defined area. In order to re-conduct the research with higher accuracy and define more variables which also increase the value of R<sup>2</sup>, it is suggested that the government agencies allocate the required budget for conducting the research and develop the results of this survey. This research can be conducted in other provinces and with wider statistical population for covering the national objectives in order to identify the factors affecting the national identity and increase and accentuate these factors in line with increasing the national unity and spirit of commitment and loyalty to the country. According to the objective of study, the above model can be used to assess the current status of national identity. Comparing the current results with the test conditions in the coming years leads to the evaluation of increasing or decreasing process of national identity value in the measuring population.

- Using the mathematical modeling after determining the factors affecting the national identity in order to optimize the factors according to the status quo and reduce the distance from the ideal status in national planning by responsible organizations

- Using Friedman test for classifying the variables of increasing models of human resources ability for linear modeling and national planning by responsible organizations
- Determining the other effective variables through the future research based on Durbin-Watson test and increase of statistic  $R^2$

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