A Comparative Study of National Identity Dimensions in Educational System of Canada, France, Japan and Iran

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
  KEYWORDS 	The aim of study is to identify different dimensions of national identity in education system policies of selected countries based on Herbert Mead's theory. The present study is a qualitative, non-experimental and comparative study using George Bereday's four-step approach. The unit of observation is at macro level (countries) and sample selection strategy is "different systems, different outcomes" including Canada, France, Iran and Japan. The data collection method is documentary (upstream documents of selected countries), books and articles. For data analysis, content analysis method was used. The findings of study reveal that in Japan's centralized education system and after the Meiji Revolution, emphasis was placed on fundamental Japanese philosophy and Confucian values. In France's centralized education system, the emphasis is on training based on republican values (equality, democracy, individual and social rights and responsibilities), and in Canada - despite federal parliamentary democracy - there is no unified educational institution. In the centralized educational system of Iran, importance is given to Islamic philosophy and values. Although the past is emphasized in Iran, Japan, and France, Canada cares more about past achievements (such as the construction of railroads) than historical events. The benefit of experiences of Canada, France and Japan- in terms of the dimensions of national identity- can pave the way for policies in Iran's education system.

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1. Introduction

Literature National identity is basis for formation and continuity of human societies, because the survival of countries is achieved through adoption of appropriate measures to create a sense of belonging to that country. The purpose of this article is not to refer to various definitions of national identity, but to focus on fundamental values that in the countries under study, education actors try to institutionalize it with their skillful policies. Considering situation of this policy in Iran during the last two centuries, we will not face a very pleasant situation. During these two centuries, Iranians have been in a conflict between modernity and tradition, or three national, Islamic and international elements, to develop their concept of national identity (Hajiani, 2000). This situation is seen in the development of society from the traditional mode - with stability and homogeneity - to the modern situation - in which there is fundamental movement and distinction. A traditional society suffers from a lack of dynamism when dealing with any incident that is accompanied by imbalance. On the other hand, in modern societies - where life is based on distinction and difference, turning distinctions into differences or similarities can lead to collapse. Therefore, the need for national cohesion at structural levels is essential for any society (Azad Armaki 2015). National identity in contemporary Iran and its challenges is not only a political issue rather a social and communication problems. Its social aspect refers to relations of power centers (such as State and non-governmental institutions) with intellectuals and society (with generational, ethnic and gender differences). The communicative aspect of this issue refers to relationship between individual and society on the one hand and contemporary world - which indicates the transnational identity of individuals- on the other side.

Symbolic interactionism theory is one of the perspectives of contemporary sociology that emphasizes interaction of individuals and institutions in society and identity process feature. George Herbert Mead, one of the great thinkers of this school believes that one's identity develops under the influence of structures, external processes and social changes. In other words, identity is influenced by values, structures, rules and social systems and has a variable and compositional nature. Identity is also influenced by power and culture (Abulafia, 2016). In this article, national identity is considered from Herbert Mead's point of view, because students' national identity is formed after family through interaction with environment and especially through educational system. Accordingly, Billante and Saunders (2002) believe that any policy to strengthen civilization should be centered on educational environments - schools and universities - because it is main

institution responsible for socialization of new generation, internalization of values and following principles of society.

Much research has been done in Iran and around the world on national identity and its relationship with educational system. The results of these research show that national identity is one of the major concerns of researchers in all societies - both developed and developing countries. For example, the work of Samuel Huntington (2004) entitled "Identity Challenges in U.S" addresses the issue of divergent identity tendencies in different states considering it the most important American's identity challenges. Khader (2012) also examined "education system in Malaysia as a model for Jordan". According to his findings, the possibility of Jordan's identity integration depends on national unity and acquisition of a common identity, and this will be possible through mutual respect and acceptance of differences. Maduta (2014) conducted a study entitled "Education and National Identity" in Romania and highlighted that education has influence on formation of national identity. Idris, Hassan, Ya'acob, Gill, & Awal (2012) in a study "The Impact of Education in Shaping National Identity of Youth" conducted in Malaysia reveal that education plays an effective role to shape identity and life skills of young people. Ljunggren (2014) in his study "Citizenship Education and National Identity: Training of Duality " addresses the issue of national identity in Swedish multicultural society and role of citizenship education in creating a unified national identity. In this research, he focuses on democratic patriotism, which aims to confront all forms of chauvinist ethnicity on the one hand and fundamentalist religious identity on the other. He discusses and challenges the issue of national identity in classroom by presenting theoretical and empirical arguments and through a professional attitude and practicing the interaction of learners with each other. Hardwick, Marcus & Isaak (2010) in their study "Education and National Identity in a Comparative Context" has made a comparison analysis of the impact of social studies (especially citizenship education) on national identity of two North American countries. By analyzing high school documents and textbooks, they seek to provide more information on how social studies help to create a sense of "Canadian" versus "American" identity among pupils.

In Iran, Mirzapour, Zamani Moghadam & Jafari (2019) examine function of education in institutionalizing students' national identity and show "symbols", "cultural attitude and behavior", "historical trend", "historical works", "Social Thought and Behavior" and "Social Emotions" strengthen students' national identity. Also, cultural, social and historical dimensions are the most important variables in institutionalizing students' national identity respectively. Rabiee, Fayyaz, Mahroozadeh, Bakhtiari & Khorsandi Taskooh (2019) in a comparative study of social education in

primary schools of Iran and Japan concluded that the Japanese pay more attention to children's social education in terms of policy and process. Saffar Heydari and Saffar Heydari (2019) in a comparative study of nationalism and construction of modern educational systems in Iran and Turkey believe that nationalism as a socio-political phenomenon belonging to the modern era is closely related to the emergence of modern educational institutions. Their findings also indicate that in both countries, educational systems were best able to assist modern government in building a single nation identity.

In sum, the results of these research show that most countries in the world are involved in identity issue and try to deepen and develop it and maintain cultural and social cohesion through educational systems by using various programs. It can also be said that policymakers try to shape national identity of young generation through education system and adoption of macro-national policies. These macro-policies are mainly reflected in development plans and national documents and are implemented through approval of legal bodies such as the government, parliament, national councils and commissions. Therefore, the first step to understand macro policies of each country regarding explanation and formation of national identity is to study its upstream and national documents. Given this fact, the purpose of present study is to examine policies and strategies of educational systems in leading countries of Japan, France and Canada to establish a concept of national identity for young generation. Naturally, experiences of selected countries can inspire policymakers in the Iranian education system. With regard to this introduction, the research questions are:

- What are national identity dimensions in upstream documents of educational system in selected countries?
- What are similarities and differences among upstream documents of educational system of selected countries with regard to national identity dimensions?

2. Research Method

The present study is qualitative research in terms of nature, non-experimental in terms of control of variables, applied research in terms of purpose and comparative in terms of method using George F. Bereday's four-step approach. The unit of research observation is "Macro", method of sampling is consciousness and purposeful with "small n, less variable" and strategy of country's selection is "different systems, different outputs". According to the research literature, four countries of Canada, France, Iran and Japan were selected as a sample among 205 countries. It is assumed that the four educational systems under studied are culturally, politically, religiously, socially and

historically different from each other and also have different functions to strengthen the national identity of their students. Thematic Analysis method was used to analyze the data.

3. Results

In this study, national identity refers to permanent reproduction of patterns and values, memories and traditions that, according to Herbert Mead (1967) are born in a social process and are product of rational and autonomous action of individuals. In present study, identity has political, cultural, religious, social, historical and linguistic dimensions. Researchers at this stage describe and interpret the phenomenon under study based on evidence and information obtained from various sources and through study of documents and reports. In the next step, the information classified and put together. The results of this stage provide a framework to compare similarities and differences of selected countries.

First and second stages of research: description and interpretation

Canada

Canada is the second largest country in the world in terms of geographical area and has 10 provinces and 3 northern regions. It is a country that has broadly integrated the ideas of multiculturalism and pluralism into the policies of national governments, provincial States and educational institutions. It was founded by British and French immigrants as a bilingual community. The two "founding groups" have largely ignored the cultural rights and needs of Indigenous peoples and other immigrant groups since their settlement in the 16th century in an effort to protect their own cultural and linguistic rights. This later led to adoption of policies that today emphasize need to attract "others" (Berns, Clark, Jean, Nagy, & Williams, 2005). Canada is a country of immigrants, and their diversity has made government always face challenge of establishing a sense of national identity. Belshaw (2015) states that for Canadian patriots - who revolted against the British Empire in 1837 – nationalism mean loyalty to the country and was a fundamental structural issue. Since the late 19th century, several strategies have been used to create a common national feeling in Canada, including placing maple leaves in the flag instead of the British flag, producing anthems, postage stamps, national holidays, national currencies, and even special hats - which has strengthened national identity.

Political dimension: Until the middle of twentieth century, no one could recognize Canada as an independent country, and no significant efforts or steps were taken to determine factors and characteristics of its national identity. Canada, over time and the explicit acceptance of linguistic and ethnic minorities, has never been caught up in ethnic nationalism and struggle for a unit nation (Sumara, Davis, & Laidlow, 2001). Since the 1970s, the Government of Canada has launched two major policy

initiatives to recreate nation-state: pursuing a bilingual policy and a multicultural policy. Therefore, Canada's national identity is not result of shared ethnic and linguistic experiences, but is made up of social infrastructure and government services. Hence, Canadian identity is not unified by historical context (Sumara, Davis, & Lidlow, 2001). In Canada, each State is legally request the National Department of Education to provide cultural and historical services. Each State, despite its similarity to other States, also pursues its own regional interests (Guerriero, Pont, Figueroa, Albiser, Maghnouj & Fraccola, 2015).

Cultural dimension: Until the middle of twentieth century, Canadian national identity was a heterogeneous combination of cultural values and characteristics of France, Britain and the United States. This sense of distrust between tribes caused tension from the 18th century to middle of the twentieth century. According to Wright (2017) French and British nationalists believed that a culturally dual society could not create a common and unify national identity. As Tomkins (2008) point out, cultural conflicts such as debate over religion, language, and demand for separate schools have been a challenge since the establishment of Canadian schools. Since the second half of the twentieth century, there has been considerable growth and development in Canadian culture, necessitating a change in education system. In this regard, the following developments can be mentioned: 1- Education of cultural heritage and traditional & national values, 2- Promotion of cultural level of indigenous and non-indigenous communities, and 3- Public access to educational opportunities and implementation of pluralism policy (UNESCO International Bureau for Education Canada, 2010).

Religious dimension: Canada is a secular country with no official religion under its constitution, although the freedom of all religions is guaranteed. This is why Canadian Muslim veiled women are legally allowed to attend State centers, university and schools (Hajiani, 2013).

Social Dimension: Canadian society has learned from its bilingual and multicultural experiences that acceptance and understanding of differences between communities enables social life to flourish. However, the experience of cultural diversity proves that inequalities must be identified and eliminated so that different social groups can grow and prosper at the same time (Berns et al, 2005). In this regard, the citizenship education programs contribute to the general education of students in three ways: First, they consider time and its complexity. Rationally, citizenship education enables students to learn how to gather, analyze, and interpret a variety of information. Then, this training leads to a gradual enrichment of conceptual framework that students use to understand social world. Finally, these trainings allow students to understand impact of humanitarian action throughout history and become aware of their responsibilities as citizens (Niens & Chastenay, 2008).

Historical dimension: In the first half of twentieth century, much of content of school textbooks was devoted to British history, poetry, and stories showing "children drowning in depths of imperialism" (Bainbridge, 2002, p. 165). History in the Canadian curriculum often reflected British-French colonial ties. Interestingly, Canada cares more about the legacy of the past (for example, railroad construction) than history (Belshaw, 2015). History is now taught in primary schools in conjunction with subjects like geography, citizenship, and economics under common title of "Social Studies." The purpose of this subject is to study societies from the local to global level, their heritage and nature of citizenship. In this subject, students are introduced to historical events and develop their understanding of Canadian identity and values of democracy (UNESCO International Bureau for Education Canada, 2010).

Linguistic and Literary dimensions: Today, 80.3% of Canadian immigrants come from Third World countries. For this reason, it is important to note that these immigrants are increasingly coming from countries where the predominant language is neither English nor French. Most of these immigrants enter Canada while willing to get an education in their mother tongue. Since the Canadian government recognized right to education in mother language, it has taken extensive steps to identify other languages. Therefore, at the same time as teaching two official languages, and if the student wishes, education is provided in the mother tongue, and the Government of Canada is required to create necessary infrastructure. Canada's interest in supporting such policies largely goes back to its long history of promoting cultural diversity (Brosseau, & Dewing, 2009).

France

France is located in Western Europe and also has several lands and islands outside its original territory around the world. The mainland is called the French Metropolitan, stretching from the North Sea and the English Channel to the Mediterranean Sea and from the Rhine to the Atlantic Ocean. France is recognized as a world power and has been the economic and cultural center of Europe for hundreds of years (Boniface, Cooper & Cooper, 2016). Immigrants make up 20% of the country's population (Schwartz, 2011). The policy of assimilation has always been the dominant approach to French politics. This country has a history of anti-immigration in its history, although the French always deny it and try to show a minority-friendly nation (Nazari and Salimi, 2015). The reconstruction of France's national identity after the dark years of World War II was carried out by the French elite with immediate aim of building a nation. A strong and collective consensus to restore a new national identity gave rise to a free and prosperous France. France's success in rebuilding its national identity has many lessons for other countries (Kelly, 2008).

Political dimension: An important consequence of the French Revolution was birth of modern nationalism (Bickford, 2012). The political system of this country is centralized and republican, and through strengthening of educational system tries to empower the national identity of its citizens. The French education system historically is centralized, although a limit number of decisions have recently been left to local States. In France, the emphasis on cultivating values of the republic (equality, democracy, individual and social rights and duties) is main goal of education system (UNESCO International Bureau for Education France, 2010).

Cultural dimension: André Siegfried (2012) in his book "Spirit of Nations", which examines and compiles the cultural elements of Western civilization, has categorized most important features of France as follows: In terms of public culture (global thought, preservation and attention about Indigenous traditions, art-friendliness, proper power of organizing, good management, strong analytical power and great literature), in terms of political culture (libertarianism, colonialism, expansionism, active diplomacy, attention to Europe-centeredness and pro-order), Economically (great desire to work and saving) and socially (having a moderate patriotic spirit, strong national unity, moderate nationalism, selfishness and high pride). These are also found in the two important principles governing the French national curricula: 1. Gaining a variety of artistic, mental and practical experiences to develop sound judgment in everyday life, and 2- Having the knowledge necessary to appreciate cultural, social and environmental heritage (UNESCO International Office for Education, France, 2010).

Religious dimension: Christianity is main religion of the French as one of the foundations of their national identity. However, the French constitution states that country is a secular republic.

Social dimension: Citizenship education has traditionally been on political agenda of the French government, which is rooted in consolidation of republic and restoration of democracy. In the first statement of compulsory education and before emphasize on learning to read, write, and literature, priority is on moral and civic education. Those involved in the country's education system provide schools' facilities for students to receive citizenship, responsibility and teamwork training (French Ministry of National Education, 2019).

Historical dimension: In the process of construction of national identity at each country, the land is fundamental base and historical experiences are materials. Although France has a continuous history of eighteen centuries, but today plays an important role in European identity's definition (Poirier, 1997). For this reason, subject of history in high schools cover topics such as rise of Christianity, the Renaissance, the changing world, the French Revolution and Republic, to familiarize students with the country's historical identity (UNESCO International Office for Education, France 2010).

Linguistic and Literary dimensions: The French language is connecting element of republic components and its values . Throughout history, the linguistic unity of France has been associated with its political unity and centralism. In 1992, the parliament amended the constitution to make French the official language. In this regard, the government has taken supportive measures to combat entry of foreign words into the language (Gemie, 2002). Thus, the promotion of French language as a national language is main educational policy of government (Burr, 2003). Every year, more than 150 literary awards are given to writers and poets to help strengthen and enrichment of French literature. Also, from January 2012, citizenship applicants must successfully pass exams on the history and culture of this country with ability and skill to use French language (Stadelmann, 2014).

Iran

Due to its climatic and biological diversity, Iran is among the top 5 countries and is historically and culturally among the top 10 countries in the world. There are 22 ethnic groups and 11 religions in Iran (Aman Elahi Baharvand, 2001). The Islamic Revolution of Iran (1979) caused a change in political, social and cultural system, has great ideals such as revival of the great Islamic-Iranian civilization, a constructive, active and progressive presence among nations, and readiness to establish justice and spirituality in the world. Achieving these goals requires a roadmap that clearly and accurately identifies the route. The "Fundamental Transformation of Education Document" - as a roadmap and constitution of the Iran education system - has tried to explain the vision and goals of education on the horizon of 2025, inspired by upstream documents and attention to strategic goals of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Political dimension: Considering the cultural diversity of Iran society, the approach to identity policies has taken a certain direction and coherence at the time of national government formation in new period and from the 1920s onwards (Hajiani, 2000). Since then, governments and elites have sought to define and establish Iranian identity with their favorite components. Specifically, identity policies in Iran can be divided into three periods: the first Pahlavi era (1925-1941), the second Pahlavi era (1942-1979) and the Islamic Republic era (1979 until now). In the first period, the model of archeology (pre-Islamic Iran), in the second period, the model of modernity and westernism, and in the third period, the religious model dominated the determination of identity policies (Hajiani, 2013). At present, the "Document on Fundamental Transformation of Education" points to the following axes regarding the political dimension of Iran's national identity: unity and territorial integrity, strengthening national security with emphasis on scientific and technological growth, political participation and stability, balance policies about different regions of the country, promoting Iran's global position, and independence and freedom (Supreme Council of Cultural Revolution, 2011).

Cultural dimension: Culture provides possibility of acquiring identity in both individual and collective levels. The "National Curriculum of the Islamic Republic of Iran" is a document that outlines major plan of curriculum and curriculum planning system. This program makes culture most important and richest source of identity identification such as beliefs and values, past history, national celebrities, customs and traditions, laws, antiquities, art and literature. In this program, the field of learning culture and art is concerned with understanding meaning and relations between phenomena, aesthetics and appreciation for the signs of divine beauty in cultural background of society and its preservation and transcendence (Supreme Council of Education, 2012). Ethnic and religious diversity is one of the demographic characteristics of Iran. The unity and integrity of country depends on coexistence of these ethnic and religious groups because the interaction between them throughout history is best way to achieve national unity in a pluralistic society. Recognizing the cultural commonalities of these ethnic groups has been emphasized by the upstream educational documents.

Religious dimension: One of the most important dimensions of national identity in Iran is religious dimension, which has an effective presence in upstream documents of educational system. In "Document of Fundamental Transformation of Education", the religious dimension has been repeated more than 110 times. In this document, several concepts refer to this dimension: First, in Islamic society, monotheism is emphasized; Second, Hayatee Teyabee (the Excellent Life), which in the sphere of society, is the basis for nearness to God and realization of justice in society; Third, the comprehensive development of the human characteristics of students and provision of moral education (Supreme Council of Cultural Revolution, 2011). Religious Education Section of Iran's National Curriculum emphasizes on cultivate a united, faithful, committed person to God, self, others, and nature, with Islamic morality and ready to enter a dignified life (Higher Education Council, 2012).

Social dimension: In Iran educational system, the protection of national unity and social cohesion with focus on a common Islamic-Iranian identity is considered (Supreme Council of Cultural Revolution, 2011). From national curriculum perspective, and through the "Social Studies" school subject, pupils should be provided with opportunities to challenge their own and others' ideas about social issues at local, national, and global levels. In this way they can cultivate the spirit of truth-seeking, justice-seeking, right-seeking, duty-orientation, negotiation, fairness, altruism, and accepting their divine responsibility to humankind - especially the deprived and oppressed people. They should be able to understand characteristics of Iranian-Islamic civilization and culture and its impact on development of human society and today's world - to maintain and promote Iran's position in the region and the world (Supreme Council of Education, 2012).

Historical dimension: teaching history is a very important subject in Iran education system. The identity of Iranians- as a historical fact- ties to history of people and their spiritual and cultural heritage. Hence, recognizing Iran's past enriches its identity and constituent components. For this reason, the role of history in continuation of Iran culture and civilization is undeniable (Yousefifar, 2019). The National Curriculum introduces history as one sources of human knowledge and considers influence of historical figures on Iranian civilization (Supreme Council of Education, 2012).

Linguistic and Literary dimensions: Persian language and literature, because of its development and evolution nature and historical process in preservation of Iranian identity has always had a high position in national unity of Iran. Persian literature refers to all elements and subcultures and manifestation of Iran. According to Article 15 of the Constitution, "the official and common language and script of the Iranian people is Persian. Documents, correspondence, official texts and textbooks must be in this language and script, but the use of local and ethnic languages in the press and mass media and teaching their literature in schools is free alongside the Persian language" (Iran's Constitution, 1989). Nevertheless, strengthening the tendency towards Persian language and literature - as a common language - has been emphasized in the "Document of Fundamental Transformation of Education" (Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution, 2011).

Japan

Japan is a country in East Asia with 6,852 islands (Japan Guide, 2020). Japanese nationalism, which has shaped the set of beliefs and feelings of the Japanese people over the past two centuries, emphasizes education of a patriotic generation (Shimazu, 2006). The Central Education Council of Japan is an organization established in response to a request from the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, and has an advisory role on important issues related to the promotion of education, lifelong learning, sports, etc. (Japan Central Education Council, 2020).

Political dimension: Japan is an imperial country. The government is governed by a parliamentary system. Japan education is divided into two periods before and after the Meiji Revolution. The sharp economic and military differences between Japan and the Western colonial powers were the best reason for rise of the Meiji Revolution and nationalist ideas. For this reason, the emphasis on spreading nationalist teachings and ideas in the Japanese education system to raise a patriotic generation has been on agenda of all Tokyo-based governments (Shimazu, 2006). The principles of education in the Meiji period were based on traditional and national values as well as religion and ethics. This Meiji-era policy - that nationalist ideas should be included in textbooks – still has continued.

Cultural dimension: Since the 19th century, Bushido thought has been known as one of the dimensions of Japanese nationalism. Bushido - which means samurai way, is based on values such as loyalty, self-sacrifice, faith, honor, decency, sensitivity, delicacy, courage and benevolence (Yushino, 1992). In the Japan educational system, in addition to the mandatory subjects in the formal curriculum, students are taught to respect culture and traditions of their homeland (Fereshteh, 1992). General support for culture and the arts - as a strategic investment - is one of Japan's cultural policies.

Religious dimension: According to Articles 20 and 89 of the Constitution (1946), religious freedom is guaranteed for all people of the country and no religious organization should receive privileges from the government (Comparative Constitutions Project, 2020). Although there is no official religion in Japan, Shinto and Buddhism are still prevalent (Inazo, 2001). It is quite normal for a Japanese person to go to a Shinto shrine to pray as a teenager, get married according to Christian rites, and finally be buried according to Buddhism. In primary school, an independent subject called "Ethical Education" is offered 45 minutes per week (IkeMoto, 1996). The content of this school subject includes goals such as self-analysis, relationships with others, relationships with nature, and relationships with groups and communities.

Social dimension: In Japan, the Ministry of Education, Science, Sports, and Culture (Monbushu) considers the feeling of belonging to the nation to be exactly the same as feeling of belonging to social groups, school and family. Love and respect are two important issues that are taught to children in schools (Ellington, 2001). In Japan, students are taught in groups to learn participate in social activities, accountability and problem solving (UNESCO Bureau of Education Japan, 2010). Teaching methods and content are the main tools in Japan school education. These have a lifelong impact and are associated with long-term outcomes such as annual income, financial assets, well-being and life satisfaction (Kubota & Itob & Ohtake, 2019).

Historical dimension: Upstream documents and recommendations of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology emphasized respect on national history, symbols , flags and anthems in schools. The ministry's policymakers emphasize that the use of national flags and anthems will increase love for the nation and respect for its symbols (Doak, 2007).

Linguistic and literary dimension: The official language of the people is Japanese, although learning English is also compulsory. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology argues for the importance of the Japanese language that the core of the actions that take place between an individual and others is through language. More precisely, the national language plays a key role in self-creation and fulfillment of civic duties. The policymakers of mentioned ministry, in addition to the

national language, have paid attention to literature, music, art, history, national governments and the constitution (Jafarzadehpour, 2018). Therefore, in Japan and from the first grade of primary school to the first year of high school, the number of hours devoted to language teaching is more than any other subject. The issue that has been brought to the attention of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology is that there is a language, a culture, awareness and even a national way of life. Therefore, in practice, the lack of multicultural policy - as an education policy - is fully felt in Japanese schools (Parmenter, 1999).

Third Stage of Research: Juxtaposition

Regarding previous step, the interpretation stage information is categorized to pave the way for the next step. This stage involves juxtaposition of national identity's dimensions. It is also worth noting that all six dimensions are divided into sub-indicators. Table 2 shows dimensions in terms of number of indicators:

Table 1. Main dimensions of study based on number of sub-factors

Dimensions	Sub-factors
Political	2
Cultural	4
Religious	3
Social	3
Historical	2
Linguistic	2

Juxtaposition of political dimension

The political systems of four countries have some differences and similarities. In Japan's centralized education system and after the Meiji Revolution, emphasis was placed on fundamental Japanese philosophy and Confucian values. In the French centralized education system emphasis is on education based on republic values (such as equality, democracy, individual and social rights and responsibilities), and in Canada, despite federal parliamentary democracy system, there is no unified educational rules and regulations. In the centralized educational system of Iran, importance is given to Islamic philosophy and values.

Table 2. Juxtaposition of selected countries in terms of political dimension

Country / Factor	Centralized national sovereignty	Dominant values
Canada	-	Federal Parliamentary Democracy
France	*	Republic
Iran	*	Islamic values
Japan	*	Confucius values

Juxtaposition of cultural dimension

The four countries also have differences and similarities in terms of cultural policy. All selected countries pay attention to their national and indigenous cultural heritage and customs in school curricula. A multicultural curriculum and a policy of pluralism (equal education opportunities for all races) have been implemented in Canada, but other selected countries have no policy on multicultural curriculum.

Table 3. Juxtaposition of selected countries in terms of cultural dimension

Country/ Factor	Implementation of pluralism policy in schools	Multicultural curriculum	attention to national customs and traditions	Attention to cultural heritage
Canada	*	*	*	*
France	-	-	*	*
Iran	-	-	*	*
Japan	-	-	*	*

Juxtaposition of religious dimension

The four countries also have differences and similarities in terms of religious policy. Except Iran, other three countries are secular and prevent religion from interfering in their educational policies, although all of them provide ethics education in school curricula.

Table 4. Juxtaposition of selected countries in terms of religious dimension

Country/ Factor	Dominant Religion	Secularism	Ethics Education
Canada	Christianity	*	*
France	Christianity	*	*
Iran	Islam	-	*
Japan	Shinto and Buddhism	*	*

Juxtaposition of Social dimension

The four countries have differences and similarities in terms of social policy. Canada, France and Japan pay special attention to teamwork and social issues and challenges in school curricula. This dimension has received less attention in the Iran's curriculum.

Table 5. Juxtaposition of selected countries in terms of social dimension

Country/ Factor	Attention to Social Issues	Team Work Training	Citizenship Education
Canada	*	*	*
France	*	*	*
Iran	-	-	-
Japan	*	*	*

Juxtaposition of Historical dimension

Japan, France and Iran are countries with ancient history and paid attention to respect historical background in their curricula. As a young country, Canada has little historical or civilizational history, and curricula have focused on past heritage such as the history of social and economic infrastructure developments such as construction of railways instead of historical-political events such as the rise of monarchies or wars.

Table 6. Juxtaposition of selected countries in terms of Social dimension

Country/ Factor	Appreciate Historical Background	Antiquity of Civilization
Canada	-	-
France	*	*
Iran	*	*
Japan	*	*

Juxtaposition of Linguistic & literary dimensions

Educational policymakers in all four countries have focused on role of language and literature in national identity development. In this regard, there are some differences between selected countries. While Canada emphasizes teaching of three languages to young generation, in the other countries formal education is largely in one language.

Table 7. Juxtaposition of selected countries in terms of Linguistic dimension

Country/ Factor	Teaching through different languages	Teaching through only one official language
Canada	*	-
France	-	*
Iran	-	*
Japan	-	*

Comparison stage

At this stage, research subject is examined according to analysis of data in previous sections and based on similarities and differences:

Political dimension: From this point of view, the similarities and differences between four countries can be identified as below:

Table 8 - Comparison of selected countries in the political dimension

Factor	Differences	Similarities
Attention to dominance values	-	4
Centralized national sovereignty	1	3

While differences in political systems' structure of four countries are evident, the ultimate goal of their educational systems is to educate individuals to participate in society and to transmit identity, culture, values, and principles of country. Four countries have their own national values and except Canada, other countries have a centralized education policy system.

Cultural dimension: The findings of the previous section showed differences and similarities among these countries as below:

Table 9 - Comparison of selected countries in the Cultural dimension

Factor	Differences	Similarities
Attention to indigenous customs and traditions	-	4
Multicultural curriculum	1	3
Policy of pluralism	1	3
Attention to cultural heritage	-	4

While the cultural structures of all four countries are different from each other, but attention to national and local customs and traditions has been considered by all of them. One of the main differences in the Canadian curriculum with the other three countries is emphasis on existence of different ethnic groups and immigrants in the country and explicit acceptance of their linguistic, ethnic and religious minorities. Therefore, this country is not caught up in creating an ethnic nationalism to build a unified nation. In Canada achieving the goals of a multicultural curriculum has been a success. In the upstream documents of the Islamic Republic of Iran, culture is recognized as the most important source of identity and emphasize is to different ethnic groups too. However, Iraqiee and Fathi Vajargah (2012) revealed that Iranian students' lack of awareness about historical figures and cultural monuments of different ethnic groups has caused a sense of superiority and cultural prejudices.

Religious dimension: The findings of the third section determine the similarities and differences between Iran and the other three countries as follows:

Table 10. Comparison of selected countries in the religious dimension

Factor	Differences	Similarities
Ethics education	-	4
Secularism	1	3
Dominant religion	2	2

Ethics education is included in all four countries school curricula. The religion of the majority of Canadians and French people is similar and differ with Iran and Japan. The system of government in Japan, France, and Canada is secular preventing religion interfere in politics. In Iran, the religious dimension has a colorful presence in the upstream documents of the educational system and this system seeks to cultivate a united, faithful, committed and responsible generation before God, self, others and nature according to Islamic morality.

Social dimension: The findings of the third section determine the similarities and differences between Iran and the other countries as follows:

Table 11. Comparison of selected countries in the social dimension

Factor	Differences	Similarities
Citizenship Education	1	3
Team Work training	1	3
attention to social issues	1	3

As seen at Table 11, from social aspect, Iran is different from three countries. For example, citizenship education, teamwork education, and attention to social challenges are present in curricula of three countries, but research shows that Iran's school curricula has not paid enough attention to social dimension. Talebzadeh Nobaran et al. (2012) believe that although the formal curriculum - especially subject of social sciences - plays a key role in achieving citizenship education, most indicators related to these skills have received very little attention in content of social sciences curriculum. Amini et al. (2012) in their research entitled "Study of the identity of students in Isfahan" showed that students were weak and below average in terms of knowledge about social identity. An content analysis of the "Document on Fundamental Transformation of Education" also indicates that the authors have made general statements about social challenges such as population growth, migration, dropout to enter the labor market, early marriage of girls and have not come up with a convincing plan to address these challenges.

Historical dimension: The findings of the third section determine the similarities and differences between Iran and other three countries as follows:

Table 12. Comparison of selected countries in the historical dimension

Factor	Differences	Similarities
Historical antiquity	1	3
Appreciate history in curriculum	1	3

Except Canada, other countries have a long history and civilization and emphasize on history education and respect for the past. Canada is not very old country and history lesson is integrated with the subjects of geography, citizenship and economics taught under the unit title of "Social Studies". The purpose of this course is to study societies from local and global levels, their heritage and nature of citizenship. In Iran, since the time of the Constitutional era (1906) until now, three elements of ancient Iranian civilization, Westernism and Islamic identity have been mentioned in school textbooks. What is clear from a careful look at the contemporary history of Iran is an excesses in the use of the above three identity-making factors by different governments. In a way that governments usually use one of these elements to weak other considering them as "Other Identity" (Amirzadeh and Behestani, 2013). In addition, history textbooks have been compiled in such a way that constantly addressing the past failures of the nation and betrayals and corruptions of previous governments and this caused frustration and dissatisfaction among students. History classrooms, on the other hand, are dry and soulless, and students are forced to memorize unfamiliar events and names. Therefore, history lessons are not attractive for students (Nemati, 2017).

Linguistic dimension: The findings of the previous section determine the similarities and differences among Iran and other three countries as follows:

Table 13. Comparison of selected countries in the linguistic dimension

Factor	Differences	Similarities
One official language for teaching	1	3
Teaching through different languages	1	3

Japan attaches great importance to learning its national language in school curricula. In France, one of the power's means and signs of national identity is the French language. There are official bilinguals in Canada, and both languages are used in the curriculum, although learning third language is encouraged. Japan, France and Iran use only one official language in education.

4. Conclusion

In terms of social systems, Iran has little similarity with other three countries. In addition, Iran's educational system is not similar to Japan, France and Canada. Nevertheless, Iranian policymakers can benefit from successful experiences of these countries in strengthening national identity. The experiences of selected countries indicated that national identity of students is formed under the influence of values, structures and rules of the social system and through interaction with their surroundings in educational system. Therefore, the ultimate goal of educational systems around the world is to influence individuals in order to be present in society and to transmit culture, values and principles of society. Iran educational system can be inspired by Japanese educational system in social dimension and should try to implement these policies in its educational goals. Findings indicated that the French have tried to make their national language and literature prosperous globally by awarding major literary prizes. Attention to language, art, special way of life and interaction with other countries has led to the acceptance of France as the cradle of freedom, art and intellectuals. It seems that using the experiences of this country and implementing cultural and literary identity's policies can be fruitful for policy makers and planners of the Iran educational system. The findings also indicate that benefit of cultural treasury of all ethnic groups to strengthen national commonalities can be one of the expert and prudent policies to build a safe and peaceful society. Utilizing experiences of successful multicultural countries such as Canada, which was able to benefit from cultural heritages of all its ethnicities, respect different cultures and neutralizing tensions and conflicts on national identity, can prepare invaluable lessons for Iranian educational policy makers. The results of this study is consistent with research findings of Jafarzadehpour (2018) and Amirzadeh and Behestani (2013) who highlighted that there are obstacles in identity policy of Iran educational system may prevent strengthening of national identity. These barriers

include: lack of awareness of historical facts, lack of collective spirit, reduced social trust, lack of attention to the multicultural society challenges in educational system, and overemphasis on religious rites and rituals. The national identity of Iranians is a mixed identity and one cannot hope to strengthen all its dimensions just by extra emphasis on religious dimension. On the other hand, we know that the Farsi language is the connecting factor of national identity and main element of cultural fluid. However, simultaneous attention to the official language and indigenous languages do not contradict each other. Therefore, it is necessary for policymakers to emphasize all aspects of national identity, making reforms in upstream documents, textbooks and executive policies to achieve the desired result.

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