

## Social Identity in a Multi-Ethnic Society

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### ABSTRACT

The present study aims to: 1. Identify the level of social identity among university students. 2. Determine the extent of differences in social identity according to the variable of gender (male–female). 3. Examine the degree of differences in social identity according to ethnicity (Turkmen, Arab, Kurdish). To achieve the objectives of the current study, the researcher constructed a Social Identity Scale using the descriptive method and based on Social Identity Theory by Tajfel (1969) and Tajfel & Turner (1979). After administering the scale to a representative sample of university students consisting of (400) male and female participants, the results revealed the following: 1. University students possess a high level of social identity. 2. There are statistically significant differences between the two independent samples according to gender, in favor of females. 3. Regarding differences among ethnicities, the study found that: There are no statistically significant differences in the sense of social identity among the three ethnic groups (Turkmen, Arab, Kurdish).

**Keywords:** identity, social, students, university, ethnicities.

### INTRODUCTION

#### Chapter One: First – The Problem and Its Significance

Achieving social identity and a sense of belonging constitute essential goals and key factors for psychological stability—objectives all individuals strive to attain. They represent important indicators of mental health, which forms the basis of personal, social, and psychological adjustment (Guilford, 1975, p.18).

In a research study conducted by Al-Duba'i (2003) on social identity and its relationship with psychological stability, the results indicated that social identity is positively associated with psychological stability and socio-economic status (Al-Duba'i, 2003, pp. 116–126).

Social identity varies according to differentiating factors that distinguish individuals—such as religion, ethnicity, personal relationships, occupation, stereotypes, and political affiliations. Erikson (2000) argues that religion and ethnicity represent fundamental pillars in shaping identity for most individuals (Santrock, 2005, p. 607).

Phinney (1993) notes that one reason for the failure to achieve social identity is low self-esteem, meaning a perceived discrepancy between one's real and ideal self (Phinney, 1993, p. 57). When individuals fail to obtain love, acceptance, and appreciation, they experience alienation, isolation, and loss of social identity, which in turn fosters self-hatred and resentment toward society (Awad, 1989, p. 84).

A study by Ahmad & Rashid (2024) found that ethnic sentiment among students fosters hostility and dislike toward foreigners, reducing social interaction. Their results showed a high level of Kurdish ethnic inclination

among university students, with males scoring higher than females. However, no differences appeared in ethnic inclination according to governorate (Ahmad & Ahmad, 2024, pp. 97–98).

In another study, Al-Ubaydi (2025) examined social identity complexity, intergroup bias, and their relationship with tolerance. The results indicated that social identity complexity among students was high across gender and ethnic groups, with significant differences in favor of Kurdish and Turkmen participants. Intergroup bias was low, with no significant differences by ethnicity, indicating that the sample demonstrated tolerance across ethnic groups, particularly among Kurdish students. The study also found a positive correlation between social identity complexity and tolerance, and a negative correlation between intergroup bias and tolerance. Thus, the study emphasized the need to promote a culture of rational, open dialogue and to avoid marginalizing others in academic environments to strengthen tolerance and acceptance among students of different backgrounds (<https://coart.uobaghdad.edu.iq/?p=32055>).

A comparative study by Rahim (2011) on national identity and ethnic identity among students at the Universities of Mosul and Kirkuk found that the participants exhibited high levels of both identities. No differences were observed between males and females regarding either identity. However, differences were found between Kurdish and Arab students in favor of ethnic identity, while no differences emerged among Turkmen students. Christian students, on the other hand, showed stronger national identity than ethnic identity (Rahim, 2011, p. 57).

Hameed et al. (2019), in their study on national identity from the perspective of Iraqi minorities, concluded that proximity between minorities and the Iraqi majority—through friendship, neighborhood, and intermarriage—supports national cohesion. Minorities' perception of national identity was strongly associated with the lack of constitutional recognition of cultural diversity and the need for justice and equality in granting rights to all social groups. Such measures contribute to strengthening the presence of minorities in public life and promoting their integration and social identity within the national framework (Hameed et al., 2019, p. 479).

Sahdra and Baljinder (2006) conducted a study on social identity and memories of injustice within in-groups. Their results showed that strong identification with the in-group's social identity led participants to recall fewer events that threatened their social identity, especially when the perpetrators were in-group members. The findings also indicated that memories of injustices and tragedies experienced by the in-group enhanced feelings of cohesion among its members. In other words, events involving aggression against the group threatened social identity, while collective suffering strengthened it (Sahdra & Baljinder, 2006, pp. 14–21).

From the above, it is evident that previous studies have highlighted how power imbalances among groups influence feelings of marginalization and injustice among individuals belonging to different ethnic groups.

## Second: Research Objectives

The present research aims to:

1. Identify the level of social identity among university students.
2. Examine the differences in social identity according to gender (male–female).
3. Identify the differences in social identity according to ethnicity (Turkmen, Arab, Kurdish).

## Third: Research Limits

This study is limited to students at the University of Kirkuk from both scientific and humanities disciplines, of both genders (male–female), and from the ethnic groups (Turkmen, Arab, Kurdish) during the academic year 2024–2025.

## Fourth: Definition of Terms

**Social Identity:** Defined by:

- **Tajfel (1981):**  
A component of the individual's self-concept derived from their awareness of belonging to a group or groups, along with the emotional and value-based significance attached to that membership (Tajfel, 1981, p. 255).
- **Turner & Tajfel (1986):**  
The result of an individual's feelings regarding their membership in a group, regardless of direct personal relationships among members. The essential factor is the psychological sense of belonging and shared destiny among group members (Tajfel & Turner, 1986, p. 108).
- **Deaux (2001):**  
The manner in which individuals define themselves based on their membership in a particular group (Deaux, 2001, p. 431).
- **Herman (2011):**  
A set of attributes, beliefs, personality traits, appearance, or expressions that distinguish a person or group (Herman, 2011, p. 779).

***Theoretical Definition:***

The researcher adopts the definition by Turner and Tajfel (1986) because their theory underpins the study's conceptual framework.

***Operational Definition:***

The score obtained by the respondent on the Social Identity Scale prepared for this study.

## CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Tajfel and his student John Turner (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) developed Social Identity Theory (SIT) in the 1970s. The theory proposes three processes—*social categorization*, *social comparison*, and *self-categorization*—which shape social identity. It defines social identity as an individual's awareness of belonging to certain social groups, along with the emotional and evaluative significance attached to that membership. Thus, while personal identity refers to self-knowledge based on unique individual traits, social identity concerns how individuals define themselves in terms of the groups to which they belong. (<https://www.simplypsychology.org/social-identity-theory.html>)

The core premise of the theory is that individuals form their identities in light of their group affiliations. They strive to maintain a positive image of their groups to enhance their self-esteem. The more an individual perceives their group as superior, the stronger their social identity becomes. Accordingly, individuals tend to perceive their in-group with positive bias compared to out-groups, resulting in identification with an impersonal collective identity rooted in group membership and imbued with positive attributes (Gazi Islam, 2014, p. 5).

The theory also integrates processes of categorization and social comparison with self-enhancement motives, along with beliefs and intergroup relations, within a single framework that explains intergroup behavior and the emergence of collective identity (Hogg, 2004, p. 204).

Therefore, the researcher will present an overview of the theory by discussing the cognitive and psychological processes that explain how individuals join groups and develop their social identities. These processes are dynamic rather than fixed and vary according to context and the chronological development of psychological concepts. The two primary mechanisms highlighted in this theory are social comparison and social categorization, as follows:

### 1. Social Comparison

#### *(Comparing the in-group with out-groups to enhance distinctiveness and self-preference)*

Based on Festinger's Social Comparison Theory (1954), the process begins with the assumption that people are motivated to evaluate their opinions, attitudes, feelings, and abilities by comparing them with others. As Tajfel (1978, p. 43) notes, individuals have no objective criterion other than others' behavior as a standard of comparison.

People engage in social comparison due to an inherent desire for self-improvement. Comparisons provide socially relevant information, particularly when objective data is unavailable. Festinger (1954) defines social comparison as the process of evaluating oneself in relation to others. Even when objective indicators are available, social information tends to have stronger influence because it is more personally diagnostic (Monica K. Miller, 2015, p. 1).

Central to the theory is the assumption that social categorization serves as a cognitive tool for dividing, organizing, and simplifying the social environment. Social groups thus provide members with a socially based definition of themselves. These identity definitions are relational and highly comparative. The theory rests on three basic assumptions:

1. Individuals strive to maintain or enhance their self-esteem; they seek a positive self-concept.
2. Social groups carry positive or negative value connotations; thus, social identity may be positive or negative depending on the evaluation of the group(s) contributing to an individual's identity.
3. The evaluation of one's group is based on comparisons with relevant out-groups on valued dimensions.

Positive intergroup comparisons elevate group status; negative comparisons reduce it (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, pp. 15–17).

The theory therefore posits that the need to evaluate the in-group positively leads groups to seek distinctiveness from other groups. Tajfel and Turner argue that the goal of such differentiation is to maintain superiority over an out-group on specific dimensions. Any attempt at differentiation is fundamentally competitive.

Festinger identified two types of comparison:

- A. **Social Realism:** Comparing oneself directly with others.
- B. **Subjective Realism:** Evaluating one's abilities or opinions relative to a specific group rather than individuals (Watson, 1984, p. 469).

## 2. Social Categorization

### *(Categorizing the self and others into “us” vs. “them”)*

Drawing on Tajfel’s Social Categorization Theory (1964), Turner and Tajfel describe categorization as a cognitive tool that segments and organizes the social structure, enabling individuals to simplify complex social phenomena and locate themselves within the social context. Categorization clusters events and social stimuli into equivalence classes, affecting how individuals interpret differences between in-group and out-group members.

Tajfel’s categorization process is built on two principles:

1. People understand the social world through category-based distinctions that convert continuous variables into discrete classes.
2. Categorization helps individuals define their own and others’ positions in the social structure.

Categorization simplifies complex social stimuli in meaningful ways (Ducket, 2000, p. 171).

Tajfel (1982) further argued:

1. Categorization leads to in-group favoritism and out-group bias or hostility.
2. Categorization not only organizes the social world but also provides a reference system that shapes individuals’ understanding of their social position (Tajfel, 1982, p. 112).

Research on category salience traces back to Festinger’s work on religious identity (1947). Oakes (1987) explains that *psychological salience* occurs when group membership influences perception and behavior, while *motivational salience* refers to contextual cues that remind individuals of group membership (Oakes, 1987, p. 118).

Categorization heightens perceived differences between groups (intercategory differences) and minimizes differences within groups (intracategory similarities), known as the *accentuation principle*. This is strongest when the category is salient and relevant to the individual (Hogg & Abrams, 1988, p. 2).

Categorization leads to differentiation, and differentiation produces social comparison (Sabina, 1999, p. 10). Thus, for SIT, categorization is a prerequisite for intergroup perception and behavior. Understanding group conflict begins with recognizing that individuals perceive a social context containing at least two groups: one to which they belong and one to which they do not.

### **Researcher’s Commentary on the Theory**

The researcher considers Social Identity Theory appropriate for interpreting intergroup relations because individuals form their identities through social comparison and categorization processes—distinguishing “us” vs. “them”. Any marginalization or devaluation of a group’s identity triggers defensive reactions aimed at protecting the group.

Thus, the theory effectively explains biases, discrimination, and feelings of marginalization or exclusion, making it a powerful framework for understanding interethnic dynamics in multicultural societies. Ethnic groups often struggle between preserving their identity and integrating with the majority.

For these reasons, the researcher adopted Social Identity Theory for constructing the measurement scale and interpreting the findings, as it provides the most comprehensive explanation of social identity as a mechanism through which majority groups acquire social and economic advantages, while minority groups seek recognition of their existence and rights through their distinct identities.

## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES**

### **First: Method of Research**

The present study employed the **descriptive method** in collecting and analyzing data, as it is an appropriate approach for identifying the current status of the phenomenon under investigation. This method is also characterized by its ability not only to describe the phenomenon, but also to interpret it and predict its future trends (Lamar, 2000, p. 1).

### **Second: Population of the Research**

The target population of the current research comprised **undergraduate students at the University of Kirkuk** for the academic year (2024–2025), totaling **20,612** male and female students. This population consists of several ethnic groups, namely:

**Turkmen, Arabs, and Kurds.**

### **Third: Sample of the Research**

The sample represents a portion of the population selected by the researcher to conduct the study. The sample of the present research consisted of **400** male and female students representing the ethnic groups (**Turkmen, Arabs,**

and Kurds). The sample was selected using a **stratified random sampling technique** from various colleges at the University of Kirkuk, including:

- College of Agriculture
- College of Science
- College of Medicine
- College of Education

for the academic year (2024–2025), as shown in the corresponding table.

**Table (1)** Distribution of the Research Sample by College and Ethnicity

No.	College	Kurdish	Arab	Turkmen	Total
1	College of Agriculture	35	56	30	121
2	College of Science	26	20	20	66
3	College of Medicine	30	43	30	103
4	College of Education	16	45	49	110
	<b>Total</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>400</b>

### Social Identity Scale

After reviewing the available scales and literature related to social identity—such as Raheem’s Scale (2011), Mubarak’s Scale (2013), Bakr’s Scale (2022), and Abdul-Amir & Hussein’s Scale (2022), as well as international scales including Phinny (1995), Sahdra & Baljinder (2006), and Leach et al. (2007)—the researcher found it appropriate to develop a tool that aligns with the Iraqi context and fits the target population, in accordance with the adopted theoretical framework (Social Identity Theory by Tajfel, 1979; and Turner, 1969).

The researcher theoretically defined social identity as: **the result of an individual’s feelings toward their membership in the group to which they belong. Such membership does not necessarily require direct personal relationships among members; rather, the essential factor is the psychological sense of belonging and the shared destiny that links members of the group.**

Accordingly, the researcher constructed a preliminary scale consisting of **14 items**, as presented in **Appendix (5)**. The response options were based on a five-point Likert scale. Respondents indicate their answers by selecting one of five alternatives, ranging from **(5) Strongly Agree** to **(1) Strongly Disagree** for items reflecting the construct, and **(1) Strongly Agree** to **(5) Strongly Disagree** for the reverse-worded items.

The psychometric properties of the scale (validity and reliability) were examined as follows:

#### A. Validity

Validity is considered one of the essential requirements in constructing psychological scales. It refers to **the degree to which an instrument measures what it is intended to measure** (Al-Aamiri, 2018, p. 137).

The researcher relied on **Construct Validity** to examine the validity of the scale. Construct validity refers to determining the scale’s scores based on the psychological construct to be measured, in light of a specific theoretical framework (Al-Aamiri, 2018, p. 138). This form of validity was verified using **Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)**.

#### Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

Researchers typically employ Exploratory Factor Analysis to analyze participants’ responses and to assess factorial validity, revealing the factor structure—i.e., the number of factors and the pattern of item loadings on those factors (La’oun & Ayeshe, 2016, pp. 96–97).

The researcher used the **Principal Components Method**, along with the **Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure** and **Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity**, on a sample of **400 male and female students**.

- The KMO value reached **0.87**, which exceeds the acceptable cutoff value of **0.50**, indicating that the sample size was appropriate and adequate for factor analysis.
- The value of Bartlett’s Test was **(2121.981)**.

Table (2) presents these results.

**Table (2)** Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) Measure and Bartlett’s Test for the Social Identity Scale  
*KMO and Bartlett’s Test*

Test	Statistic	Value
Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	—	<b>0.875</b>
Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	<b>2121.981</b>

	df	91
	Sig.	0.000

This indicates that the sample size for the study was adequate and appropriate. After conducting the factor analysis of the scale's items, the results showed that **a single factor** was extracted. The **eigenvalue** of this factor was **5.37**, accounting for **38.40%** of the total explained variance.

After applying **Varimax rotation** to determine the factor loadings of the items on this factor, and based on **Thurstone's criterion**, the results revealed that **all items were significant and loaded on this factor except for one item (Item 4)**, which was not significant because its loading was **less than 0.30**, according to the criterion adopted by the researcher for determining item significance.

**Table (3)** below illustrates the rotated factor matrix for the Social Identity Scale.

**Table (3)** Rotated Factor Matrix for the Social Identity Scale

Item Number in the Scale	Factor 1 Loading	Item Significance
1	0.71	Significant
2	0.76	Significant
3	0.64	Significant
4	0.18	Not Significant
5	0.43	Significant
6	0.61	Significant
7	0.55	Significant
8	0.82	Significant
9	0.62	Significant
10	0.44	Significant
11	0.66	Significant
12	0.77	Significant
13	0.32	Significant
14	0.73	Significant

**Eigenvalue:**5.37

**Percentage of Total Variance Explained:** 38.40%

It is evident from the results of the exploratory factor analysis for the Social Identity Scale that a single general factor emerged, explaining **38.40% of the total variance**. By examining the items, it is clear that they all address a specific construct, namely social identity. Consequently, the Social Identity Scale is **unidimensional** and, in its final form, consists of **13 items** after excluding item 4.

## **B. Reliability (Internal Consistency)**

One of the conditions for a good scale is high reliability, which refers to the instrument's ability to yield consistent results if applied again to the same group under the same conditions, or the consistency of an individual's responses across items (Al-Amiri, 2018, p.139). The researcher assessed the reliability of the Social Identity Scale using **two methods**:

### **1. Cronbach's Alpha for Internal Consistency**

This method evaluates the consistency of responses from item to item and provides a good estimate of reliability in most cases (Al-Amiri, 2018, p.140). To calculate reliability via this method, the researcher applied **Cronbach's Alpha formula** to the responses of the statistical analysis sample, consisting of **400 students** from the three ethnic groups (Turkmen, Arab, Kurdish). The reliability coefficient for the Social Identity Scale was **0.74**, indicating a high level of internal consistency according to absolute standards.

**Table (4)** Reliability Statistics for the Social Identity Scale

Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
0.745	13

**2. Split-Half Method**

The split-half method is primarily used to estimate reliability. It divides the items into two equal halves—typically odd-numbered and even-numbered items—and calculates the correlation between scores on these halves (Azim, 2017, p.99). The researcher computed the correlation between odd and even item scores for the **400-student sample** from the three ethnic groups. The **Pearson correlation coefficient** between the halves was **0.65**, and after applying the **Spearman-Brown correction formula**, the corrected reliability coefficient reached **0.78**. This indicates that the scale exhibits a **high degree of reliability**.

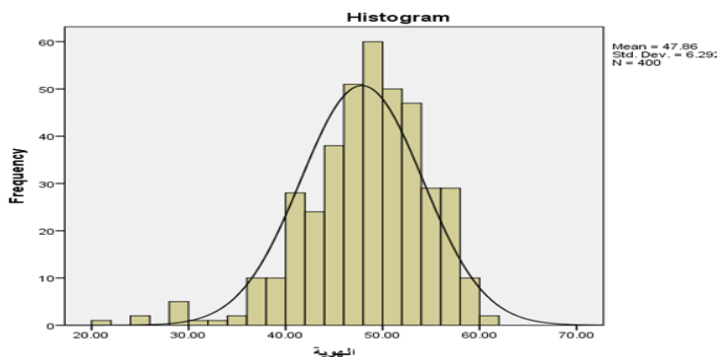
**Statistical Indicators of the Scale**

The researcher calculated descriptive statistics for the Social Identity Scale, including **mean, standard deviation, variance, skewness, and kurtosis**, as summarized in Table (5).

**Table (5)** Descriptive Statistics for the Social Identity Scale

Statistical Indicator	Value	Statistical Indicator	Value
Mean	47.8600	Skewness	-0.843
Median	48.4333a	Kurtosis	1.434
Mode	49.00	Range	40.00
Standard Deviation	6.29161	Minimum Score	21.00
Variance	39.584	Maximum Score	61.00

Figure (1) illustrates the distribution of the Social Identity Scale along the normal curve.



**Figure 1:** Normal Distribution of the Social Identity Scale

**CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION, AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

**Objective One: To identify the level of social identity among university students**

The results of the study indicated that the arithmetic mean of the scores for the sample, consisting of 400 students, reached **47.86**, with a standard deviation of **6.29**. When comparing this mean to the hypothetical mean of the scale, which is **39**, it is evident that the observed mean is higher than the hypothetical mean. Using a one-sample t-test to examine the significance of the difference between the two means, the results revealed a statistically significant difference in favor of the sample mean. The calculated t-value was **28.16**, exceeding the critical t-value of **1.96** at a significance level of 0.05 and with **399 degrees of freedom**.

**Table (6)** Mean, standard deviation, and t-value for the Social Identity Scale among university students

Sample Size	Mean	Std. Deviation	Hypothetical Mean	t-Calculated	t-Critical	Significance Level
400	47.86	6.29	39	28.16	1.96	0.05

The statistical results presented in Table 6 indicate that students at the University of Kirkuk possess a **high level of social identity**.

This result is consistent with the findings of Rahim (2011), who reported that university students have a social identity, as well as with Al-Obaidi (2025), which concluded that university students exhibit a high level of social identity. It also aligns with the findings of Jiey Hu (2020).

This finding can be explained through the adopted **Social Identity Theory (Tajfel)**, which interprets intergroup relationships and posits that individuals define their identity based on social comparisons and the categorization of self and others into groups ("us" vs. "them"). This theory explains individuals' affiliation with social groups (e.g., ethnicity, religion, gender, nationality) and their behavior and attitudes toward others. It also suggests that social identity helps individuals define themselves not only through personal characteristics but also through group membership, including the emotional and evaluative significance of this membership. While personal identity refers to the self in terms of unique individual traits, social identity refers to one's identity in terms of the groups to which they belong, thereby enhancing self-protection. The theory further posits that individuals seek **positive social identity** by comparing their in-group with out-groups, favoring their own in-group.

The researcher observes that university students achieve a **positive social identity** due to their sense of belonging to social groups based on shared foundations such as classmates, friends, clubs, and student activities. This transforms identity from an ethnic/national identity into a broader identity, particularly when students share common goals (e.g., success, graduation). Thus, identity originates from personal and self-esteem within the university context.

**Objective Two: To identify the differences in social identity according to gender (male-female)**

To achieve this objective, the mean score of the Social Identity Scale for female students (N = 218) was calculated as **48.79**, with a standard deviation of **6.54411**. For male students (N = 182), the mean score was **46.7363**, with a standard deviation of **5.79547**.

Using an independent-samples t-test, the calculated t-value was **-3.304**. Comparing this to the critical t-value of **1.96** with **398 degrees of freedom**, the result was statistically significant at the 0.01 level. This indicates a significant difference in social identity scores between male and female students, favoring female students.

**Table (7)** Independent-samples t-test for differences between male and female students on the Social Identity Scale

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-Calculated	t-Critical	df	Significance Level
Female	218	48.79	6.54411	3.304	1.96	398	0.01
Male	182	46.73	5.79547				

The results of the independent-samples t-test indicated statistically significant differences in social identity between male and female students, in favor of females, as the mean score for females was higher. This finding aligns with the study by Phinney (1992), which applied the multi-group ethnic identity scale among minority individuals and concluded that females exhibited higher levels of commitment to ethnic identity compared to males. Similarly, our results are consistent with Roberts et al. (1999), who examined gender differences in ethnic identity among adolescent minorities and found statistically significant differences favoring females, who achieved higher mean scores than males.

This result can be interpreted according to Tajfel's Social Identity Theory, which emphasizes the classification of oneself and others into groups ("us vs. them") to simplify societal structures along lines such as ethnicity. The theory suggests that individuals strive to achieve a positive social identity by comparing themselves with others, seeking distinction and classification within their ethnic or social group. Given that many societies—including the community at the University of Kirkuk—experience pressures on ethnic identity, females tend to employ social classification more actively within their social identity as a reference frame for self-definition. Ethnic identity provides females with a sense of belonging and stability within a multi-ethnic environment.

Thus, the study found that females are more inclined to use classification to define themselves, making them more aware of their ethnic and social group membership. Females also seek positive differentiation of their ethnicity by adhering to their ethnic culture, language, and traditions, which facilitates their integration into a multi-ethnic society. This explains why the mean scores and t-values for females were higher than those for males.

**Objective Three: To identify the degree of differences in social identity according to nationality (Turkmen, Arab, Kurdish).**

To achieve this objective, the means and standard deviations for the three nationalities among the students (Turkmen, Arab, Kurdish) were calculated, as shown in Table (8).

**Table (8)** Means and Standard Deviations of Social Identity Scores by Nationality (Turkmen, Arab, Kurdish)

Nationality	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Turkmen	129	46.9147	6.60851
Arab	164	48.4085	6.05173
Kurdish	107	48.1589	6.18908
Total	400	47.8600	6.29161

The researcher then employed a **one-way ANOVA** to examine the significance of differences in social identity scores according to the three nationalities. The statistical results indicated that the calculated F-value was **F = 2.213** with degrees of freedom (2, 379) and a significance level of **Sig = 0.111**. These results show that there are **no statistically significant differences** in social identity among the three nationalities, as illustrated in Table (9).

**Table (9)** One-Way ANOVA of Social Identity Scores by Nationality

Source	Sum of Squares (S.S)	df	Mean Square (M.S.)	F	Sig.
Between Groups	174.171	2	87.085	2.213	0.111
Within Groups	15619.989	397	39.345		
Total	15794.160	399			

Based on the data presented in Table (9), the statistical results indicate **no significant differences in social identity according to the three nationalities**. When comparing the calculated values with the critical values at the significance level of 0.05, the p-value ( $P = 0.111$ ) exceeds 0.05, and the calculated F-value ( $F = 2.213$ ) is smaller than the critical F-value (approximately 3.02). This indicates that there are **no statistically significant differences between the nationalities in social identity**, confirming that the sample members' responses on the social identity scale are similar across nationalities.

This finding aligns with the study by **Maya Benish W. et al. (2024)**, which reported no differences in social identity between Arab and Jewish groups. It also concurs with **Dillon P. Byrd (2023)**, who found that nationality did not produce significant differences in social identity.

The researcher interprets this result based on **Tajfel's Social Identity Theory**, which emphasizes how social interaction persists while focusing on the characteristics of situations and actors and understanding the role of social structures in reproducing interaction patterns over time. The theory highlights the reciprocal relationship between the self and society, whereby shared meanings generated through interactions with others influence social behavior. According to the theory, three processes are central:

1. **Social categorization** – where individuals classify themselves and others into groups (e.g., Turkmen, Arab, Kurdish).
2. **Social identification and self-esteem** – whereby individuals adopt the values and norms of the group to which they belong.
3. **Social comparison** – whereby individuals compare their own group to others to enhance self-esteem and reinforce belonging.

The researcher suggests that this finding may be explained by the fact that, **despite their differing nationalities**, university students interact in an environment that diminishes distinctions and promotes coexistence. This indicates that while students maintain their ethnic identity, their **general social identity within the university** is stronger due to the positive social position and inclusive environment provided by the institution.

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

- It is recommended to **strengthen social identity** by designing cultural programs and academic activities that promote a social identity that reduces ethnic conflicts within the university while embracing them within a national-humanitarian framework.
- Emphasize the importance of continued **academic support** by leveraging ethnic diversity within the university as an enrichment of social identity.
- Train academic staff to **assist students in developing skills** for interacting with peers of different ethnic backgrounds, ensuring the formation of a flexible social identity capable of adapting to diversity.
- Organize **guidance programs and activities** to integrate sub-ethnic identities within a university-wide student identity that respects ethnic specificities and reduces feelings of alienation.

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