

Mutual-implication Interaction between Social Identity and Social System: An Analytic Approach to Social Identity Formation

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DOI: 10.26907/esd15.4.05

Abstract

Social identity formation (SIF) has rarely been addressed, either through analytic methods or on through sociologically and social-psychologically mixed-methods design at multiple levels. In the Iranian context, SIF, especially among youths, is devoid of any theoretical and functional models capable of explaining the effects which have been hypothesized of social system's SIF functional deficiency. A sample of 445 students from the University of Tehran was selected in the period of 2016-2018, based on a random stratified sampling method. The participants undertook a validated questionnaire (i.e., content and construct validity) measures through expert judgment and PFA, delivered on a tablet. The reliability was $r=0.88$. A parametric one-sample Student's t-test and a Friedman test were employed in the analysis which suggested a functional model for SIF. The analysis also supported both the major and minor hypotheses predicting direct effects of Iranian social system's functional deficiency on reducing the level of their SIF in relation to their social system. Theoretically, the findings suggested an applied model for SIF in a mutually-implicated interaction process with social system along with specific measurement criteria. The model, which has seven parameters, is the product of a social system's functional requirements, and seems to be influential in SIF formation by social system and can provide insights for social researchers and planners.

Keywords: social identity, social system, mutual-implication, construction, functional effects of social system.

Взаимовлияние социальной идентичности и социальной системы: аналитический подход к формированию социальной идентичности

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DOI: 10.26907/esd15.4.05

Аннотация

Формирование социальной идентичности (SIF) редко рассматривается с помощью аналитических или социологических и социально-психологических смешанных методов исследования на различных уровнях. В иранском контексте SIF, особенно среди молодежи, лишен каких-либо теоретических и функциональных моделей, способных объяснить эффекты, которые были выдвинуты гипотезой о функциональном дефиците SIF социальной системы. В исследовании приняли участие 445 студентов Тегеранского университета. Отбор участников проходил в период 2016-2018 гг. на основе метода случайной стратифицированной выборки. В ходе исследования респонденты заполняли опросник. Достоверность результатов составила $r = 0,88$. В анализе использовались однопараметрический t-критерий Стьюдента и критерий Фридмана, которые предложили функциональную модель SIF. Анализ также подтвердил как основные, так и второстепенные гипотезы, предсказывающие прямое влияние функционального дефицита иранской социальной системы на снижение уровня SIF по отношению к социальной системе. Теоретически полученные результаты позволили представить прикладную модель SIF в процессе взаимодействия с социальной системой наряду с конкретными критериями измерения. Модель, имеющая семь параметров, является продуктом функциональных требований социальной системы. Очевидно, она оказывает влияние на формирование SIF. Предложенная модель будет полезна социальным исследователям и специалистам, работающим в данной области.

Ключевые слова: социальная идентичность, социальная система, взаимосвязь, формирование, функциональное влияние социальной системы.

Introduction

The concept of identity is amongst the most significant issues receiving attention and being extensively referenced in various fields of social sciences in recent decades (Bottomore, 1993). The concept so important that Fukuyama (2018), claims that identity-seeking movements have threatened liberal-democratic systems in the world. Despite extensive attention paid to the concept of identity, majority of the related studies are founded on specific pre-suppositions, perceptions and attitudes, instead of theoretical and functional requirements (Sedigh-Sarvestani & Hajian, 2008). These studies are also more inductive in nature. Identity (especially social identity) is not formed intrinsically, but rather is socially constructed and, as a social phenomenon given different conceptualizations of its roots, mechanisms, methodological approaches and interpretations of various

findings, it is affected by social structure processes (Korostelina, 2007). The main problem amenable to research which has been ignored is the nature of SIF process considered as a mutually-implicated concept in relation to the background factors in a social system. This study, initially suggests a functional model of the SIF process to show the effect of the requirements of social system functions in terms of SIF in the light of social order in relation to the mutually implicated parameters. It then examines the model proposed with a sample of the students, representing Iranian youth, from the University of Tehran, Iran. The main survey research question is whether functional weakness of Iranian social system has had any effects on reducing the extent of the youths' SIF in Iranian context.

Finding a sound response to the research question requires an analytic research design based on an integrative approach at macro, micro and moderate levels of various thoughts and theories in social sciences. This analytic concept is one of the most crucial issues in theoretical sociology. It has been suggested as a closed and restricted axiomatic-concept favored in particular theoretical approach to sociological issues. Such a belief in mutual-dimensional and mutual-implication analyses of sociological phenomena and subjects is free from a particular theoretical approach (Tanhaei, 2013). Then the study relies on an integrative methodology of systemic and macro approach of structural functionalism in sociological, psychological and social-psychological approaches along with micro and moderate analyses on social identity, to pursue its objectives. These are: the presentation of a validated analytic-applied scientific model for the definition and function of social identity; and suggestions of operational indices for the assessment of social identity concept in the light of social system, and description of Iranian young university students' social identity status.

Social identity-related attitude has been approached from different perspectives:

1. Some studies have reduced the concept to the level of collective identity, thus failing to define identity in a transparent manner (Stryker & Burke, 2000). Azad-Armaci and Chavoshian's study (2009) and Abdollahi's field studies (1996) are in this category, holding a sociological approach to the subjective and objective foundations of collective identity and a mechanism of its developments in Iran.

2. Other studies in Iran have considered social identity as an aspect of national identity or as synonymous to it. However, social identity is here seen theoretically as a multi-dimensional and multi-exemplar concept and then national identity is taken as a sub-component of it. This shows that one of the major problems with this approach is its theoretical reductionism. The research studies by Ashraf (1994), Mirmohammadi (2004), Afrough (2001), Tajik (2005), Sedigh-Sarvestani and Hajian (2008) are reductionist.

3. Given the psychological and social-psychological perspectives, some studies have approached social identity from sociological perspectives. The studies belonging to this perspective, in spite of introducing social identity as an independent concept in social structures, are of mainly a subjective nature and devoid of a comprehensive functional content (Oatey, 2006). These include the studies by Lawler (2015), Rusi and Breakwell (2014), Robins (2009), Riley (2007), Weinreich and Saunderson (2005), Bernd (2004), Stets and Burke (2000), Burke (1997, 1996, 1991), Jenkins (2008), Sharehpure and Khoshfar (2001), Abdollahi and Ghaderzadeh (2009), Douran (2008) and Ashrafi (1998).

A general critique of the approaches and views reveals that these studies exclusively originate from specific schools of thought governing them and almost none have clearly and practically dealt with the role and effect of sociologically analytic factors on SIF which is hypothesized to be characterized by a mutually-implicated process. Contrary to this trend, this study attempts to implement a different design both realistically and practically and take an integrative analytical approach to the mainly subjective approaches to SIF.

Problem and Hypotheses

Extensive theoretical studies on the concepts of both social system and social identity have revealed objectively that these two concepts are mutually implicated: a social system entails functional requirements through socializing and social observation processes thus paving the grounds for affecting individuals' SIF. Accordingly, the SIF process, functioning as a mutually implicated principle in the light of the requirements of social system, becomes an umbrella variable with its dependent variable embedded in its independent one. Since SIF suffers from the lack of standard measurement indices, the sub-variables of the whole were selected as the indices, so that the synergy of theoretical studies and analytic model of this study could be investigated in the form of special research questions through a purposefully constructed questionnaire. The exploratory research as well as the related literature in Iran (e.g., Ashrafi, 1998; Tajik, 2005; Hajjani, 2000; Sotoodeh, 1996) show that SIF in the light of Iranian social system has been so inefficient that it has turned into the youths' identity crisis.

That is why the main research question was: "Whether the functional deficiency of Iranian social system had any significant effects on the lower level of young university students' SIF in relation to the social system.

This formed the main hypothesis that Iranian social system's functional deficiency has not had affected the lower level of young university students' SIF in relation to the social system.

However, because of the rationale justifying the embedded nature of the sub-variables, the main research question was broken down into seven minor questions and the respective hypotheses representing the sub-variables as follows:

1. Has Iranian social system's functional deficiency had any effects on breakage of the loops of young university students' identity process controlling system?

H1: Iranian social system's functional deficiency has had no effects on breakage of the loops of young university students' identity process controlling system?

2. Has Iranian social system's functional deficiency had any effects on excessively controlled identity system of young university students?

H2: Iranian social system's functional deficiency has had no effects on excessively controlled identity system of young university students?

3. Has Iranian social system's functional deficiency had any effects on the young university students' feeling social participation avoidance within the society's dominant ideological framework?

H3: Iranian social system's functional deficiency has had no effects on the young university students' feeling social participation avoidance within the society's dominant ideological framework?

4. Has Iranian social system's functional deficiency had any effects on the young university students' feeling of social incapability?

H4: Iranian social system's functional deficiency has had no effects on the young university students' feeling of social incapability?

5. Has Iranian social system's functional deficiency had any effects on the young university students' feeling of social anomaly?

H5: Iranian social system's functional deficiency has had no effects on the young university students' feeling of social anomaly?

6. Has Iranian social system's functional deficiency had any effects on the young university students' feeling of social isolation?

H6: Iranian social system's functional deficiency has had no effects on the young university students' feeling of social isolation?

7. Has Iranian social system's functional deficiency had any effects on the young university students' feeling of social (community) getaway?

H07: Iranian social system's functional deficiency has had no effects on the young university students' feeling of social (community) getaway?

Definition of Concepts

Construction: Proponents of Social Construction Theory (SCT) relate the development and evolution of any phenomena to their social backgrounds and the product of mutual social interaction (Boghossian, 2001), and represent how a concept changes into a social reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1991). According to Parson's Social System Theory, this approach is based on the assumption that "the way one perceives him or herself and the feeling he or she holds for him or herself as the reflections of the attitudes of others to him or her which are constructed through organizing his/her attitudes in the form of group's socially organized attitudes, which are continuously constructed in the form of social group's socially organized attitudes during social actions and are achieved through mutual implications of internal and external identification" (Zeitlin et al, 1981, pp. 173-7).

Mutual Implication: As an analytic approach in sociology (as approached by Ghorvich (1967), Merton (1938), and Blumer, 1969), the term signifies that all components of a social reality are mutually implicated, indicating that an analysis of any of them necessitates the analysis of the other sensitive components. Mutual implication might be better elaborated when it is contrasted with mutual exclusiveness in probability theory, in which events E_1, E_2, \dots, E_n are said to be mutually exclusive if the occurrence of any one of them implies the non-occurrence of the remaining $n - 1$ events. In probability theory, the word *or* allows for the possibility of both events happening. The probability of one or both events occurring is denoted $P(A \cup B)$ and in general it equals $P(A) + P(B) - P(A \cap B)$. Therefore, in the case of drawing a red card or a king, drawing any of a red king, a red non-king, or a black king is considered a success. In a standard 52-card deck, there are twenty-six red cards and four kings, two of which are red, so the probability of drawing a red or a king is $26/52 + 4/52 - 2/52 = 28/52$. Therefore, two mutually exclusive events cannot both occur (Wikipedia, 2020). In contrast, mutual implication suggests that social events are mutually inclusive or implicated as they occur simultaneously and in a mutually associative manner. Then, the mutually implicated principle suggested by Ghorvich (1967) in the light of Cooley and Mead's dialectic system holds that all social phenomena, internal and main components of every structure and all social structures are composed of sensitive components which are relatively mutually implicated by each other, and should be re-identified and separated from the insensitive components in the process of exploring any phenomenon. In social life, mutual implication refers to the interdependence and mutual ties of the elements in various strata of real life, such that the effects of one stratum are represented in the others (Tanhaei, 2013; Tanhaei & Khademlou, 2009; Turner, 2003). In explaining Ghorvich's ideas, Bosserman says that "in the process of mutual implication of components, there exists some kind of mutual relation or interdependence whereby each component is continuously and sustainably present from both sides of the implication (Bosserman's diary, cited in Tanhaei, 2013). (See Blumer (1969) on the representation and development of human nature in relation to his social environment in the mutual implication process of "mind" and "society" as meant by Mead (Tanhaei, 2012), Goodman and Freeman's (2015) study on normal unconscious mutual implication about man's pains, and Miller (2013) on the mutual implication of nature and religion.

Identity Process Controlling System: defined on the basis of social identity measurement indices in Burk's Social Identity Theory, identity process is considered as

a controlling system which is constructed through a series consisting the reflection of individual's meaningful actions and behaviors in the cycle of assessments radiated from social environment and situation which affect an individual and his self-perception in relation to society and self-comparison with his own personal identity (Burk, 1996, 1997).

Social getaway or hatred: According to Seaman (1959, cited in Sotoodeh (1996), this term refers to a feeling through which individuals under-estimate and become alien to those values, beliefs and objectives which are of value in a particular society. Such people neither believe in the way society functions not in the relations and macro, micro objectives governing it. Since they cannot actively deny the relations and objectives, they resort to getaway through social isolation (Sotoodeh, 1996). Given the definitions suggested for social getaway by Sotoodeh and the other Iranian scholars (Chalabi, 2017; Rafipoor, 1999; and Sedaghatifard, 2013), the term (as used in this study) socio-culturally refers to a state under which youths become displeased with the values and norms governing their own national social system and life-style because of inappropriate functioning of the governing regime and an excessively unconventional trouble-making atmosphere. As a result of feeling a sense of non-participation in their social system performance, they are willing to get away from their national living atmosphere.

Social identity: This is a specific concept in which meaning for each individual is determined by the social position of the actors of the respective society (Cuche, 2010). Given the overlap among various and existing shaky definitions (Korostelina, 2007), social identity may be clearly defined as an individual's perceptions, conceptions and conceptualizations of themselves or of society's perspective imposed on them through his/her social system structure based on a dichotomy of approval or disapproval assessment mechanism (Lawler, 2015). Social identity is achieved in the course of socialization and interaction with existing groups or social institutions, with which an individual is affiliated in terms of emotion, commitment, assignment and belonging. As a result, they feel recognized by their social system perspective (Kroger, 2019; Burke, 1991), and considers themselves committed to and responsible for their own affiliated social system criteria, values. They participate in various social events and try to meet its requirements (Darity, 2008).

Social system: This refers to a means or an absolutely analytic or a subjective prospective, and a type of conceptualization of reality which achieves faithfulness in relation to principles through establishing unity. It sets the limits of freedom of action, and accommodates a set of mutual actions or an interactive model originated from man's social roles, expectations, and norms in various arenas of life including family, political party, university, institution, etc., where the actors are interacting, mutually affecting each other, and performing collectively (Turner, 2003).

Social system's Functional Deficiency Effects: This term emanates from Parsons's functional requirements including adaptation, goal attainment, integration, and latency pattern maintenance considered required for all systems (Parsons, 1951). In this work, one of the functional requirements in micro-cultural system is the sustainability or survival of social system for which the latter is supposed to facilitate the requirements for meeting the objectives. It deals with those situational requirements compatible with the society's culture and individuals' sociability through teaching rules and regulations, by laws, and various customs and traditions deemed suitable for the society as well as through exercising social control (through education, indoctrination, propaganda, and ultimately by force). Thus, values and norms can be protected by cultural system and transmitted from one generation to another and make the social members positive to and aligned with their social system (Tanhaei, 1998; Hamilton, 2011; Craib, 1984). In this study, the term, refers to the inappropriate performance of Iranian social system

in meeting the functional requirements for the purpose of facilitating the grounds for the youths' SIF and its enhancement through the seven variables. These include: breakage of the loops of young university students' identity process controlling system, excessively controlled identity system, feeling social participation avoidance, social incapability, social anomaly, social isolation, and social (community) getaway within the society's dominant ideological framework.

Functional Deficiency: The term originates from Parsons's (1951) functional requirements in which adaptation, Goal attainment, Integration and Latency (pattern maintenance) are suggested for all social systems. One of the functional requirements in every social system's micro cultural system is its sustainability or survival. In other words, every social system is required to pave the grounds for achieving the objectives of a suitable environment, compatible with social culture and individuals' sociability through teaching rules and regulations, different traditions and rituals benefitting the society and implementing social event (through education, inculcation, propaganda and ultimately by force). This is so that it can safeguard the values and norms through social system, transfer them between the generations, and can make the individuals aligned with the respective social system (Tanhaei, 1988, pp. 183-185; Graib, 1984, pp. 57-61; Hamilton, 2011, p. 71). For the purpose of this study, functional deficiency of a social system or its inefficiency means the inappropriate performance of Iranian social system in meeting its functional requirements needed for facilitating the establishment and enhancement of the youths' social identity. In the framework of this study, the performance is measured the investigation of seven variables including: *breakage of the loops, excessively controlled identity system, and feelings social participation avoidance, social incapability, social anomaly, social isolation, and social (community) getaway* within the society's dominant ideological framework among the youths.

Breakage of the Loops of Control System Process: This refers to a variable defined on the basis of the social identity measurement criteria represented in Burke's 'Social Identity' theory (1996). In this theory, identity process is considered as a controlling system constructed through a set of meaningful actions and behaviors in the cycle of measurements reflected from one's environment, social position, and self-perception in relation to his society, comparing it with the standard criteria of his personal identity. The loops of the identity process controlling system may collapse under the environmental and social position pressure imposed by social system. This is because the outcome measuring an individual's performances and behaviors in the environment or his social position is not reflected in an adjusted manner compared to the standard of his personal identity and his self-perception in relation to his society has not been shaped in a sound manner (Burk, 1966, pp. 40-43 & 1997, pp. 239-251).

Theoretical Foundations

In order to explain the construction of social identity in the context of social system under the influence of social system function (SSF) in the light of the integrative and analytic approach, this study discusses the systemic approaches to structural functionalism and structural analysis of identity at the macro, moderate and micro levels of sociology, social-psychology and psychology fields.

Macro-level Theoretical Approaches

The macro-theoretical approaches are predominantly based on systemic approaches of structural functionalism and structural analysis of identity. The most important pre-supposition behind the systemic approach to structural functionalism emphasizes system pressure agency and attempts to preserve the whole system (Tanhaei, 2013), and makes social system sustainment conditioned to meeting the fundamental and

required functions of society. According to Parsons, the sustaining principle is that social structure is responsible for meeting the requirements (Azad-Armaci, 2015; Turner, 2003). In this approach, functional requirements, as the most crucial condition for every social sustenance, need to access the required structures, functions and socialization of its members. In this regard, Parsons holds that individuals' needs relate them to social system and the latter facilitates the provision of the former (Ritzer, 1988). Similarly, Weinreich & Saunderson (2005) have suggested a conceptual framework for "Structural Analysis of Identity" based on psychological and sociological approaches. They conclude that what is salient to identity is the assessment and interpretation of events attended by individuals, identifying themselves cooperatively by others and social institutions. In this way they perceive their own identity and shape a right or wrong understanding of society, economy, policy, history, culture, ethnicity, gender and themselves.

The society's structure plays a significant role in the creation and shaping of an identity such that an identity can be known as some type of adjustment with socio-cultural context (Cote & Levine, 2014). In a structural functionalism view, an identity is approached in relation to historical, cultural, social, political and economic parameters (Abdollahi & Ghaderzadeh, 2009). The main authorities of this approach who have followed socially constructed social identity include: Durkheim (1979), Merton (1938), Parsons (1951), Castells (2010), Hall (1996), Berger and Luckmann (1991).

Durkheim (1979) believes that anomaly is the most significant normality interference causing failure in the construction of social identity, and it happens when individuals' identity and belief in non-dominant social norms are due to fast socio-cultural developments and a mismatch between the cultural norms and social construction (Chalabi, 2017). In this regard, Merton also proposed that each socio-cultural structure plays a role or function in the sense that society's cultural structure promotes its cultural values or objectives and social structure provides an achievement means of the objectives or social opportunities (1938). Parsons's macro and structural approach to social action and system supports the role of social system construction in SIF. Figure 1 shows such a process of identity formation within the framework of an actor's performance in social system (Hamilton, 2011; Craib, 1984).

Parsons (1951) believes that an actor selects one option from multiple ways and means under the influence of norms, beliefs, and values or, in other words, under the conditions of socialization and compatibility with environmental or historical conditions in order to achieve his/her objectives (Hamilton, 2011). The social system is also committed to providing the required conditions for meeting the objectives beneficial to society and to exercise social control in order to make individuals positive to and aligned with social system through many possible ways (Craib, 1984) so that an actor, pursuing his/her own interests, can act in line with the benefits of social system as a whole.

In Parsons words: "combination of value-oriented models supposed, to a great extent, to be a function of fundamental role of structure and dominant values of social system, is achieved in the process of socialization (by actor)" (1951, p. 227). In his psychological analysis of social action, Parsons also holds that one's personality is in need of social system support, and the social system is, in turn, approved in the light of personalities. In the course of its social function, personality attends to the social system, and forms a dimension of personality identified as social identity (Rocher, 1988).

Castells (2010) relates identity to social context and background, and considers it as a source of meaning and experience for people. Social construction of identity always happens in the context of power relations, implying that identities may emanate from the dominant institution. If true, it would be called identity provided that social actors internalize it and recreate and re-organize the meaning of identity in the course of an

internalization in accordance with the social requirements and cultural projects rooted in such a social construction and tempo-spatial framework. Hall also believes that SIF is amongst the functions of power, and its objective is to preserve and control power (Hall & Du, 1996). According to Berger and Luckmann (1991), identity can be seen as an authentic component of mental reality which is mutually implicated with society. It is formed in the course of social processes, and sustains, changes, or even it is refreshed as a result of social relations after being realized. Social processes involved in both identity formation and preservation determine social structures.

Micro-level Theoretical Approaches

These approaches are rooted in the ideas of theoreticians defending symbolic interaction (Howard, 2000). Accordingly, this emphasizes the role of mental and symbolic factors in the collective (social) identity construction process (Abdollahi & Ghaderzadeh, 2009) and the formation of social identity becomes a product of interactive mechanisms (Woodward, 2000) under the influence of values, constructions, rules, social control systems, and social activities (Ritzer, 1988). The well-known proponents of this approach are Cooley (1998), Mead (1974), Goffman (1963) and Rosenberg (2017).

The concepts suggested by Cooley and Mead indicate that formation of “Self” through which individuals' social identity is formed, is necessarily considered a social phenomenon realized through peoples' roles in an interactive process in society (Weinreich & Saunderson, 2005). Goffman's social problem is associated with terms like “potential, active, shameful social identity, identity crisis, madness pain, full institution, etc.” (Goffman, 1963, pp. 16-22). He believes that society determines certain functions for individuals whose social identity is set through carrying out such functions. Individuals also do their best to play their roles so that their target identity can be established in the light of relatively structural situations and can force others to accept their identity (1963). Accordingly, individuals' action and potential social identity are formed in the course of social actions framework to achieve a desired identity which determines their social position and mobility, but following the emergence of mismatch between the two identities, an individual faces “functional-identity” crisis constructed in the light of social system structure. Goffman (1963) expresses his beliefs, especially through labeling, in a constructed nature of social identity. Rosenberg (2017) identifies social identity as “groups, positions or ranks” with which an individual “socially affiliates”. This concept is conceptualized through an individual's involvement in social institutions, participation in and cooperation with some events like educational, political, economic and legal systems.

Moderate-level Theoretical Approaches

Theoreticians such as Burke (1991, 1996, 1997), Wyn and White (1997), Jenkins (2008), Giddens (1991), and Stryker (1968) have explained contemporary identity-seeking and identity formation processes in regard to individuals' and social structures' mutual effects (Abdollahi & Ghaderzadeh, 2009). The best known of these is Burke who believes that individuals do not possess a static identity but rather hold new identity called “functional identity” (Burke, 1996). Social identity is a set of concepts employed by an individual in playing a role which he, under the influence of environment or social situation, defines himself as a norm or reference point. This set of concepts is a determining factor for one's “who” and “what” reference points and acts as a criterion (standard) or reference point whereby an individual can identify and assess himself in his society.

According to Burke, when dealing with various situations in a bid to coordinate their own perceptions with the interval criteria they hold for themselves, individuals act in a continuous self-regulatory manner till the normal conditions meet each other at a point (Stets & Tsushima, 2001; Burke, 1991). Based on Burkes' model, identity process acts as a controlling system in which identity loss happens when it is weakened and inefficient)

Burke, 1996; 1997). In Burke's model (shown in Figure 1) arousal and activation of identity in the form of a control system are shaped, stabilized, and possibly broken in the process of a feedback-loop.

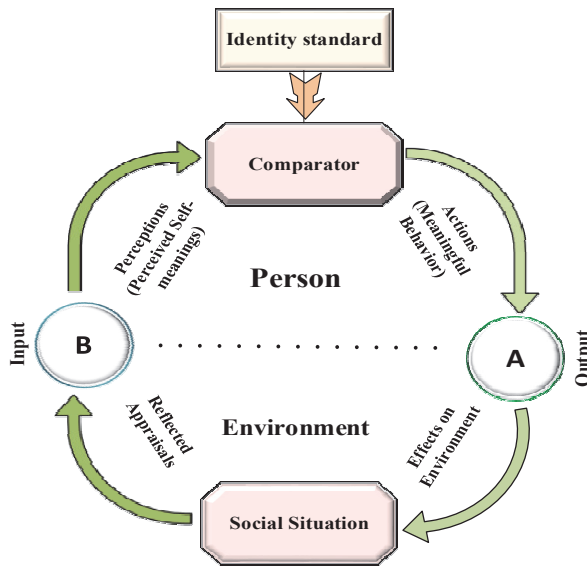


Figure 1. Burke's control-system view of the identity process:
The cycle of meaning showing possible points of interruption at A and B

As shown in Figure 1, section A indicates the social environment including symbols and environmental sources, while section B covers human environment composed of individual's mental criteria and subjective behavior of others. First, under the influence of social situation and environment, certain assessments in the form of "input" are reflected upon an individual who, then, interprets himself in the light of the input and makes a personal perception. This self-perception linked with society is compared and measured based on the individual's identity standards, and the product of such an evaluation forms his meaningful actions and behaviors. Whenever such an output is reflected in social environment or situation, is the time that social identity is formed. However, when a piece of 'incompatible data' with person's concepts or meanings enters the system and is measured based on identity standards, he/she feels emotion, but not necessarily pain and pressure, leading to social identity loss. Since this process entails changes in identity system output, a new identity is formed (Burke, 1996; 1997).

Breakage in the identity process and in the formation of a new identity happens in the light of two mechanisms: The first is a breakage in the identity loops in both section A (i.e., entry of behavior output to environment) and section B (i.e., reception of data from the environment). The second refers to the situation in which identity system is excessively controlled, referring to the efforts made in a bid to achieve success in the compatibility process of the externally reflected assessment to an individual in the data axis, especially in the environment characterized by variable reflective assessments or richness of resources with identity standards (Burke, 1991). According to Wyn and White (1997), SIF takes place through social institutions like schools, workplaces, and recreation environments (both at participation and observation levels). Therefore, social institutions are required to offer identity by involving individuals because identity is a function of the social and individual relations with society's dominant values and ideologies.

Jenkins (2008) believes in a constructive approach and a mutually-implicated attitude in relation to social identity. For him, “individuals’ selves are totally formed in society; individuals define and redefine themselves and others in the process of socialization and flow of social interaction in their social context” (p.7, p. 44). Power, politics and social structure play a main role in identity construction and they may, in certain cases, act significantly in identity preservation and change processes. In interpreting identity, Giddens (1991) relates action to position in a mutually-implicated function (Ritzer, 1988), and believes that individuals’ behaviors and actions are affected by the environment in which they are located, to which they adjust, and through which they embark on constructing and dealing with their own identity. The key principle in Stryker’s (1968) identity theory is the central role which social structure plays in determining the extent of commitment to a particular function (Jaspal & Breakwell, 2014). For him, identities are the relation loops between an individual and social structure, since they are the selections made by an individual in line with his/her own position in social structures as well as the roles he/she plays in such situations.

Theoretical Model and Framework

Based on theoretical foundations followed in this research, identity as a social construct is co-constructed in the course of mutual-implication of structural-agency in a social system through its background parameters and “it is socially established and extracted from people’s daily social life” (Lawler, 2015, p. 8). This because what is salient to identity is the individual’s assessment and interpretation of the structures and events attended and makes himself acquainted with other peoples and social intuitions. Society, under the influence of its social system parameters, offers a framework for individual’s assessment of the events based on which they can create a right or wrong perception of social system and of their own personality (Weinreich & Saunderson, 2005).

The formation and variability of the types and levels of every individual’s, group’s identities or a micro-culture are affected by two sets of macro and micro factors including features of personality and structural or social systems. Any comprehensive applied analysis of the identity formation process, contrary to the functioning each of these independent approaches just at the level of conceptualization (Skidmore, 1975), necessities an integrative and analytic approach (Turner, 2003). This integrative approach, as followed here, is based on both a macro-systemic structural functional approach and an integrative speculation on socio-psychological identity at moderate and micro analytic levels. The final outcome of such an integrative approach is shown in figure 2 as the conceptual and theoretical model behind the process of SIF in the course of structural interaction with social system extracted from the theoretical foundations and analyses of this study.

Based on the theoretical model shown in Figure 2, formation and enhancement of social identity will happen in the course of mutually implicated relation with society where the social system offers certain functional requirements and assignments for paving the ground for social identity. Where the social system’s requirements function appropriately in the context of its structure, the totality of actors’ action will be realized in the system and an appropriate construction of their social identity will take place. As represented in this model, the loops of identity process controlling system are not broken, and individuals do not feel social incapability, anomaly, isolation, getaway, excessively controlled identity system, and social non-participation in the community dominant ideological framework. Then, the general level of individuals’ SIF in relation to social system will be enhanced.

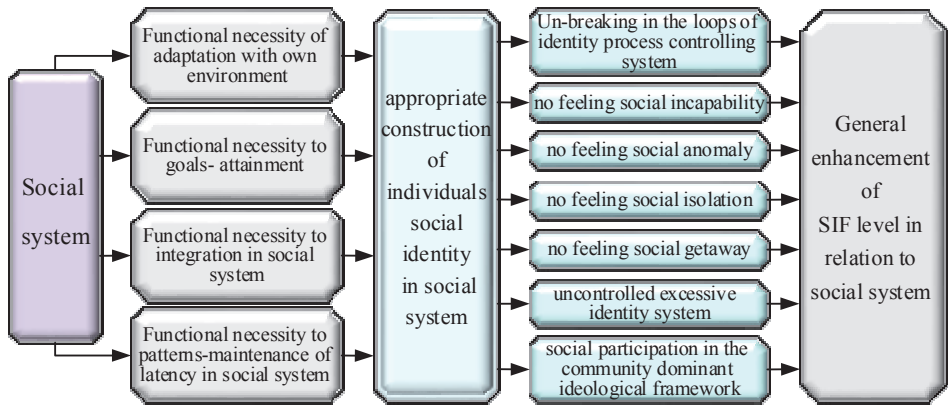


Figure 2. Theoretical model of the process of SIF in the course of a structural interaction with social system

Figure 3 shows a trial model of the defects in the social system’s functional effects on the construction of youths’ social identity which emanate from the respective theoretical foundations and analyses and compatible with the target research questions, hypotheses and objectives for this research. This is a part of the theoretical model of the study tested through the survey with a sample of students representing Iranian college youths from the University of Tehran.

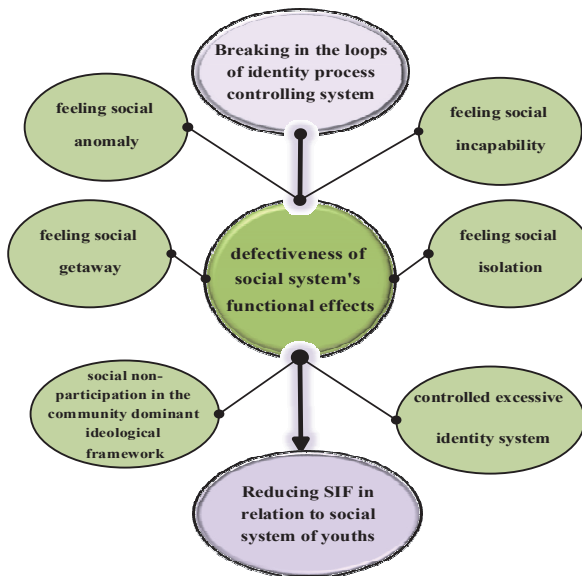


Figure 3. Applied model of measuring the functional deficiency effects of social system in reducing the youths’ SIF in relation to social system

Figure 3 shows an applied model of measuring the impacts of functional deficiencies reducing the youths’ SIF level in relation to social system. The functional deficiency effects on the functional requirement in the course of a mutually-implicated process paves the grounds for SIF. In the form of an over-arching variable accommodating the seven

sub-variables (discussed earlier), This has proved effective in reducing Iranian young university students' SIF in relation to their social system.

Method

The first stage of the study required theoretical investigations into concepts of social identity, social system, and certain indices identifying them. In order to offer clear definitions and operationalize them, the theoretical investigations were initially carried out on an inter-disciplinary sociological, psychological and socio-psychological approach, which shaped the theoretical framework and model of the study. This framework, combined with the related literature, was used to construct a questionnaire which was then validated by a panel of experts, piloted and analyzed, with a sample group, and then was used for actual data collection purpose.

The theoretical and field studies on the subject of this study date back to 2016 and 2019, respectively. Given the theoretical and applied dimensions as well as the nature of the research questions, variables, and purposes of the study, the most rationale method seemed to be quantitative survey design whose efficiency and validity were verified through construct validity measures based on confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). This proved that the variables and indices, as expected, loaded on the predicted factors.

Other qualitative initiatives included:

1) content validity, which assured that all aspects and parameters that could represent our conceptualization on the target variables existed in its criterion measures,

2) briefing and interactive interviews by a group of professional interviewers so that the researchers could be assured that the respondents were aware of the research purpose, questions and the value of their attendance, and

3) abduction methods aimed at moderating, hypothesizing and constructing information measurement indices throughout the research process, ranging from hypothesis-making to the administration of the primary pilot questionnaire. The collective resulted in strengthening the hypotheses compatible with the research topic and objectives.

The research method was mainly quantitative – a survey supported by qualitative approach. The indices and items addressing the hypotheses were constructed based on the theoretical model and framework, and were then examined by a panel of research methods, statistics and sociology experts. The questionnaire, composed of 34 ordinal Likert scale-based items, was validated in the light of CFA with a homogeneous sample group.

The professional experts, from Iranian Academic Centre for Education, Culture and Research (ACECR) affiliated with Jihad-e-Daneshgahi (known as one of the most credited research centers in Iran) were involved in collecting the data both through the questionnaire supported by a briefing, and through interview conducted by the experts using a tablet so that the reliability of the data could be assured. Furthermore, qualitative content validation by a panel of experts and CFA aimed at construct validation were run. Its reliability was also estimated based on Alpha Cronbach.

The sample of 20,284 students included both male (55%) and female (45%) young university students within the age range of 19-35 studying in the University of Tehran. The sample reflected the cultural demographics of the total population based on the census obtained from the Education Office (Amani, 2016).

The main rationale for selecting university students was that they are identified as the elite and more informed social class, more purposeful and dynamic practitioners than the other youth groups. Thus, the investigation should be more representative of the young social class. Similarly, the rationale for selecting University of Tehran as the research venue was the representation of the youths and contribution to the research reliability. The University is the most popular academic center with students coming from various economic, social, cultural, and political backgrounds. The sampling process used the

probability strata method given the sample size in terms of faculty, educational level, and gender factors. Cochran's sample size formula, with an estimation accuracy level of 0.09 and error estimation degree of 0.05, was used for the sample selection mechanism. Following the pilot of the questionnaire to an initial sample ($n=40$) and estimation of the variance of the participants' strata, the sample size was estimated to cover 445 participants. As shown in Table 1, in proportion to the 55% and 45% contribution of female and male students, the proportional contribution of BA/BS, MA/MS, and PhD students was estimated to be 55%, 35% and 15% respectively.

Table 1. Sample frequency of each faculty in terms of gender and educational level

Faculty	Faculty-based Frequency	Gender		Educational Level								
		Male	Female	BA/BS			MA/MS			PhD		
				Ratio/ Σ sample	Male	Female	Ratio/ Σ sample	Male	Female	Ratio/ Σ sample	Male	Female
Literature and Humanity	35	16	19	17	8	9	12	5	7	6	3	3
Economics	12	5	7	6	2	4	4	2	2	2	1	1
Theology & Islamic thought	30	13	17	15	7	8	10	4	6	5	2	3
Physical Education	30	13	17	15	7	8	10	4	6	5	2	3
Geography	22	10	12	11	5	6	7	3	4	4	2	2
Law & Politics	40	18	22	20	9	11	14	6	8	6	3	3
Veterinary	16	7	9	8	3	5	6	3	3	2	1	1
Psychology & Education	38	17	21	19	9	10	13	5	8	6	3	3
Foreign Languages	35	15	20	13	8	5	5	5	0	2	2	0
Social Sciences	21	9	12	10	4	6	7	3	4	4	2	2
Information Science & Knowledge Management	10	4	6	6	2	4	4	2	2	0	0	0
Modern Technology	23	10	13	12	5	7	7	3	4	4	2	2
Entrepreneurship	26	12	14	13	6	7	9	4	5	4	2	2
Environment	21	9	12	10	4	6	7	3	4	4	2	2
Management	74	33	41	29	5	24	20	8	12	10	5	5
Bio-chemistry & Bio-physics Research Centre	4	2	2	2	1	1	2	1	1	0	0	0
World Studies	6	2	4	3	1	2	2	1	1	1	0	1
Islamic Teachings & Thought	2	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Grand Total	445	196	249	210	86	124	140	63	77	65	32	33

Given the larger sample size and based on the central tendency measures indicating that data normality is associated with sample size, one sample parametric t-test was run as in the data analysis. A Friedman test was used for prioritizing the hypotheses and variables from the respondents' perspectives (Habibpour & Safari, 2016).

Although parametric statistical approach and regression analysis are justifiable measures on the grounds of the mutual-implication nature of the independent and dependent variables (social system and social identity) because they practically offer multi-variables jointly forming a full-fledged variable, such comprehensive variables could not be measured either directly or indirectly. This methodological limitation forced the researchers to resort to using a T-test instead of regression analysis. So, the T-values for each variable and their central tendency measures in relation to the final values were measured as a determinant of positive or negative effect of the independent variable on the main variable. If T values tend in relation to the moderate and neutral values of the

target variable, it can be claimed that the independent variable would have no significant effect (Habibpour & Safari, 2016; Karimi, 2015).

The statistical approach followed here as to the ordinal variables is based on the views of some authorities who hold that, in cases where several variables are combined and a scale is formed for a subjective concept, they can be measured via internal scale (Nayebi, 2017) with certain degree of tolerance. Alternatively, through estimating the mean score of the Likert scale data, ordinal values can be converted into interval values (Habibpour & Safari, 2016). It is worth mentioning that in the process of constructing both the indices and designing the questionnaire, the mutual-implication nature of social system and social identity variables which jointly make a comprehensive variable have been noted. So, in the questionnaire items measuring functional deficiency of social system, the youths' social identity feelings was taken as a general variable.

Results

In addition to the validity measures (i.e., content and construct) as assured through both expert content judgment and CFA-based construct validity, the reliability of the questionnaire was also estimated through Cronbach Alpha as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Questionnaire reliability index

Cronbach's Alpha coefficient	N of Items	Hypothesis
0.88	34	main hypothesis

Based on Table 2, the obtained alpha level 0.877 exceeds 0.67 Cronbach alpha level as a criterion measure to test the reliability level. Then, the questionnaire demonstrated an acceptable level of reliability.

Testing the Hypotheses

The results of the data analyses of the impact of functional deficiency process of social system in the model were composed of the seven variables (as explained in Problem and Hypotheses sub-section) each addressed through its respective hypothesis jointly addressing a comprehensive, umbrella variable. These showed that all but one of the variables, were effective in reducing the SIF of the young students. Details are shown in the form of T-test in the tables 3, 4 and 5 as follows:

Table 3. T-Test Statistics on testing minor hypotheses

T-test Statistics Minor hypothesis	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		Mean
					Lower	Upper	
Breakage of the loops of identity process controlling system	41.93	444	0.000	0.144	1.375	1.51	4.94
Over-controlled youths' identity system	16.45	444	0.000	0.988	0.870	1.106	4.49
Feeling social participation avoidance within the society's dominant ideological framework.	4.02	444	0.000	0.194	0.099	0.288	3.69
Feeling social incapability	17.59	444	0.000	0.836	0.743	0.930	4.34
Feeling social anomaly	9.69	444	0.000	0.473	0.377	0.569	3.97
Feeling social isolation	-13.12	444	0.000	-0.720	-0.827	-0.612	2.78
Feeling social getaway	3.44	444	0.000	0.237	0.101	0.372	3.74

Given the significant level (0.000) for all seven minor hypotheses jointly contributing to the main research hypothesis, it could be claimed that none of the hypotheses is sustained. In general, the mean score of response to the questions addressing all minor variables, except that of the social isolation, exceeds 3.5 (the average rate of six-option Likert scale is used as an acceptable index of direct efficiency degree of the variables) on one hand, and the mean difference of lower and upper target variables at 95% confidence interval rate, except that of the social isolation, is positive in all cases on the other. It is concluded that the functional deficiency of all variables except that of the social isolation, has had direct effect on reducing the youths' SIF in relation to the social system. Because of lower value of the social isolation mean score than the average index (of 3.5) and its lower and upper mean difference (as shown in Table 3), it can be concluded that this variable has had no significant effect on reducing the youths' SIF. Therefore, it cannot be identified as an appropriate variable for the measurement of the effect of functional deficiency of social system on reducing the youths' SIF.

The Friedman Test was employed in order to identify the significance and priority of each sub-variable in terms of reducing the youths' SIF. The results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Friedman Test determining the effectiveness significance of each sub-variable

Minor Hypotheses	Mean ranks	t-test Statistics		
		Ch.2	Df	Sig
Breakage of the loops of identity process controlling system	4.85	544.7	5	0.000
Over-controlled youths' identity system	4.13			
Feeling social incapability	3.79			
Feeling social anomaly	2.99			
Feeling social isolation	2.79			
Feeling social participation avoidance within the society's dominant ideological framework	2.44			

Based on Table 4, given the significant level (0.000) for all minor hypotheses and Friedman test mean scores related to the minor variables, it could be concluded that the minor hypotheses claiming an effectiveness in reducing the youths' SIF in relation to social system do not enjoy an equal rate of significance and priority rank.

As shown in Table 4, the variables are ranked from the highest to the lowest rank in terms of their significance and effectiveness: Breakage of loops of identity process controlling system, Over-controlled identity system, feeling social incapability, feeling social anomaly, feeling social isolation, and Feeling social participation avoidance within the society's dominant ideological framework among the youths.

Tables 5 shows the results of testing the main hypothesis based on the T-test and removing the social isolation.

Table 5. T-Test statistics on major hypothesis

Hypothesis Statistics Main hypothesis	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		Mean
					Lower	Upper	
It is hypothesized that Iranian social system's functional deficiency has an effect on reducing the young university students' SIF in relation to the social system	18.32	444	0.000	0.551	0.479	0.623	4.5

Given the significant level of the p-value (0.000) and T-values as shown in table 5, the main null hypothesis is not sustained. Since the higher and lower levels with the confidential internal differences are positive and the mean difference of the responses to the research questions addressing the main variable exceeds 3.5 (average rate of six-option Likert scale is used as an acceptable index of direct efficiency degree), then, with 95% confidence interval rate, it is concluded that the mean responses of the individuals tend to confirm the effects of Iranian social system's functional deficiency on reducing the youths' SIF in relation to the system. Therefore, the functional deficiency of Iranian social system has had direct effects on reducing the young university students' SIF in relation to social system.

Discussion and Conclusion

As discussed above, the majority of the studies conducted on social identity have been based on particular axiomatic-conceptual pre-suppositions, perceptions and attitudes rather than any theoretical and applied/functional requirements. However, social identity is not a uni-dimensional concept to be formed intrinsically; rather it is a multi-exemplar and an analytic concept whose formation process should also be addressed analytically. This is justified on the grounds that even the most salient studies on social identity including those by Burke (1997, 1996, 1991), Jenkins (2008), Lawler (2015 (Shareh'pure and Khoshfar (2001), Abdollahi and Ghaderzadeh (2009), Douran (2008) suffer from offering a comprehensive cognitive and functional analysis. So, to test the theoretical model in practice, a new operational model was designed in the light of the research hypotheses and objectives. There were exploratory studies prior to the research, and the literature search so that the research hypotheses could be tested. This research was carried out methodologically, based on an analytic and integrative approach in sociology, social-psychology and psychology at macro, micro and moderate theoretical levels. A theoretical and functional/applied model for SIF was suggested for the process of mutually-implicated interaction of individuals' structural-agency with social system. The study succeeded in presenting the constructive nature of social identity in the context of social system as a dynamic and multi-exemplar concept in contrast to the previously suggested subjective and uni-dimensional approaches. The model suggested was founded on the theoretical studies and supported by seven minor hypotheses providing a basis for SIF under the influence of Iranian social system's functional requirements so that it can realize the totality of actor's action in the social system and shape an appropriate construction of Iranian youths' social identity in the context of their social system.

Following the construction of the operational indices and items in the form of a researcher-made questionnaire validated in terms of reliability and validity indices through both qualitative and quantitative methods, a sample of 445 students from the University of Tehran, attempted the questionnaire and attended the interview conducted by a group of professional interviewers and delivered on a tablet. The major hypothesis, *'The functional deficiency of Iranian social system has had no effects on reducing the young university students' SIF in relation to their social system'*, was tested statistically on one sample parametric t-test (18.32). The findings, in addition to supporting the major hypothesis, offered a functional, applied model for SIF through a mutually-implicated process along with field support of its measurement indices. The indices extracted from the theoretical studies include preservation of the loops of the identity process controlling system, feeling social incapability, feeling social anomaly, feeling social isolation, avoidance of social getaway, non-excessively controlled identity system, and feeling social participation in the community dominant ideological framework.

The accuracy of the measurement and the relatively higher level of validity and reliability indices showed that one out of the seven hypotheses (i.e., social isolation), probably due to its psychologically individualized nature, cannot be identified as an appropriate measurement index of the effects of the social system's functional deficiency on reducing the youths' SIF in relation to their social system. The Friedman test carried out in the field phase of the research, in order to understand the significance and priority of the effectiveness of the six variables sought through the respective hypotheses, showed that the variables were ranked from the highest to the lowest in terms of the significance and effectiveness as: breakage of loops of identity process controlling system, over-controlled youths' identity system, feeling social incompetency, feeling social anomaly, social isolation, and feeling social participation avoidance within the society's dominant ideological framework among the youths.

In summary, the authors propose that a theoretical and applied model for SIF in the form of unit a mutually-implicated interaction with the nationally prevalent social system and its functional effects along with its measurement indices and items. The field study phase of the research, demonstrated that Iranian social system's functional deficiency has a direct effect on reducing the youths' SIF in relation to their social system.

Suggestions and Limitations

The results show that the youths' SIF takes place in the process of a mutually-implicated interaction with social system. So, a symbolic mutual interaction and transaction based on the cultural and social foundations, and bilateral understanding between the youths and Iranian social system (and perhaps that of the other countries) is of the utmost importance so that youths in particular can feel a sense of social value, importance, and mobility.

The most significant suggestion for the realization of this finding could be the reformation of the Iranian social system structure aimed at offering further actions and structural participation of the youths through the decision-making and influential social organizations and institutions at macro ranks of their social system so that the totality of youths' actions in their social system can be realized, and grounds laid for an appropriate construction of SIF feelings in relation to their own social system. Otherwise, youths may likely resist their social system instead of showing joint mutual interaction with it. On the other hand, due to the urgent need for youths to feel their social identity, we have to expect this tendency in relation to other structural grounds of the social system in their SIF process.

In spite of its findings, this study suffers from certain limitations including:

- the lack of indices and a standardized questionnaire compatible with the newly innovative and different design implemented for this study,
- identifying the indices and constructing a researcher-made instrument and validating it,
- the lack of access to and confidential nature of certain organizational data for sampling purposes,
- the impracticality of studying a comprehensive sample representing the whole general target population of the community of Iranian youth.

Limitations in employing certain statistical methods to measure the variables and test the hypotheses were also visible due to the mutually implicated nature of the independent and dependent variables.

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