Research on the Cultivation of Education for National Identity in High School Geography

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Abstract

National identity is an important national conscience and plays a key spiritual role in maintaining national unity, stability and promoting the healthy and rapid development of the country. As an essential driver of education, the discipline must assume a major responsibility for national identity education. This study integrates national identity education into high school geography teaching, combines the latest geography teaching theory system with literature research method, text analysis method to analyze the components and specific content of national identity in high school geography teaching, and establishes a new teaching model. Simultaneously, the theme of "maritime rights and interests and ocean development strategy" was selected for teaching experiment, and the impact of the teaching mode proposed in this paper on the students' learning efficiency in geography is investigated by questionnaire. The results of the teaching experiment show that the proposed teaching model can improve students' awareness of national identity and serve as a reference for the teaching of national identity in subject subjects.

Keywords: education for national identity, teaching model, high school geography

1. Introduction

National identity refers to emotional affiliation and identification developed within a particular national context, and significantly affects individuals' perceptions of identity and social stability (Yousaf & Li, 2015). As one of the important ways to construct national identity, education undertakes the important task of promoting the history, culture, and values of a specific country, and fostering individuals to form a positive national identity. However, as the deepening of the globalization process, students' sense of national identity is facing an impact from multiculturalism and diverse values (Branco & Izzo, 2017). How to guide students to form a healthy and positive national identity through education has become a crucial issue for education systems worldwide.

The formation of students' national identity should be based on a correct understanding of the motherland. Geography education, with its unique perspective and content, aiming to help students understand various aspects of the country, such as its geographical environment, natural resources, population distribution, and economic development, so that students can form a holistic knowledge of the country in geography learning (Hintermann & Kessel, 2020; Karadeniz, 2020). As an important window for students to learn about China and the world, geography is an ideal vehicle for cultivating students' national identity and plays an irreplaceable role in national identity education (Lotz, et al., 2022; Sautereau, 2023).

This study used literature research method, text analysis method, questionnaire survey method and experimental research method to establish a high school geography national identity teaching model for the content characteristics of high school geography national identity education, and conducted a teaching experiment for experimental verification. The integration of national identity into high school geography, which will not only deepen the study of national identity education within the subject context, but also provide a valuable reference for the implementation of national identity education in various countries, thereby promoting the development of national identity education within the framework of subject teaching systems.

2. Content of National Identity Education

2.1 The Basic Elements of National Identity in High School Geography

The basic elements of national identity refer to the factors that influence the identity of an individual to his own country, which will develop with the development of the state form. They are the basis for individuals to form

national identity, and they jointly shape the individual's sense of identity and belonging to the country. Andreas Pollman, a scholar from the Department of Sociology at the University of Essex, believes that national identity can be divided into four dimensions: citizen national identity, ethnic national identity, national pride, and supranational attachment (Yang, 2022). Parekh believes that national identity includes ethnic identity, cultural identity and institutional identity (Parekh, 1995).

Combining with the characteristics of high school geography courses, this study proposes that the basic elements of national identity in high school geography mainly include national identity, sovereignty identity, cultural identity and political identity (De Micheli, 2021; Čučko & Turkanović, 2021; Schardong & Custódio, 2022; Soltani et al., 2021; Ragsdale, 2005). The content requirements of each element are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Content requirements for the elements of national identity.

Elements of National Identity	Content Requirements
National Identity	Understanding the national geographical environment, focusing on population, resources, regions, economy, and global geographical issues, possessing a sense of national consciousness.
Sovereignty Identity	Understanding the national territory and the composition of the map, and possessing awareness to defend national sovereignty and territorial security.
Cultural Identity	Promoting outstanding traditional Chinese culture, understanding the history and regional culture of the country.
Political Identity	Embracing the Party's consciousness and actions, understanding national policy guidelines, and having the concept of sustainable development.

2.2 Analysis of National Identity Education Content in High School Geography

In 2016, "Core Competencies and Values for Chinese Students' Development" included "national identity" as one of the eighteen core competencies for students, and pointed out the key requirements for cultivating students' national identity competency (Zhao, 2020) (Figure 1). This requirement has provided guidance for schools to implement national identity education.
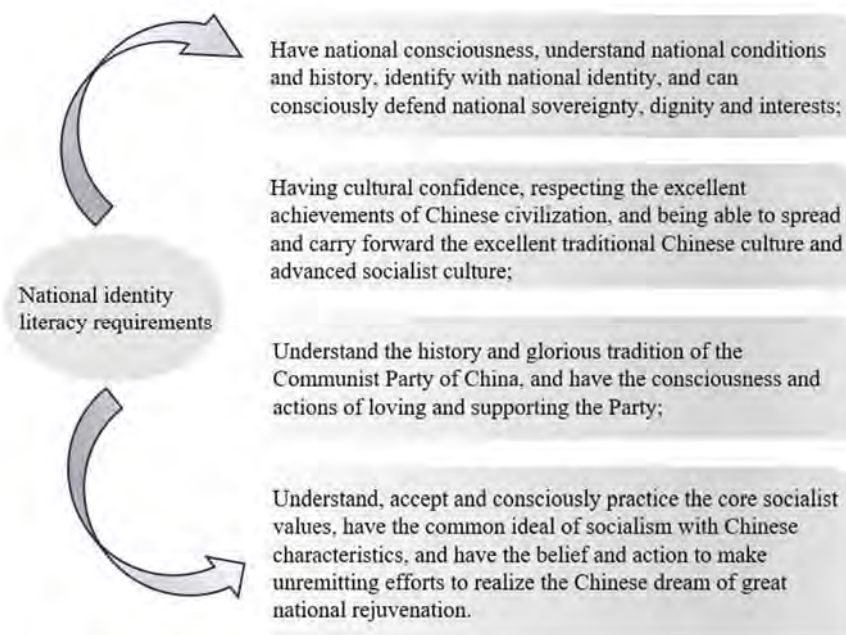

Figure 1. The requirements for cultivating students' national identity competency

If the "Core Competencies and Values for Chinese Students' Development" serves as a guide for implementing national identity education, then the high school geography curriculum standards and textbooks are the content carriers for national identity education. The contents of national identity education are reflected in various parts of the high school geography curriculum standards. In terms of structural layout, the content of national identity

education is generally distributed across sections such as the nature and philosophy of the curriculum, core competencies and curriculum objectives, curriculum structure, curriculum content, and academic quality. Some of them are directly reflected in specific teaching content requirements and academic quality descriptions. This fully reflects the national will embodied in the curriculum standards of the new era.

As the core pare of national identity education, textbooks are the main basis for teaching activities. High school geography textbooks contain national population resources, regional development, regional culture and other contents, which play an important role in shaping students' national identity. The following statistics about high school geography textbooks show that it has a large amount of content on national identity education, but they are not evenly distributed. Figure 2 shows the distribution of national identity education content in geography textbooks (People's Education, 2019 edition).
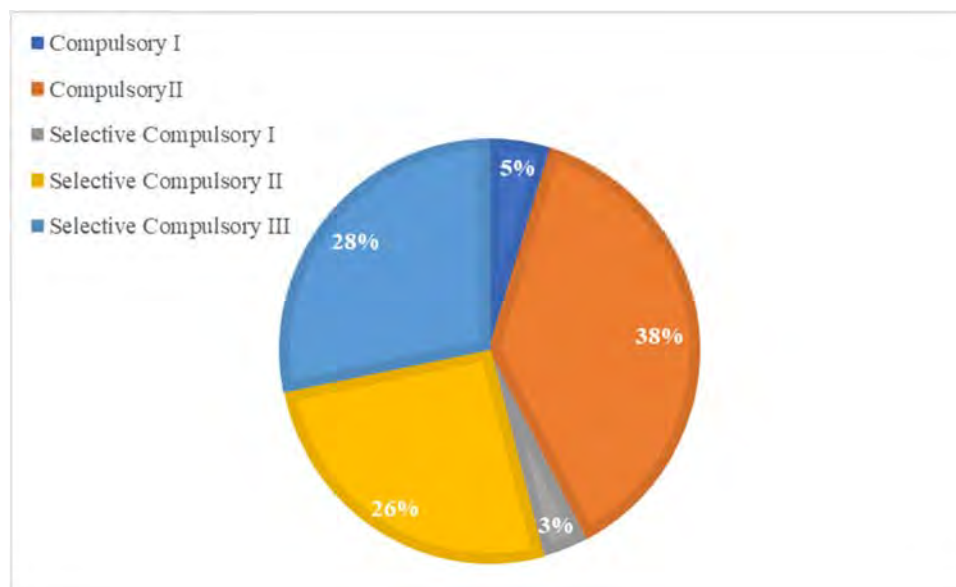

Figure 2. Content distribution of national identity education in geography textbooks (The People Education 2019 Edition)

3. The Construction of National Identity Teaching Model in High School Geography

The teaching model serves as a bridge between teaching theory and teaching practice, providing a blueprint for teachers to carry out teaching activities. Focusing on the teaching goal of cultivating students' national identity in high school geography, this paper constructs a comprehensive teaching model for national identity education in high school geography through guiding teaching philosophy, supporting teaching elements, implementing teaching procedures, and evaluating and examining teaching effectiveness. The framework of the teaching model is shown in Figure 3.
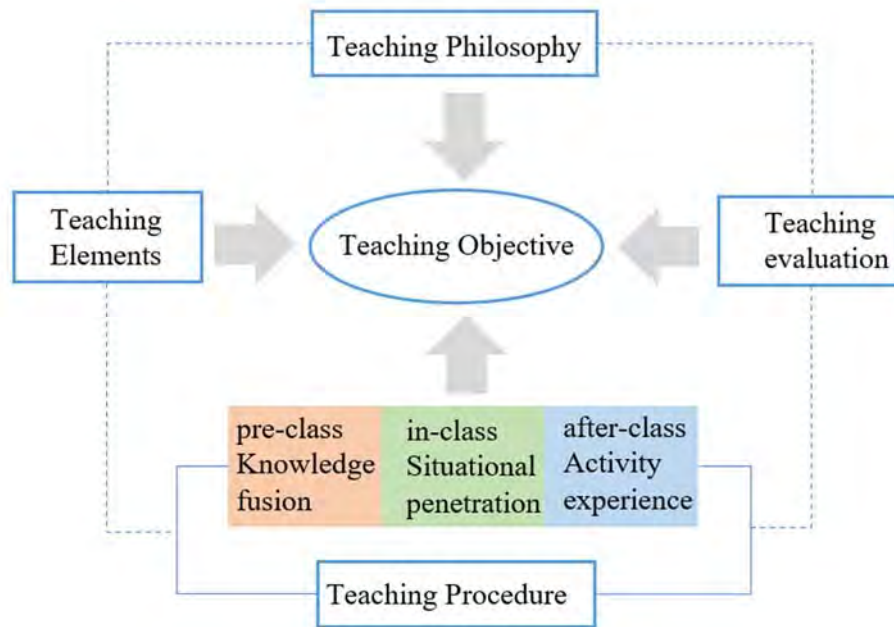
Figure 3. Framework of the Teaching Model

3.1 Teaching Philosophy

Regionalism is a fundamental characteristic of geography. From a regional perspective, students can gain an understanding of territorial divisions, ethnic compositions, population distributions, national sovereignty, political systems, resources and environment, and economic development issues within the region. They can also comprehend the differences and connections between different regions, and gain a clear understanding of the country's national conditions, thereby strengthening their overall awareness of the country. Through the study of geography in high school, students learn to recognize regions at different spatial scales in the world and China. They also explore the relationship between human production and life and the regional geographical environment, which contributes to maintaining ecological security and promoting the construction of a beautiful China. Ultimately, this process fosters emotional attachment, love for one's homeland and country, and a sense of national identity.

3.2 Teaching Objectives

National identity education is a kind of value education (Pike, 2000), which is different from the cultivation of knowledge and ability. It is implicit but not isolated and mechanical. Therefore, knowledge, emotion and action should be integrated in the design of national identity education objectives. According to the combing of national identity knowledge in the above article and the geography curriculum objectives in high school, the teaching objectives of national identity in high school are established as three dimensions: acquisition of national identity knowledge, generation of national identity emotion and practice of national identity behavior.
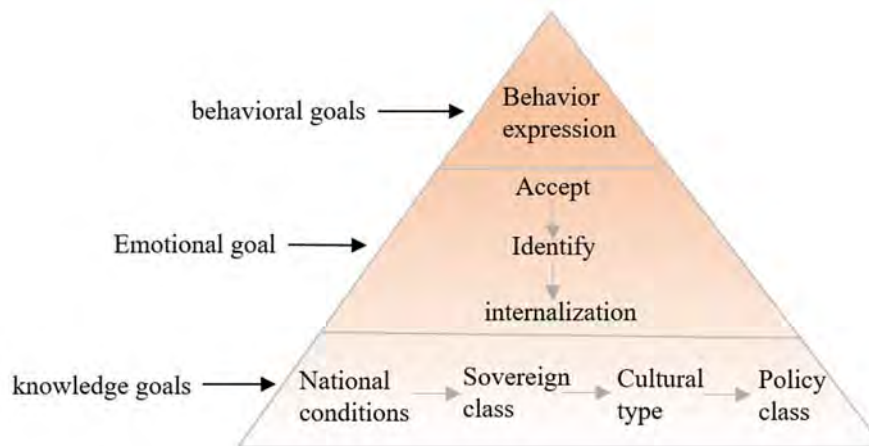
Figure 4. Teaching objective structure

3.3 Teaching Elements

The teaching elements in this article mainly include teachers, students, and the content of national identity education. In high school geography national identity education, the teacher's responsibility is mainly to guide students to learn the knowledge of national identity, cultivate students' national identity emotions, and create activities that allow students to manifest national identity behaviors. Additionally, the high school period is a crucial time for students' psychological and cognitive development, and teachers conducting national identity education also need to understand the developmental patterns of high school students' psychological cognition. The content of national identity education serves as the foundation for teachers to carry out instructional activities, supporting the achievement of national identity educational goals.

3.4 Teaching Procedure

The teaching procedure primarily involves three stages: "pre-lesson knowledge integration, in-lesson contextual infusion, and post-lesson activity experience." This facilitates the effective integration of national identity education into high school geography teaching.

3.5 Teaching Evaluation

Teachers, students, and the classroom constitute the three subsystems of the teaching model. Therefore, the teaching evaluation of national identity education in senior high school is mainly evaluated from three dimensions: teachers' teaching work, students' learning effect and classroom teaching effect.

4. Teaching Experiment

This study applies the proposed teaching model to the teaching of the theme 'Maritime Rights and Ocean Development Strategy.' This theme encompasses geographical environment, national interests, territorial boundaries, map awareness and national strategic content. The national identity elements involved include national situational identity, sovereignty identity, and political identity. The purpose of this experiment was to determine whether the teaching model of national identity in high school geography could help students understand geography knowledge and enhance their awareness of national identity.
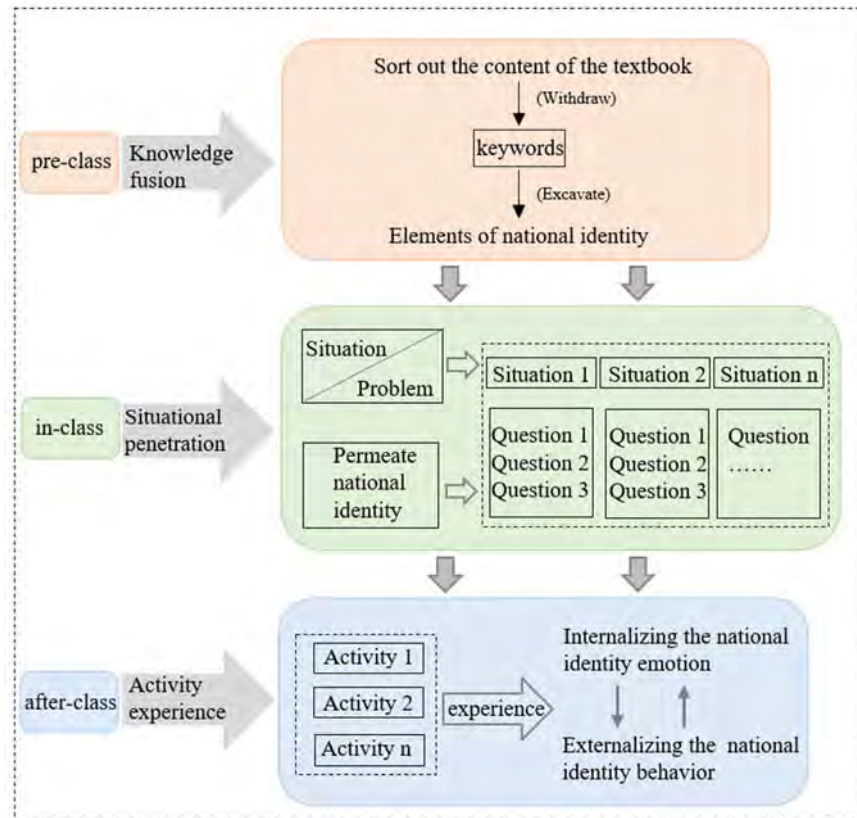
Figure 5. Teaching procedure

This paper takes two classes of senior two in a high school in Xinyang City as the research objects, which are identified as the experimental group and the control group. The total number of students and the gender ratios in the two classes are very similar, with 52 students in the experimental group and 55 students in the control group.

4.1 Pre-experiment Test

In the real world of teaching and learning, there are many factors that influence teaching and learning, including students' cognitive level, learning attitudes, teachers' teaching level, teaching progress, and teaching experience. The interference of irrelevant variables must be consciously controlled in the experiment.

To ensure that there were no overall differences in the levels of the experimental subjects, two classes of the same level in the same section of the same school are selected for the practice. The same teacher will teach both the experimental and control classes, and the same curriculum will be used during the experiment. A geography proficiency test was conducted for both the experimental and control groups before the experiment began. The results are shown in Figure 6.
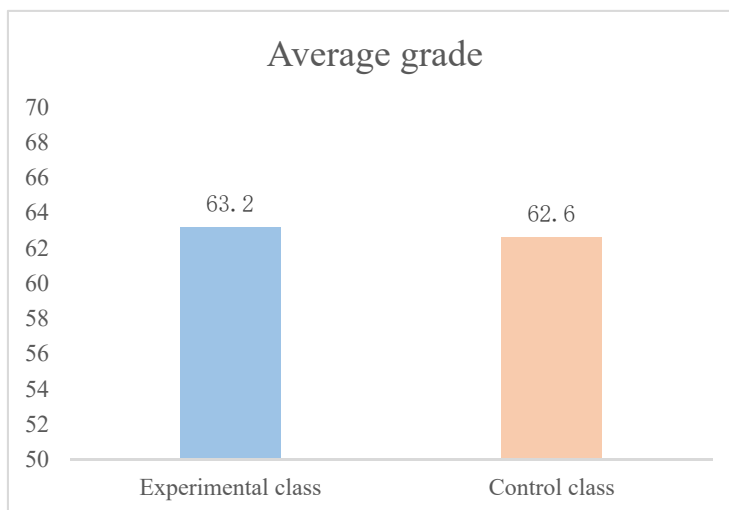
Figure 6. Comparison of pre-test geography results

The results indicate that there were no significant differences in geography proficiency between the two selected classes for the experiment. Students exhibited comparable foundational abilities, so the next experimental research could be carried out.

4.2 Post-experiment Test

During the study, the experimental group utilized the national identity teaching model proposed in this paper, while the control group employed conventional teaching methods. After the teaching sessions were completed, questionnaires were distributed to collect feedback on the experimental results from both the experimental and control groups. The questionnaire included tests of students' national identity knowledge, national identity emotion, and national identity behavior. All questionnaires were collected and deemed valid. Questionnaire data were scored using Likert scales, with a maximum score of 5 points per question and a total score of 70 points for the questionnaire. Independent samples t-tests were conducted on the post-experiment data for different dimensions of national identity for students in both classes, and the results are shown in Table 2.

The table shows that the experimental group scored higher than the control group in various dimensions of national identity. In the independent samples T-tests for each dimension, all P values were 0.000 ($P < 0.05$), indicating a significant difference between the experimental and control groups in various dimensions of national identity. This demonstrates that the national identity teaching model proposed in this paper can effectively enhance students' national identity knowledge, national identity emotions, and national identity behaviors.

Table 2. Post-experiment data on various dimensions of national identity

Dimension	t	P (Significance)	Average Score	Standard Deviation	Class
National Identity Knowledge	9.043	0.000	23.42	1.486	Experimental Group
			20.82	1.492	Control Group
National Identity Emotion	8.535	0.000	23.50	1.475	Experimental Group
			21.20	1.311	Control Group
National Identity Behaviors	11.219	0.000	19.13	0.886	Experimental Group
			16.78	1.243	Control Group

5. Conclusion

No matter the reform of geography curriculum abroad or at home, geography education has undertaken the education of students' basic geographical conditions, patriotism and global consciousness. This study, based on the uniqueness of high school geography, explores national identity education from the perspective of teaching models, which is distinct from the macro perspective of national identity education content in previous studies. Therefore, it is feasible to cultivate students' national identity awareness from the perspective of high school geography education. the national identity teaching model proposed in this study can serve as a reference for

implementing national identity education in high school geography teaching.

In the high school stage, students are at a crucial period of establishing ideals, beliefs, and political convictions. Through the study of national rights and interests, territorial security and international cooperation in geography class, they can understand their self-identity, have a strong national concept and patriotic enthusiasm, and have a stronger sense of social participation and national identity. However, national identity education is not only about knowledge but also emotional education, requiring long-term integration into geography teaching. For future research, a more diverse selection of topics is recommended. It is also recommended to expand the sample size to include a more diverse group of students from various schools and districts. Additionally, conducting follow-up studies in varied educational settings is suggested to further validate the validity of the model and explore its long-term effects on students' national identity literacy.

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Authors' contributions

Jiqiang Niu involved in supervision, writing-review of the manuscript, and was responsible for funding acquisition; Yiyan Wang performed conceptualization, methodology, writing of the original draft; Jiao Chen involved in editing of the manuscript.

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Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this study.

Informed consent

Obtained.

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The Publication Ethics Committee of the Canadian Center of Science and Education.

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Data availability statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

Data sharing statement

No additional data are available.

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