

## Presenting an Identity Model Based on Content Analysis of Social Studies Book of Junior High School

### Article info

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### Abstract

**Purpose:** This study presented an identity model based on content analysis of Junior High School social studies textbooks.

**Method:** It was an applied qualitative study examining social studies book of Junior High School and taking the idea of education experts in Tehran in 2019. According to the principle of theoretical saturation, 9 of them were selected by targeted sampling and snowball sampling methods. Review of documents and texts and semi-structured interviews were used, the validity of which was evaluated by the appropriate triangulation method and its reliability was calculated by Cohen's Kappa coefficient method to be 0.798. Open, axial and selective coding methods were used to analyze the data.

**Findings:** The identity model based on the content analysis of social studies book of Junior High School had one category, 9 components and 45 indicators; The components included society and social relations (with 9 indicators), family and parents (with 7 indicators), mass media (with 4 indicators), age (with 2 indicators), school (with 3 indicators), educational system (with 8 indicators), career future (with 3 indicators), personality (with 3 indicators) and teachers (with 6 indicators). Finally, the identity model was designed according to the mentioned components.

**Conclusion:** According to the identity model, educational professionals and planners can design content to improve students' identities and include them in social studies textbooks.

**Keywords:** Identity Model, Students, Social Studies Books.

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## Introduction

Adolescence is a sensitive period of human life due to the formation of identity and is a good opportunity for the growth and flourishing of potential abilities and talents (Chea, Gursoy & Balkaya-Ince, 2021). Adolescents face an identity crisis. Identity means a person's perception of unity and coherence between past, present and future composed of a set of values and beliefs to which one adheres (Penner, Gambin & Sharp, 2019). Identity formation is a process that continues throughout life, but its study is important because of fertility, creativity, and the need for independence during adolescence (Kessler, Hinkle, Moyers & Silverberg, 2020).

Identity is a sense of distinction, continuity and personal independence that is formed in the cultural and social context of society and reflects the feelings and attitudes of individuals (Browne, Wall, Batt & Bennett, 2018). It is a set of characteristics and signs in the material, biological, cultural, social and psychological domains distinguishing one person from another, a group from another group or a culture from another culture (Hu & Dai, 2021).

If the adolescent's identity is formed in the time and cultural context as a result of appropriate experiences and correct behaviors, and he knows himself and distinguishes himself from others, his mental balance is guaranteed, otherwise he will suffer from identity crisis and his mental balance will be disturbed (Metzger & Duening, 2021). The formation of a desirable identity is associated with mental health, and proper identification and crisis resolution in the field of identity formation increases psychological adjustment, correct judgment and the ability to develop and flourish abilities (Clayton, Andrzejewski, Johns, Lowry & Ashley, 2019).

Identity is an umbrella term including all fields of humanities, especially social sciences which received special attention in these fields. Thus, identity in science and social studies means the perception and evaluation of the individual about himself from the perspective of society, as a result of which the individual becomes aware of his position, value and status from the perspective of others (Khabazi & Banisi, 2019). Nowadays, social studies is an important field of learning that discusses man and his interaction with different environments during different times and different aspects of this interaction (political, economic, cultural, environment, etc.) and covers different disciplines. In the Iranian educational system, the main approach of social studies books is the cultural-educational approach that tries to provide the grounds for individual and social education of children and adolescents in the context of elements based on naturalism. We want to train knowledgeable citizens who have independent internal government and respect for others, and who participate in political processes and make good and responsible decision-makers (Salavati, Maleki & Sohrabi, 2020). One of the important concepts in social sciences and psychology is the concept of identity, which has been considered as an interdisciplinary concept in various fields such as politics, culture, ethics, mysticism, economics, social sciences and psychology (Wiley & Berman, 2012). This concept is much more prominent in high school curricula that deal with adolescents who are in the process of developing their identity than in other levels of education (Sznitman, Zimmermann & Petegem). Due to the nature of the subject and the use of scientific disciplines such as history, geography and sociology, social studies textbooks are directly related to cultural heritage and social values. One of the objectives of this course is to train learners to live and behave responsibly in which identification plays an effective role (Pourshokri, Sharifian & Nasr Esfahani, 2020).

The identity model of students has been examined scarcely and no research has used the content analysis of social studies textbooks. For example, Abas Hashemi, Sharifi & Imani (2020) concluded that the multicultural identity model of elementary students includes teacher pedagogical factors, multicultural social competencies, learning patterns and methods, evaluation and participation, cognitive-emotional content of culture, educational tools, linguistic-religious cognition, social system cognition, development of multicultural literacy, knowledge of history and historical memory, cultural geography, formal education, explanation of multicultural attitudes and values, educational programs and multicultural affiliation. The results of Babaie, Bakhshian, Karimian & Saadatmehr (2019) showed that the factors related to the identification of high school students included family, personality, school, society, culture and media. According to Imamura & Zhang

(2014), identity has three dimensions: cognitive or awareness (degree of awareness or understanding of commonalities), emotional or desire (desire, interest and attraction within the group and a sense of commitment to it) and behavioral or readiness for action (preparation for action in a competitive and intergroup context). In another study, Haghghatian, Ghazanfari & Akbarabadi (2011) reported that national identity has emotional, cognitive and behavioral dimensions and is influenced by friends, family adherence to national customs, family nationalism, television and family familiarity with historical-national figures. The results of Dowran, Azadfallah, Fathi Ashtiani & Poorhossein (2011) showed that identity had six dimensions including commitment building, scope search, reflective search, commitment matching, in-depth search, and commitment review. In another study, Luycks, Schwartz, Berzonsky, Soenens, Vansteenkiste & Goossens (2008) introduced the five-dimensional model of identity, including commitment building, commitment matching, in-depth search, scope search, and reflection search.

Curriculum content and, above all, the content of the Junior High School social studies course play an important role in shaping identity. The national curriculum, as a comprehensive learning map, provides the context for a comprehensive, broad, and profound transformation in educational concepts and content. In addition, it seems that the education system has failed to transmit the teachings of identity. Cultural policymakers have neglected the mission of identifying and helping to shape identity by focusing on education, especially textbook teaching; So that students at the end of Junior High School do not have the right attitude and identity cohesion. Since social studies course and its books in Junior High School are the most relevant sources for the formation and cohesion of identity, so the present study was conducted to provide students' identity model based on content analysis of Junior High School social studies textbooks.

## Method

It was an applied qualitative study examining social studies books of Junior High School using education experts' ideas in Tehran in 2019. Nine experts were selected by targeted sampling and snowball sampling methods according to the principle of theoretical saturation. In the purposeful sampling method, the researchers selected a number based on their knowledge of the experts in the field of education and in the snowball sampling method, the experts who were selected by the purposeful sampling method were asked to introduce other experts.

To conduct this research, first, the content of Junior High School social studies textbooks was examined in terms of identity and questions were designed by researchers to interview experts (Table 1). The training experts were then selected using target and snowball sampling methods and coordinated in person or by telephone to conduct interviews with them. At the specified time and place, the experts were interviewed using a semi-structured interview, and after obtaining their consent, all interviews were recorded and reviewed again to ensure that some information was not lost or destroyed in addition to noting important points. The selection criteria for experts included the minimum academic rank of associate professor, familiarity with the books of social studies Junior High School, having at least 20 years of teaching and research experience, and having at least three books and articles in the field of identity and curriculum planning. The average interview time with each of the experts lasted about 40 to 50 minutes, and before the interview, they agreed to conduct the interview and were assured of ethical points such as anonymity, confidentiality of personal information, etc.

In addition to reviewing documents and texts (social studies books of Junior High School), semi-structured interviews were used to collect data. The validity of the interviews was assessed using the appropriate triangulation method. Triangulation methods included data source triangulation (using multiple data sources in study or research), researcher triangulation (using more than one researcher to collect, analyze and interpret data) and theorizing (using multiple perspectives to interpret data). The validity of triangulation in this study was such that interview questions with two experts were examined and at the same time the study of theories, information sources and documents was used. The reliability of the interviews was calculated by Cohen's Kappa coefficient method to be 0.798, which was significant at a level less than 0.05. Because the coefficient of 0.40 to 0.60 indicates the average agreement rate, 0.60 to 0.80 indicates the significant agreement rate and above 0.80 indicates the excellent agreement rate.

**Table 1.** Expert interview questions

N	Items
1	What are the components of students' identities based on Junior High School social studies textbooks?
2	What are the factors influencing the formation of students' identities based on Junior High School social studies textbooks?
3	What are the effective barriers and challenges in shaping students' identities?
4	To which components of students' identity does the Junior High School social studies textbooks pay attention?
5	What components should Junior High School social studies textbooks pay more attention to in shaping students' identities?
6	What consequences can be expected if the content of Junior High School social studies textbooks is properly designed?

Data obtained from reviewing Junior High School social studies textbooks and interviews with experts were analyzed using open, axial and selective coding methods.

### Findings

The sample of the study was 9 people with an average age of 53.62 years for whom the number and frequency of demographic information including gender, academic rank and work experience were presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Results of open, axial and selective identity coding based on content analysis of social studies books of Junior High School

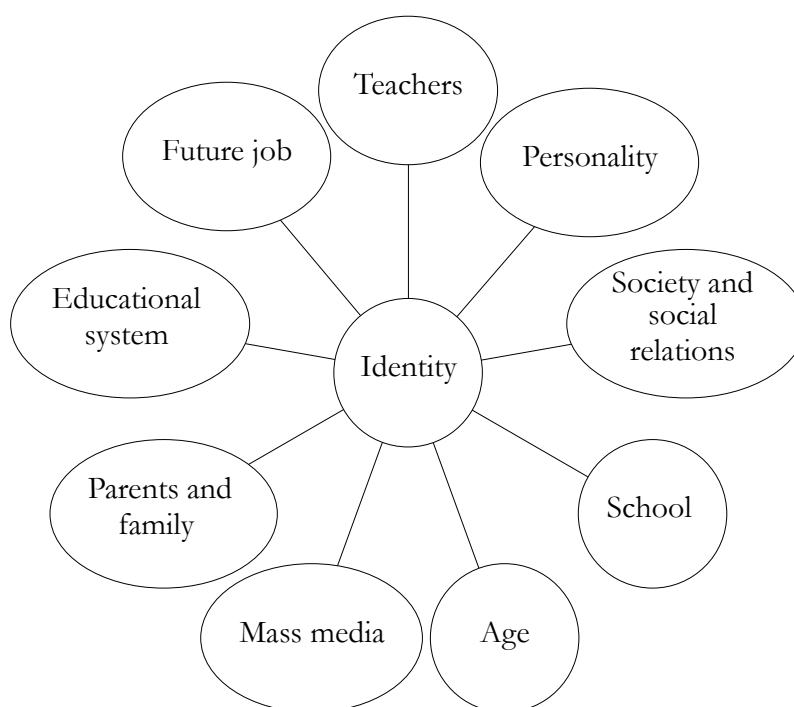
Variable	Level	N	Frequency percent	Cumulative frequency percent
Gender	Male	6	66.67%	66.67%
	Female	3	33.33%	100%
Academic rank	Associate Professor	2	22.22%	22.22%
	Full Professor	7	77.78%	100%
Teaching experience	25-21 years	4	44.44%	44.44%
	30-26 years	5	55.56%	100%

As can be seen in Table 2, most of the interviewees were male participants (66.67%) with a university degree of full professor (77.78%) and teaching experience of 26-30 years (55.56%). The results of open, axial and selective identity coding based on the content analysis of Junior High School social studies textbooks were presented in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Results of open, axial and selective identity coding based on the content analysis of social studies books of Junior High School

Selective coding (Category)	Axial coding (Component)	Open coding (Index)
The identity of Junior High School students	Society and social relations	.1Social context, 2. Relationship with others, 3. Mutual and appropriate relations with others, 4. Position and context of society, 5. Presence in society, 6. Impact of social relations, 7. Social context, 8. Relationships in society and 9 Cultural issues of society
	Family and parents	.1Parent interaction, 2. Parents' attitudes, 3. Parents' and teachers' behavior, 4. Family impact, 5. Lifestyle, 6. Family presence, and 7. Family interaction
	Mass media	.1Mass media, 2. Influence of cyberspace, 3. Mass media and 4. Mass media programs
	Age	.1Age growth and 2. Age trends and conditions
	School	.1school, 2. school attendance and 3. school impact
	Education System	.1Challenge of the educational system, 2. Impact of the educational system, 3. Content of the textbook, 4. Relationship with the educational system, 5. Scoring system of the educational system, 6. Fluctuations of the educational system, 7. Content of the lesson and 8. Impact of education
	Career future	.1Job position, 2. Work environment and location, and 3. Job ambiguities
	Character	.1the person herself, 2. the personality of the person and 3. the influence of the personality
	teachers	.1Modeling from the teacher, 2. Getting used to the teacher, 3. Teacher as a model, 4. Modeling from teachers, 5. Direct effect of teacher behavior and 6. Teacher behavior

As can be seen in Table 3, the identity model based on content analysis of the social studies books of Junior High School had one category, 9 components and 45 indicators; So that the components of this model included society and social relations (with 9 indicators), family and parents (with 7 indicators), mass media (with 4 indicators), age (with 2 indicators), school (with 3 indicators), educational system (with 8 indicators), career future (with 3 indicators), personality (with 3 indicators) and teachers (with 6 indicators). Identity model based on content analysis of Junior High School social studies textbooks is presented in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Identity model based on content analysis of social studies books Junior High School

## Discussion

Social studies course is one of the courses that, if properly designed, can play an effective role in shaping and establishing the identity and personality of students. Identity is a social matter and finds meaning in relation to society and others, and its formation or change depends on various factors and conditions at the micro and macro levels. As a result, the present study was conducted to present the identity model of students based on content analysis of the social studies books of Junior High School.

The findings of this study were in line with the findings of Abas Hashemi et al. (2020), Babaie et al. (2019), Imamura & Zhang (2014), Haghghatian et al. (2011), Dowran et al. (2011) and Luycks et al. (2008). Identity model based on content analysis of social studies books of Junior High School showed 45 indicators, 9 components including society and social relations, family and parents, mass media, age, school, education system, career future, personality and teachers and one category of identity. In the following, the nine effective components of identity are described and interpreted.

Regarding the role of society and social relations, it can be said that the formation of identity is something that is constantly emphasized by tools such as newspapers, television and the educational system. Today, in the age of globalization, identity is emerging in a way of life, and one of the important features of globalization is the use of information and communication technologies that have a great impact on the formation and consolidation of identity. In other words, the more people are aware of the news of their place of residence, country and world and use mass media, the more their identity moves towards transformation, renewal and globalization. Regarding the influence of family and parents in the formation of identity, it can be said that the family is assumed as a system in which the changes of each component are related to the changes of other components. Thus, the changes and developments of adolescence, which in many cases are serious and widespread, can also cause crisis in the family, but what can bring the family system back to balance is how family members respond to the changes in adolescence. Understanding that the changes and developments of adolescence and some serious behavioral characteristics and in addition the oppositions and arguments of adolescents are natural features of the development of this period, not due to rebellion, disobedience and restraint can have a positive effect on the formation of adolescents' identities. In this regard, respect for the adolescent's sense of independence, attention to abilities, the use of appropriate communication patterns, refusal to make decisions for him and his participation in decision-making can be

effective. Regarding the mass media, it can be said that the media, especially electronic media, due to their capabilities and functions, can be used to maintain mental health and as one of the facilitators of identification for young people and adolescents.

On the other hand, these tools and tools can cause the crisis of identity and alienation of people from their values, beliefs and cultures. As a result, on the one hand, these devices can improve the formation and consolidation of identity, and on the other hand, they can prevent it. Regarding age, it can be said that the age and intellectual development of students and their conditions and characteristics in each period of their calendar growth can play an effective role in adapting students to the changing living conditions of today and the many challenges they face which provide the context for the formation and shaping of identity.

Regarding the school, it can be said that as long as children and adolescents cannot tolerate school and have a positive orientation and desire for it, trying to learn and shape their identity will be fruitless. Students who are emotionally vulnerable cannot be forced to participate in school activities unless the student himself or herself is interested in school or the school is so attractive to him or her that the person is interested in it. Therefore, the school can play an effective role in shaping the identity of students by being attractive and up-to-date and providing up-to-date information, knowledge and skills. Regarding the impact of the educational system, it can be said that the importance of the educational system in today's world is such that many sociologists consider it the most important institution in building a successful society. Unfortunately, rapid change and sometimes political decisions always cast a heavy shadow over this institution, while changes in this institution must be very measured and thoughtful. Because the formation of identity, although it starts from the family, but finds consistency and direction in the educational system. Identity formation means that an individual is influenced by knowledge, values, norms, skills and social attitudes, and their combination enables the individual to interact with groups and individuals in society.

Regarding the future of the job, it can be said that having a job that has a social value and can be done well helps a person to have a sense of security and a stable identity. Conversely, if society treats people in a way that does not require them and employment is not possible, they will feel doubt and frustration. These people are likely to become confused in their identities and in some cases even turn to crime, drop out of school and find a negative identity. Regarding personality, it can be said that some factors in the inner dimension of people determine what spiritual characteristics, interests and desires they have. Perhaps it is appropriate to interpret that beliefs, feelings and spirit of man and his background and behavioral and social background are the constituent factors and the main foundations of one's identity that limit man in their form. Therefore, it is necessary to live in the path of perfection to have a perfectionist identity in order to create the possibility of value behaviors and beliefs and perfectionist thoughts in human beings. Regarding the role of teachers in shaping identity, it can be said that the realization of students' educational goals depends to a large extent on the behavior and actions of teachers. In the Islamic education system, like the education system of our country, there is a lot of emphasis on the purity and fairness of the teacher and his beauty with moral qualities. The behavior and actions of the teachers themselves must be appropriate and pleasing in order for their actions to be effective in addition to his words. In fact, having good morals can be a confirmation factor on teachers' speech with its good deeds and the effect can be done more quickly and accurately.

The first limitation of this research is the limitation of research to social studies books of Junior High School, which makes it a challenge to generalize the results to other courses. Also, in the present study, nine components for identity were identified based on content analysis of social studies books and interviews with experts, and perhaps, if other methods such as comparative studies are used to identify components of identity, other components can be achieved. Doing this research on social studies textbooks of other courses and other grades can help identify the components that affect identity and design programs to improve it. Given the role and importance of identity in the future of students and the future and position of the country among other countries, it is recommended that all teachers hold a course or workshop on identity. Moreover, according to the identity model of the present study, professionals and educational planners can design content to improve students' identities and include them in social studies textbooks. In addition, the level of attention to the components of identity in social studies books and even other courses should be examined

and in case of little attention to the components, the ground for strengthening and emphasizing them should be provided.

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