Identification and Ranking of the Effective Factors on National Identity of University Students
(The Case Study: the Students of Golestan University)

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ABSTRACT

National identity is among the important factors of the stability of political and social systems, thus, it is one of the main goals and aspects of political socialization to reproduce and encourage the national identity; but, this requires an accurate cognition and evaluation of effective factors on national identity of each in social system. This paper investigates and ranks these factors applying stratified analysis. For this purpose, we first review the literature and concepts of national identity along with investigation of the effective factors. I order to make sure about the effect of the extracted factors, a questionnaire was designed and the information contained was analyzed by the T test. After confirmation of the effects of the factors, the stratified analysis was used to rank them. Finally, the factor ranking was performed considering the scales due to the aspects of national identity. The results of this ranking indicated that the first priority is the economical factor, the second is the political factor, the third is the cultural factor, the fourth is the social factor and the fifth is the demographic factor.

KEYWORDS: National Identity, National Heritage, cultural Homogeneity, Economical Factor

INTRODUCTION

National identity is considered as a key concept in the contemporary world. After the World War II, colonialism, Immigration, globalization, the improvements in modern social movements, and the forms of political identity placed the identity issue in the center of arguments and discussions of social and human studies (Weedon, 2004: 1-2). Considering the fact that in different action situations of different social layers, people recognize their identity through their membership in various groups, they would have different collective identities such as sexual, age, job, ethnic, etc identities among which the national identity and the sense of belonging to a homeland is one of the most important issues of different societies because of its role in developing a social consensus and solidarity, so, it its investigation is a matter of high significance. Therefore, this research aims to identify and rank the effective factors on the national identity of the students of Golestan University. In all of its level _specially the national identity_, the identification process is performed based on identity structuration resources available for individuals in each society. These resources vary depending on different situations of the society. Location and space, time, and culture can be mentioned as identity structuration situation and tools and the condition and relationships between these components are different in traditional and modern societies. Scholars such as Giddens (1990), Hall (1996), Lash (1994), and Jenkins (1996) have investigated the situation of these variants during the identification process in a modern society.

When the people's need to things like continuity, consistency, differentiation, resemblance to society, prominence, and categorical imperative is satisfied acceptably, they would feel to have a significant identity and life. The existence of a close union between location, time and culture, and a specific zone or land in a traditional society, satisfies these needs in a good way and people easily achieve their considered identity and significance living in their small, limited, constant and harmonious societies. But cutting such a link and penetrating and removing different boundaries of the social life, the globalization process extremely unsteadies or even annihilates these needs. Affected by such fundamental changes, the possibility of traditional identification decreases very much which cause an identity crisis to emerge (Golmohammadi, 1380 (2002)).

As to many traditional and developing societies, the ideology is the dominant factor in identification both in micro and macro levels. But with the help of Information Technology, the globalization process presents other identity structuration resources to the members of societies. Satellite and Internet are among these resources.

Social scientist has discussed the effects of globalization phenomenon on the formation of modern identities. Giddnes (1990) considers the separation of space and culture from location as a consequence of intensified modernization and talked about the concept of emptying of space or the separation of space and place.

The effect of the relative deprivation variant on national and ethnic identity has been considered by many scholars as well. In Ericson's arguments about the formation of identity, the relative depravity variant is very significant (Sabatier, 2008) and it plays a determinant role n development of Cross (1991) and Phinny (1989). Other scholars such as Tajfel, Turner and Branksome (1999) pleased their emphasis on the role of relative depravity in signification of ethnic identity and attenuation of national identity and the union between them (Burmi, 1997: 589). The performed researches on the relationship between relative depravity and national and ethnic identity have shown different results, as some have reported a positive (Phinny, 1990; Javiera, 1995), some have reported a negative relationship (Green, 2006), and others have stated no relationship (Verkuyten, 2002).

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As to the depravity issue, it is very necessary to consider that in a society, depravity can be a fact or an imagination, and the formation of this feeling is not merely derived by depravity and discrimination and it can be related to other various factors such as level of literacy and awareness (Umana, 2008: 21), Social class, in-group and out-group trainings, advertisement, etc (Lahm, 2006: 35).

In a research named "The Formation of National Identity amon th old Estonians in United States", Tammeveski (2003) investigated the formation of national identity among the old Estonians in USA. Data was analyzed applying the approach of grounded theory. The findings indicated that among the participant generation of Estonian refugees (immigrants), national identity is an important aspect of their personal and social identity during their lives. Now in their golden ages, the national identity provides them an important resource of vital morals and a basis for social relationship. Globalization and national identity in Japan, is the name of a research by Sasaki (2004) which investigates the relationship between these two concepts. The findings of this research showed that Japanese children have a more positive and open view toward others (strangers) compared to their parents and other age groups. The first generation has a significant role due to national identity among Japanese. The finings indicated that Japan is not a Nation-state in which national identity plays a significant role in particular.

In a research named "National and Ethnic Identity among the Teenagers of Second Generation of Immigrants in French: the Role of Social and Family grounds, Sabatier (2008) investigated the cultural identity due to its two orientations (ethnic and national) including two elements (recognition and belonging). The regression analysis showed a high rate of variance explanation due to the comprehension of teenagers about their relationship with their parents, obeying the enculturation of parents and the perceived discrimination. The school and peers ground explains a lower rate of variance. The participation of parents due to national identity was positive. Mothers and fathers participated in different ways. This dynamism shows the acculturation of immigrant families.

According to Mead (1965) each individual forms his identity or "self" through organizing the other's individual views in frame of social or group organized viewpoints. In other words, the image and individual has of himself and what he feels about him self is a reflection of other's view toward him. Mead believed that self recognition happens only when the individual puts him self in other people's shoes or a social "generalized other", or assumes so. Simply saying, Mead believes that we can't see ourselves unless like how others see us (Jenkins, 2002 (1381): 36).

According to Erickson (1968), identity is the conflation circulation of individual changes and social needs for the future. He states that the formation of identity consists of generation of a feeling of personal identity and solidarity felt by the individual and recognized by others and it's rather similar from time to time. Erickson's picture of identity growth is rather general. The identity formation as Erickson states begins when the necessity of identification disappears. At this point the person feels like choosing which means that he omit or abandon some parts of childhood assimilation and keep other parts to be absorbed in a new combination related to the social process which determines the identity of a young person and accepts him as he is. Along with the formation of identity, the person feels independence and in this stage his behaviors and reactions are pretty predictable.

According to Burke (1991), the identification process is a control system and a comprehension control system in particular. Identity is a set of implications applied for a social role or situation which defines being a guy. This set of implications is a standard or resource explaining who the person is.

In conceptualization of identity as a cybernetic control system, Burke (1997) sees the dynamism of this system around four elements: identity standard, input, comparator, and output. National solidarity and accretion is very much affected by communicational network and interactions between the individuals in a society according to which, the base of group thrust and cooperation in framework of a territorial zone called nation forms. In developing a definition of national identity, perhaps the most parsimonious definition would be a ``sense" of culture (Bruce et al, 1999). That is, national identity is the extent to which a given culture recognizes and identifies with its unique characteristics. This raises the key issue of the components of national identity, a construct closely related to ``cultural focus" which: ...designates the tendency of every culture to exhibit greater complexity, greater variation in the institutions of some of its aspects than others. So striking is this tendency to develop certain phases of life, while others remain in the background, so to speak, that in the shorthand of the disciplines that study human societies these focal aspects are often used to characterize whole cultures (Herskovits, 1948, (Bruce et al, 1999)). Thus, national identity becomes the ``set of meanings" owned by a given culture which sets it apart from other cultures. The basic components of the national identity framework are shown in Figure 1 (Herskovits, 1948; Huntington, 1996; 1993).
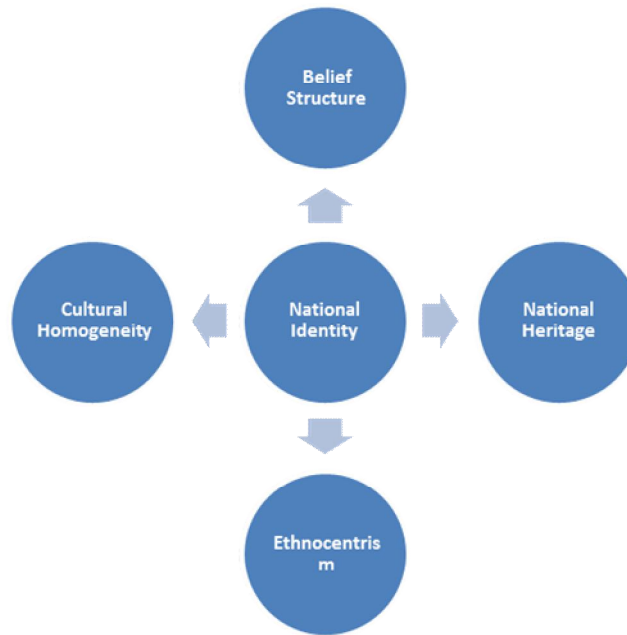
Fig 1. National Identity Framework (Bruce et al, 1999)

Belief structure, defined as the role which religion or supernatural beliefs play in facilitating cultural participation and solidarity, should have an impact on the magnitude to which a culture actively identifies with a unique national identity (Bruce et al, 1999). For example, Middle Eastern nations embrace Islam and exhibit, in many cases, open hostility toward other religions. A belief structure's role in culture is multifaceted. It can serve to promote cultural participation, provide a mechanism for conflict resolution, or a means through which psychological tensions and distortions can be reduced or eliminated (Spiro, 1967). Overall, a belief structure enables a psychological bridge to be constructed between individual beliefs and a culture's aggregate social structure. Another closely related component proposed to be part of the overall construct is national heritage (Bruce et al, 1999). Defined in terms of the importance to historical figures and events in history, the national heritage component reflects the given culture's sense of their own unique history (Huntington, 1997). For example, the colonialization period which many African nations experienced at the hands of the Europeans in the nineteenth century has left many of these nations negatively predisposed toward the West (Pye, 1980). Obviously, there are innumerable similar incidents from history which could be applied (e.g. Korean hostility toward the Japanese traceable to the first half of the twentieth century). Thus, as an illustration, while the belief structure may be similar in the various Middle Eastern nations, the differing histories, or national heritages, of the individual nations may produce differing national identities (Bruce et al, 1999). The next component is cultural homogeneity. The number of subcultures within a given set of national boundaries is hypothesized to have an inverse relationship to the ``strength'' of national identity. In the United States a wide variety of subcultures exist (e.g. Hispanic, Asian, European, Latin American, African, etc.) which may tend to reduce the strength of American national identity. On the other hand, the Japanese have virtually no ethnic subcultures which tends to contribute to their high level of national identity (Taylor, 1982). In short, the cultural homogeneity component deals with the cultural uniqueness of a given society's sense of national identity (Bruce et al, 1999). The final component of national identity is ethnocentrism (Shimp and Sharma, 1987). An ethnocentric tendency is generally considered to be one in which individuals, or societies, make cultural evaluations and attributions using their own cultural perspectives as the base line criteria. Ethnocentrism is included in the national identity framework as a means of accounting for the importance placed on maintaining culturally-centered values and behaviors (Bruce et al, 1999).

RESEARCH METHOD

The statistical population of this research included all of the students who had entered Golestan university in 2009 and were 2763 individuals according to the university statistics. As we figured on identification and ranking of effective factors on national identity of university students, two stages were required. The first questionnaire was designed in order to identify the effective factors on national identity and considering the statistical population which included 2763 individuals, the sample size was chosen using the Morgan table and it included 338 individuals. As to the second questionnaire, ten individuals among sociology professors and social science researchers were questioned as experts who were experienced in performing researches on scientific identity, for the data was getting collected for a pared comparison between social science professors and scholars.

In order to gather related information to concepts of national identity, the library method was applied. In order to identify the interferential factors due to the national identity of university students, the library method was applied as well using various sources of information. In order to make sure about the accuracy of the achieved information we used the ideas

of aware individuals and experts including ten sociology professors experienced in teaching and researching about the considered subject.

The questionnaire was also applied in order to gather information for identification and ranking of effective factors on national identity. The validity of questionnaire was determined superficially and the Cronbach's Alpha was applied in order to measure its reliability.

The extracted effective factors are:

1)   demographic factors (age, sex, marital status)
2)   economical factors (job, family income, family ownership, family properties, relative depravity due to economic aspect)
3)   social factors (urbanization experience, habitat)
4)   cultural factors (commitment to national norms, education, using mass media)
5)   Political factors (satisfaction with political system, participation in political affairs, relative depravity do to political aspect).

INFORMATION ANALYSIS

"T" Test was used to ensure that if extracted factors are effective on the quality of educational services or not.

Since Likert Scale has been used in the questionnaire, numbers from 1 to 5 have been encoded.

So, the subject mean is considered with number 3 and hypothesis test is as follows:

$$\begin{cases} H_0 &: \mu < 3 \\ H_1 &: \mu \geq 3 \end{cases}$$

With due observance to the statistical analysis, as observed in Table No. 2, and also Upper and lower values, it can be said that each six factors are placed in significant level and are accepted.

Table 2: investigation of the effects of extracted factors on national identity

One-Sample Test						
	Test Value = 3					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
demographic_factors	52.803	337	.000	1.55917	1.5011	1.6173
economical_factors	47.048	337	.000	1.30769	1.2530	1.3624
social_factors	49.439	337	.000	1.13905	1.0937	1.1844
cultural_factors	44.078	337	.000	1.29290	1.2352	1.3506
Political_factors	41.634	337	.000	1.36391	1.2995	1.4283

In order to rank the effective factors on national identity the analytic hierarchical process was applies (AHP). This method deals with analyzing the issue like what is done in the human brain. AHP enables decision makers to determine mutual and simultaneous effects of many indefinite and complex situations (Iranzadeh and Chakherlouy, 2010). This process assists decision makers to regulate priorities based on their objectives, knowledge and experience in order to consider their judgments and feelings completely (Iranzadeh and Chakherlouy, 2010).

To solve decision-making problems through AHP, all problems should be defined precisely and its details should be traced in the form of hierarchical structure.

AHP is based on the following three principles:

A) Principle of drawing hierarchical tree,
B) Principle of compiling and determining priorities
C) Principle of logical consistency of judgments

In the simulation based on AHP method of this research, the national identity was considered as a goal, belief structure as C_1, national heritage as C_2, Cultural homogeneity as C_3, ethnocentrism as C_4, demographic factors as A_1, economic factors as A_2, social factors as A_3, cultural factors as A_4, and political factors as A_5 in the simulation based on AHP method.
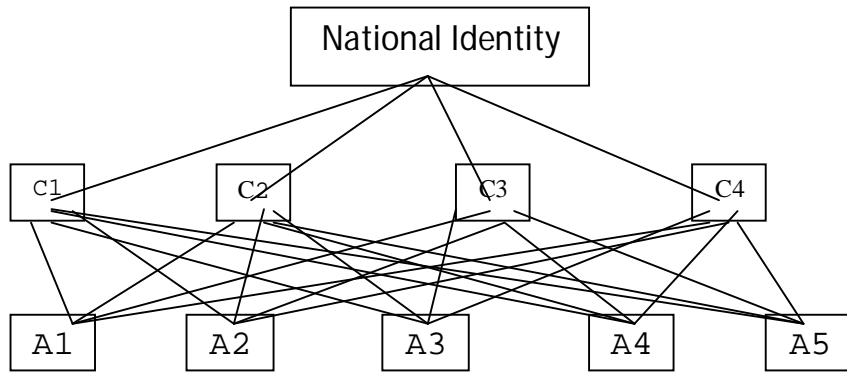
Diagram 1: AHP Tree

Priorities with respect to:
Goal: National Identity

c1	.161	
c2	.425	
c3	.270	
c4	.144	

 Inconsistency = 0.02
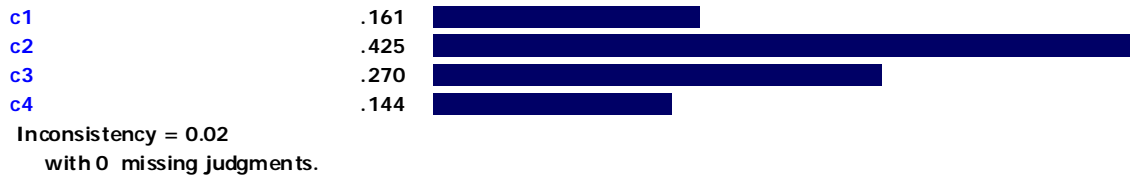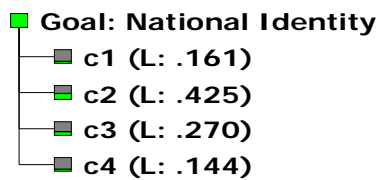   **with 0 missing judgments.**

Diagram 2: Software Output (comparison of criteria)

As it is observed in Diagram 2, the inconsistency indicator value stands at 0.02 which is less than 0.10. (0.02<0.10) and is accepted in level.

Diagram 3: Software Output (Ranking Factors)
Treeview

Goal: National Identity
 c1 (L: .161)
 c2 (L: .425)
 c3 (L: .270)
 c4 (L: .144)

Alternatives

a1	**.107**
a2	**.320**
a3	**.119**
a4	**.188**
a5	**.266**

With due observance to the Diagram 3, ranking the factors will be as follows:
A2>A5>A4>A3>A1

Conclusion

National identity is the sense of belonging and faithfulness to common symbols and elements in a national society. The most important national elements and symbols which make a nation identifiable and different from other others are: soil, faith and religion, morals and sects, history, language and literature, and people and government. Inside a national society, the rate of belonging and faithfulness to each of the mentioned elements and symbols determines the sense of national identity.

National identity and as a consequence, the national solidarity and accretion, are affected by various factors.

Considering the performed calculations it can be observed that the economical factors are in the first priority, political factors are in the second priority, the cultural factors are in third priority, social factors are in fourth priority and finally, the fifth priority goes to demographic factors. The results of this research indicate that economical factors affect the tendency of Golestan University students to national identity. Meanwhile, the better economical situation of the family is, the less they tend to national identity, but the more the relative depravity due to economical aspect is felt, the more the tendency to national identity intensifies. As to political factors, satisfaction with political system, participation in political affairs, relative depravity due to political aspect, all affect the national identity among the students of Golestan University. In other words, the more the individual participates in political activities, the less his tendency to national identity is. Cultural factors, commitment to national norms, education, and using the mass media also affect on national identity of Golestan University students. Living in habitats in which foreign people such as Afghans, Iraqi, etc are less, cause more tendencies to national identity. The results of this research indicate that demographic factors have the least effect on national identity of the students of Golestan University.

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