

The Impact of Political Management of National Media on the Perception of National Identity in Sistan and Baluchestan Province

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Abstract

Introduction: This study was conducted with the aim of studying the impact of national media political management on the perception of national identity in Sistan and Baluchestan province.

research methodology: The type of research is descriptive-analytical in terms of applied purpose, quantitative in terms of data type, and descriptive-analytical in terms of data collection method. The statistical population of the study consisted of users of the Hamoon provincial network in Sistan and Baluchestan province, whose number was uncountable and unlimited. In this study, considering the use of the minimum sample size in the confirmatory factor analysis test, 256 respondents were considered as the sample size. The data collection method was field-based and using a standard questionnaire. In order to determine the validity of the questionnaire, content and construct validity were used. Reliability was also calculated through Cronbach's alpha coefficient and composite reliability.

Findings: The results indicated confirmation of the reliability and validity of the questionnaires. The data analysis method included descriptive statistics (percentage, frequency, table, chart, mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis) and inferential statistics (structural equation model) with Spss-V23 and SmartPLS software.

Conclusion: The findings showed that political management of national media has a positive (0.776) and significant (38.576) effect on the perception of national identity.

Key Words: Political management, national media, national identity, perception of national identity

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Introduction

In many countries, media play a key role in creating and strengthening a sense of national identity. According to a UNESCO report, in 2021, over 60% of people believed that media should promote national and cultural identity (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2021). In this regard, examining how national media is managed and its impact on the perception of national identity in provinces like Sistan and Baluchestan, which face specific cultural and social challenges, can help identify successful and unsuccessful patterns.

Today, in the current era, media are increasingly recognized as strategic tools in shaping national identity. In the digital and globalized world, media are capable of creating intercultural connections and exchanging information, which can help strengthen national identity (Miller, 2020). Sistan and Baluchestan province, as one of the regions with high cultural and ethnic diversity, requires specific approaches in the media to effectively strengthen national identity. Therefore, addressing this issue can help identify existing challenges and opportunities in this field and provide effective solutions for media management.

Studying the impact of political management of national media on the perception of national identity in Sistan and Baluchestan province, especially on the provincial network Hamoon, requires a thorough examination of the existing issues in this field. One of the key issues in this regard is the political management of media, which directly affects how national identity is displayed and interpreted. In many cases, media act as propaganda tools, which can lead to inaccurate or one-sided perceptions of national identity (Giddens, 2020). Furthermore, given the ethnic and cultural diversity in Sistan and Baluchestan, there is a need for specific approaches to media management and the reflection of different identities (Sargazi et al., 2024). The second important issue is the lack of access to diverse and high-quality content, which can affect the perception of national identity. While provincial networks like Hamoon act as local sources of information, they usually face challenges such as a lack of financial resources, specialized human resources, and effective planning (Nik Nazar et al., 2024). These factors can lead to a decrease in content quality and, consequently, a reduction in the media's impact on the perception of national identity. Therefore, examining these issues can help identify existing obstacles and challenges in this area. The fundamental challenges in studying the impact of national media's political management on the perception of national identity in Sistan and Baluchestan province include four key issues. First, a lack of transparency in media and management policies can lead to a lack of public trust and dissatisfaction with the content provided. This issue, especially in areas with high cultural diversity like Sistan and Baluchestan, can fuel dissatisfaction and increase social tensions (Mir Lotfi and Jahantigh, 2022). Second, the mismatch between media content and the needs and expectations of the local community can lead to a sense of identitylessness and a reduced sense of belonging to national identity. This challenge is particularly noticeable among youth and ethnic minorities. Third, the role of media in strengthening or

weakening national identity is directly influenced by the general policies of the government and media managers (Elmi et al., 2024). In many cases, media are used as political tools, which can negatively affect how ethnic and national identities are reflected (Jenkins, 2023). Fourth, financial and human resource challenges can also lead to a decrease in the quality of programs and content, which in turn will directly impact the perception of national identity. Consequently, identifying and analyzing these challenges is essential for improving the performance of national and provincial media.

On the other hand, factors influencing the perception of national identity in Sistan and Baluchestan province include several key aspects. First, effective media management is recognized as a key factor in shaping and strengthening national identity. Proper management can lead to the creation of diverse and high-quality content that helps strengthen the sense of belonging to national identity (Ebadi et al., 2022). Also, creating a suitable environment for cultural exchange and dialogue among different ethnic groups in the media can lead to strengthening social cohesion and mutual understanding. The second factor is the active participation of the local community in content production and media planning. This participation can help create a sense of ownership and belonging to national identity. Also, research shows that promoting media literacy among different segments of society can help in a better understanding of national identity and strengthening social interactions (Khalili Khazrabadi and Hasani, 2022). Therefore, paying attention to these factors can help improve the performance of media in strengthening national identity in Sistan and Baluchestan province.

Research backgrounds on the impact of national media's political management on the perception of national identity show that many studies have focused on various dimensions of this issue, but there is still a lack of comprehensive and precise studies in specific areas such as Sistan and Baluchestan province. Some studies have emphasized the positive impact of media in strengthening national identity (Jafari et al., 2024), while others have pointed to existing challenges in this area, including the media's lack of responsiveness to the real needs of society. These criticisms indicate that in many cases, existing research has not fully addressed the real challenges and the impacts of political management on national identity, and there is a need for further investigation in this area.

Meanwhile, the unfavorable situation and existing challenges regarding the impact of national media's political management on the perception of national identity in Sistan and Baluchestan province, especially in Hamoun provincial network, are clearly evident. The lack of diverse and high-quality content, the absence of transparency in media policies, and the lack of effective community participation are all factors that have led to a decrease in the positive impact of media on national identity. This situation can lead to a reduced sense of belonging to national identity and, consequently, an increase in social and cultural tensions (Iran Statistical Center Report, 2022). The negative consequences of unresolved issues in this area are observable from various cultural, social, and economic aspects. From a cultural perspective, a lack of

attention to cultural diversity and an inaccurate reflection of ethnic identities can lead to a sense of identitylessness and social dissatisfaction. From a social perspective, a reduced sense of belonging to national identity can lead to an increase in ethnic and cultural tensions. Economically, a weakness in strengthening national identity can lead to a decrease in local investments and a failure to attract tourism, which in turn leads to a decrease in local incomes and economic instability. To solve the existing issues regarding the impact of national media's political management on the perception of national identity, there is a need to create suitable platforms for effective media management, increase transparency in media policies, and encourage active community participation in content production. Also, promoting media literacy among different segments of society can help improve the perception of national identity.

Research question

How can the understanding of national identity in Sistan and Baluchestan province be strengthened through proper political management in national media?

Methodology

Given that this research utilizes questionnaires for data collection, it can be classified as field research. Furthermore, since the relationships examined in this study have been previously investigated, it can be considered ex post facto research. Additionally, due to the use of statistical analysis methods and software, it can be described as descriptive-analytical. In the quantitative section, the statistical population of the research consists of users of Hamoon Provincial Network in Sistan and Baluchestan province, whose number is uncountable and unlimited. Kline (2015) states that for simple models, a minimum of 100 samples are required, and for more complex models, at least 200 samples are needed. He also recommends in most of his published works regarding the minimum sample size, when the statistical test is confirmatory factor analysis or a structural model, that the minimum sample size should be 200 subjects (Goodboy & Kline, 2017; Kline, 1998, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2018, 2023). Other prominent theorists in the field of structural equation modeling and confirmatory factor analysis suggest a minimum sample size of 200 as a general and appropriate rule for structural equation modeling and factor analysis (Shoghi & Karimi, 1403: 157). In any case, it should be noted that a larger sample size will increase statistical power, accuracy, and generalizability of the results. Therefore, in this research, considering the use of the minimum sample size in the confirmatory factor analysis test, 256 respondents were considered as the sample size, who were selected using cluster random sampling.

Two methods, library and field, were used for data collection. Documentary (library) method: In this method, information was collected through studying books, publications, internet resources, and databases, and after selecting the sources, preparation, note-taking, and translation of the desired texts were carried out. The outcome of this section is the identification of initial

components and research indicators based on theoretical and practical foundations. Field method: For collecting the necessary data in the quantitative section, with proper coordination, questionnaires were distributed among and collected from the statistical samples, and the total collected data was entered into the system and analyzed in two ways. For this purpose, a standard questionnaire was utilized. In this regard, for measuring political management, the standard questionnaire by Naghshbandi and Mirani (1398) was used, which has 15 questions and 3 components: general political behaviors, success through cooperation, and pay and promotion policy. Also, for measuring national identity perception, the questionnaire by Rabbani and Rastgar (1392) was used, which has 25 questions and 6 components including cultural, linguistic, social, political, territorial, and religious.

To determine the validity of the questionnaire, content and construct validity were used. For face validity, before distribution, the questionnaires were reviewed by the researcher, several sample members, and some academic experts and Hamoon Provincial Network specialists. For content validity, in the form of a Delphi method and with the help of CVR and CVI forms and with the assistance of ten experts including interviewed members, academic experts, several subjects, etc., the content of the questionnaire was reviewed for additional questions or question modifications. The CVI form showed that all items were in a good state in terms of simplicity, clarity, and relevance (the coefficient for each question was above 0.79); also, since the CVR value for all questions was above 0.62, no question needed to be removed. For construct validity, two types of convergent and discriminant validity were used with the help of Smart-Pls 2 software. In examining convergent validity, the findings showed that the significance coefficients of all factor loadings were greater than 2.58 (t-statistic), meaning all factor loadings were significant with 99% confidence; the values of all factor loadings were also above 0.5 (relationship between observed and latent variables); the average extracted variance (AVE) of all components was above 0.5, and also the composite reliability of all components was greater than their average extracted variance; therefore, it can be said that the convergent validity of the model's constructs is confirmed. In the divergent validity assessment, the Fornell-Larcker test (this test measures divergent (discriminant) validity at the latent variable level using a module defined in Smart-Pls 3 software) and the cross-loading test (this test measures divergent validity at the observable variable level using a module defined in Smart-Pls3 software) were used. In the Fornell-Larcker test, the findings showed that the square root of the average variance extracted for each latent variable was greater than its maximum correlation with other latent variables in the model. Also, the results of the cross-loading test showed that the factor loadings of each research variable were greater than the observable factor loadings of other measurement models present in the model, and on the other hand, the factor loading of each observable variable on its corresponding latent variable was at least 0.1 greater than the factor loadings of the same observable variable on other latent variables. Therefore, the results of these two tests indicated divergent validity.

Reliability: In this research, reliability is calculated through Cronbach's alpha coefficient and composite reliability. The values of these two coefficients for all research variables were obtained above 0.7, which indicated the reliability of the measurement instrument. The mentioned reliability and validity coefficients for the research questionnaire can be seen in the table below.

Table 1: Questionnaire Information and Calculation of Instrument Validity and Reliability

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE	1	2
Political Management of National Media	0.912	0.789	0.512	0.395	
Understanding National Identity	0.855	0.774	0.538	0.332	0.397

Based on the table above, it can be said that the reliability of the dimensions is confirmed because Cronbach's alpha and the composite reliability coefficient are above 0.7, and also $AVE > 0.5$. Convergent validity is confirmed, because $CR > 0.7$; $CR > AVE$; $AVE > 0.5$, and similarly, discriminant validity is also confirmed.

To describe the demographic characteristics, whose data were obtained from the questionnaire, percentages, frequencies, tables, figures, and charts were used. Also, to describe the research variables, mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis were utilized. It should be noted that operations related to descriptive statistics were performed using Spss-21 software. In the inferential section, to answer the research questions, tests such as confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling were used with SPSS-v21 and Smart Pls-v2 software.

Research Findings

Initially, the demographic characteristics of the respondents were examined. The results of the demographic characteristics survey of the respondents showed that 6% of the subjects were under 40 years old, 22% were between 40 and 45 years old, 41% were between 46 and 50 years old, and 31% were over 50 years old. According to these results, it can be said that the highest frequency is in the 46 to 50 age group and the lowest frequency is in the under 40 age group. Also, 11% of the subjects had less than 7 years of work experience, 29% had between 7 and 13 years, 32% had between 14 and 20 years, and 28% of the subjects had over 50 years of work experience. According to these results, it can be said that the highest frequency is in the 14 to 20 years age group and the lowest frequency is in the less than 7 years age group. Finally, the results showed that 57% of the subjects were male and 43% were female.

The table below displays the central tendency and dispersion indices related to the research variables. It should be noted that the minimum and maximum for each of the variables below are 1 and 5, respectively.

Table 2: Statistical Characteristics of the Model

Component	Mean	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Political Management of National Media	3.38	0.84	-0.10	-0.06
Understanding National Identity	3.31	0.74	-0.05	0.45

The information in the table above shows statistical characteristics such as mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis for the research variables. Also, given the skewness and kurtosis values, which are within a reasonable range (-2 and 2) for assuming data normality, the assumption of data normality can be proposed and accepted.

Data Normality Test

The normality of the research variables' data was examined using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, the results of which are reflected in the table below.

Table 3: Summary of Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

Component	Meaningfulness
Political Management of National Media	0.000
Understanding National Identity	0.000

As can be seen in the information in the table above, the significance level of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test statistic for all variables is less than 0.05, so the null hypothesis (normality of data) is not confirmed. That is, the data do not have a normal distribution.

Model Testing

In this section, structural equation modeling was used to test the hypotheses and the construct validity of the research, with results as follows.

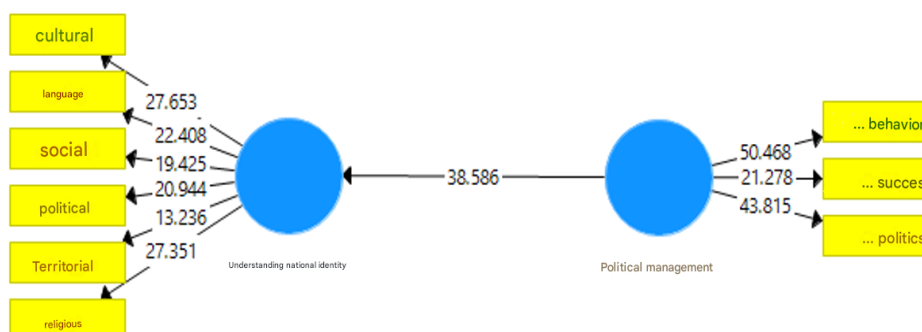


Figure 1: Model Factor Loads

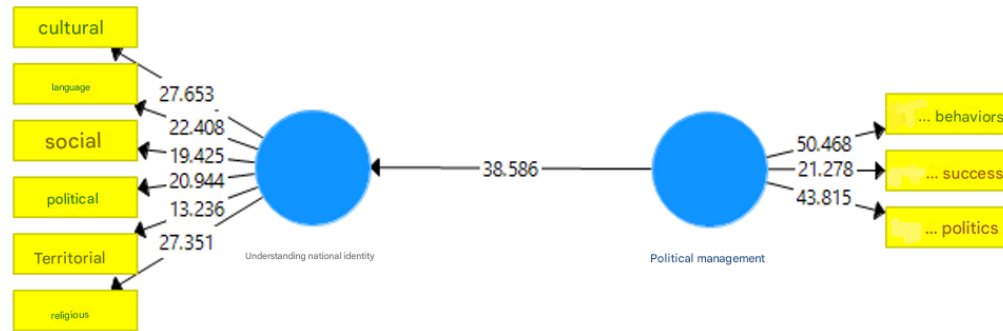


Figure 2: Model Significance

Structural model, a model in which the relationships between independent latent variables (exogenous) and dependent latent variables (endogenous) are considered. The structural model examines only the hidden variables along with the relationships between them.

The numbers written on the paths represent the path coefficients. To test the significance of the path coefficients, the t-Student test values have been calculated using the bootstrap method. If the t-Student test values are greater than 2.58, the path coefficient is significant at the 0.05 level.

Coefficient of determination index R^2 of dependent variables

The R^2 coefficient related to endogenous latent variables (dependent) shows the effect of an independent variable on a dependent variable, with three values 0.19, 0.33, and 0.67 considered as benchmarks for weak, moderate, and strong R^2 values. The value for the constructs of the main model was calculated to be 0.601.

Predictive relevance index Q^2

This criterion indicates the predictive power of the model for the dependent variables. The interpretation benchmarks for Q^2 are 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 as low, moderate, and strong predictive power. It is desirable if this index is positive. The Q^2 values for the research variables are 0.238 and 0.395, which are positive and at a desirable level. Based on this, it can be said that the predictive power of the model regarding the variables is satisfactory.

GOF index

The index introduced by Tenenhaus et al. (2005) for fit is the overall fit measure (GOF), calculated by the geometric mean of the average communality and R^2 as follows.

$$GOF = \sqrt{\text{communality} \times R^2}$$

This index functions similarly to LISREL model fit indices and ranges from zero to one, with values close to one indicating good model quality. However, it should be noted that this index, like some path-based LISREL indices, does not assess the degree of fit of the theoretical model to the collected data. Rather, it examines the overall predictive ability of the model and whether the tested model has succeeded in predicting the endogenous latent variables.

$$GOF = \sqrt{(\text{communality} \times (R^2))} = \sqrt{(0.512 \times 0.601)} = .554$$

Structural equation modeling experts using the PLS method consider a GOF index less than 0.1 as small, between 0.1 and 0.25 as moderate, and greater than 0.36 as large. According to these criteria, the fit index of the sample model under review is 0.554, which falls into the medium to large range. Considering these findings, it can be concluded that the tested model has a good fit in the examined sample. Also, given that the factor loadings of all observable variables in the model are greater than 0.5 and the significance is above 2.58, it can be said that the present construct has desirable validity. Moreover, since the path coefficient is 0.735 and above 0.5, it can be stated that the political management of national media has a positive and significant effect on the perception of national identity in Sistan and Baluchestan province.

Discussion and conclusion

This research studied the impact of the political management of national media on the perception of national identity in Sistan and Baluchestan province (case study: Hamoon Provincial Network). The results of the present study showed that the political management of national media has a positive and significant impact on the perception of national identity in Sistan and Baluchestan province. In explaining this achievement, it should be said that national identity is one of the most important social and cultural concepts that refers to the feeling of belonging to a nation and shared cultural, historical, and geographical commonalities. This identity helps individuals define themselves within the framework of a larger society and feel connected and cohesive with other members of that society. National identity acts as a unifying factor and can help create social cohesion and reduce ethnic and cultural tensions. In this regard, Garavand (2024) stated in his research that the production of national and cultural content familiarizes students with the history and culture of the country and creates a space for participation in cultural dialogues, which can increase awareness and attachment to national identity. When individuals in a society feel a sense of belonging to a shared national identity, the likelihood of cooperation and solidarity among them increases, which leads to strengthening social and political stability. In multicultural societies, national identity can act as a common ground for the peaceful coexistence of different cultural identities. This can help strengthen mutual respect and intercultural understanding and lead to the formation of a society with rich cultural diversity.

Meanwhile, media, as communication tools, can transmit identity and national messages and strengthen the sense of belonging to a larger society. Media contribute to promoting national identity by producing and broadcasting content related to national history, culture, and values. Through documentaries, television programs, films, and news, media can convey shared stories and experiences to audiences and strengthen the sense of belonging to a larger society. By covering social, economic, and political issues, media can analyze the challenges and opportunities in society. These analyses can help individuals gain a better understanding of their social and cultural position within the framework of national identity and contribute to the formation of national opinions and stances. Also, media can strengthen the feeling of pride and

belonging to national identity by introducing national symbols, figures, and myths. These symbols can be displayed in cultural, sports, and artistic programs and help form a common image of national identity. Mahmoudi Ghojdi (2023) also stated that cyberspace, especially virtual social networks, place identity in a completely new situation due to the changes they bring about in modern human perceptions. Also, Farajzadeh Khiavi et al. (2022) showed that, based on social media theory, mass and social media play a different role in the sense of belonging to national identity and its dimensions (social, historical, cultural, and political) among adolescents.

In provinces such as Sistan and Baluchestan, which have high cultural and ethnic diversity, national media must pay attention to existing challenges and act in a way that all ethnic groups feel represented and included. The way media management and policies are implemented can help shape and strengthen a positive perception of national identity. This management can include the selection of program content, news coverage methods, and interaction with different ethnic groups and cultures. Media, as a bridge between government, society, and culture, can play a key role in shaping and strengthening the perception of national identity. Given the cultural and ethnic diversity in countries like Iran, proper and effective media management can help strengthen solidarity and a shared sense of identity among different ethnic groups.

To strengthen the perception of national identity through media, especially in multicultural regions like Sistan and Baluchestan, the following suggestions can be considered:

1. Production of local and national content: Media can design programs and produced content in a way that simultaneously addresses local history, culture, and languages, as well as national values and symbols. This can strengthen the sense of belonging to national identity among audiences.

2. Holding dialogue-based programs: Creating television and radio programs on topics related to national and cultural identity, in which representatives of different ethnic groups discuss and exchange views, can help mutual understanding and strengthen social cohesion.

3. Use of new technologies: Given the expansion of virtual spaces, media outlets can use online platforms to promote content related to national identity. This content can include videos, articles, and podcasts that explain national and local culture and history.

4. Development of educational programs: Media outlets can collaborate with educational institutions to incorporate educational content about national identity and cultural diversity into schools and universities, helping to raise awareness in this area.

5. Promotion of cultural festivals and events: Organizing cultural festivals and events that introduce different cultures and traditions while simultaneously promoting national symbols and values can play an effective role in strengthening national identity.

6. Strengthening positive narratives: Media outlets should seek positive and inspiring narratives of national identity and shared experiences. These narratives can help create a sense of pride and belonging to national identity.

7. Supporting local content creators: Encouraging and supporting local content creators to produce works related to culture and national identity can contribute to the diversity and richness of media content and promote national identity among different ethnic groups.

8. Media analysis and criticism: Establishing research and analytical groups that critique and review media content and identify strengths and weaknesses in presenting national identity can help improve the quality and effectiveness of media content.

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