The Role of Family in Shaping Identity: A Study of Internal Mechanisms and Socio-Cultural Transmission

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ABSTRACT

This literature review examines the role of the family as a primary socialization agent in shaping a child's identity. Through a qualitative thematic synthesis of scholarly works, the study addresses two core questions: the mechanisms of internal family dynamics in forming personal identity, and the transmission of broader socio-cultural identities. The analysis reveals that personal identity is constructed through transactional processes within the family ecology, involving parenting styles, communication patterns, and emotional security. Simultaneously, families act as crucial conduits for social identity such as culture, religion, and class through daily practices, language, rituals, and habitus, which equip the child with a framework for positioning themselves within societal structures. The study concludes that the family's influence is fundamental and dual-faceted, integrating psychological and sociological dimensions to shape an individual's self-concept and social belonging. The findings underscore the need for holistic parenting frameworks and educational policies that recognize and support the family's central role in identity formation.

INTRODUCTION

The process of individual formation in society takes place through the internalization of values, norms, and behavioral patterns known as socialization. Through socialization, individuals learn acceptable ways of thinking, behaving, and interacting with others. This process enables individuals to function as members of society who are capable of maintaining social order and cooperation. Socialization also shapes personal identity by influencing attitudes, beliefs, and expectations regarding social roles. As a result, socialization becomes a fundamental mechanism in the development of social competence.

Among various social institutions, the family holds a central role as the first social unit encountered by individuals from birth. Within the family, children experience initial forms of interaction that introduce them to social relationships, authority structures, and behavioral boundaries. These early interactions play a crucial role in shaping cognitive, emotional, and social development, which later affects children's ability to engage in wider social environments. Family-based socialization provides the foundation for understanding responsibility, empathy, and communication.

Numerous sociological and developmental psychological studies emphasize that the absence of early family socialization can significantly hinder the formation of basic social capacities (Berger & Luckmann, 2016; Giddens, 2013).

The influence of the family in the socialization process works through interrelated channels, such as parenting patterns, verbal and non-verbal communication, and daily life practices. Interactions between children, parents, and siblings form a rich social learning space. Children do not simply imitate the behavior they observe, but absorb the social meaning attached to that behavior. They learn to understand expectations, implicit rules, and ways of expressing and managing emotions in social relationships. These interactions also form the basis of children's social perceptions, which will later influence how they view others and themselves, including in dealing with stigma and efforts to create an inclusive and equal society (Hardyansah et al., 2021). This process is dynamic because the child's responses also shape the patterns of interaction within the family. Therefore, family socialization is understood as an active and continuous symbolic exchange, rather than a

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passive, one-way flow of values (Grusec & Hastings, 2014; Collins et al., 2000).

One important result of family socialization is the formation of a child's identity. Identity refers to an individual's understanding of themselves, which develops through recognition and responses from their immediate environment. The family functions as the first social mirror, where children obtain confirmation of their existence and uniqueness. This identification process is highly susceptible to social pressure, where a teenager's ideal choices can be analyzed through a socio-psychological approach to understand the conflict between family values and environmental influences (Fajar et al., 2021). Naming, gender-based treatment, and parental expectations are the initial elements that shape identity. Children learn to recognize themselves as individuals with distinctive characteristics as well as members of the family group. The psychological well-being built from this process is very important, given that social dynamics and psychological well-being can be greatly influenced by experiences of discrimination that are also learned and perceived from an early age (Udjari et al., 2021). The foundation of identity built at this early stage plays an important role in shaping how individuals perceive themselves in various social situations throughout their lives (Schwartz et al., 2011; Erikson, 1968).

The formation of social identity through the family is always intertwined with broader socio-cultural structures. The family acts as an intermediary that transmits cultural values, social class position, religion, and ethnicity to the next generation. Family narratives, religious practices, consumption habits, language styles, and aesthetic preferences become media for learning about social position and cultural heritage. Consumption trends, such as minimalism, can also be understood as expressions of identity formed through responses to social inequality and industrial dynamics, the values of which can be transmitted within the family (Gani et al., 2021). Through this process, children acquire a frame of reference for understanding their origins and sense of group membership. In the modern era, families also face challenges in transmitting values amid the transformation of cultural values and social practices driven by rapid digital development (Al Hakim et al., 2021). This mechanism makes the family the primary means of cultural continuity and social reproduction, as well as an open space for value change when children interact with diverse external influences (Bourdieu, 2018; Lareau, 2015).

Thus, the family plays a central role in shaping

individuals who are able to understand themselves and their environment socially. Family socialization does not stop at learning basic norms, but includes the formation of identity and value orientation that guides individuals in navigating complex social life. This value orientation must ultimately be in line with sustainable public policy objectives, which aim to build a balance between the economy, society and the environment (Mardikaningsih & Hariani, 2021). Various recent studies show that the quality of interactions within the family has a long-term impact on individuals' social adaptation, self-confidence, and social participation in later stages of life. This impact is particularly evident in extreme cases such as domestic violence, where social perceptions of such acts have profound implications for the mental health and recovery process of victims (Issalillah & Khayru, 2021). Therefore, the family continues to be viewed as a key institution in understanding the process of individual formation and the sustainability of social structures in society (Berger & Luckmann, 2016; Giddens, 2013).

In particular, the hermeneutic phenomenological approach offers a useful perspective for understanding how families operate as agents of socialization. This approach emphasizes the interpretation of life experiences as experienced and interpreted by the subject themselves. In relation to this topic, children's experiences within the family are viewed as a living text full of meaning. Every interaction, rule, and expression of affection is a symbol that needs to be interpreted by children to build an understanding of themselves and their world. The dynamics of social interaction itself have undergone a major shift in the digital age, which has technological implications for interpersonal relationships and psychosocial well-being, thereby affecting how this living text is read and interpreted (Oluwatoyin, 2021). Parents, as more experienced figures, act as initial interpreters who help children make sense of their experiences. The process of identity formation, therefore, is a hermeneutic journey in which children actively interpret messages from the family environment to construct narratives about themselves. This literature review aims to systematically examine these dynamics based on a synthesis of relevant scientific works.

Although there is broad consensus on the importance of the family in socialisation, there is debate and complexity regarding the specific mechanisms and outcomes of this process. One of the main issues lies in the variety of parenting styles and their varying impacts on the formation of a

child's identity. The literature shows that authoritarian, permissive, and authoritative styles produce different psychological and social outcomes. These differences in parenting styles also have the potential to widen or narrow social gaps, which in turn have an impact on public health, access to services, quality of life, and become the subject of analysis for policy solutions (Nalin et al., 2022). However, this understanding is often simplified without considering mediating factors such as child temperament, family configuration, and sociocultural pressures. Furthermore, changes in family structure over the past few decades, such as the increase in single-parent families, families with full-time working parents, or families raised by grandparents, add a new layer of complexity. The fundamental question is how these variations in family structure and internal dynamics modify the process of value transmission and identity construction, and whether there are core mechanisms that remain constant amid changing family forms.

Another prominent issue is the interaction between family influence and external socialisation agents, particularly in the digital age. Previously, families could be said to have had relatively greater and protected authority in conveying their core values. Today, the massive and instant flow of information from the media, peers through digital platforms, and educational institutions often presents values, norms, and identity models that may differ from or even contradict those taught at home. This situation creates a tug-of-war for children in the process of building their identity. Children no longer only interpret messages from their families, but must also filter, compare, and synthesise various messages that are sometimes incoherent from many sources. The integration of technology into children's lives must be guided by ethical principles and social responsibility in innovation, to ensure that it supports sustainability and social justice, not the opposite (Da Silva & Gani, 2022). This challenges the position of the family as the primary agent of socialisation and raises questions about the resilience and adaptability of family values in shaping children's identities amid a plurality of external influences.

The rapid social transformation at the beginning of the 21st century has placed the family institution in an interesting yet vulnerable position. Globalisation, population mobility, and the communication technology revolution have blurred the traditional boundaries between the

private space of the family and the public space. Children today grow up in an environment that is far more connected and exposed to a diversity of worldviews than previous generations. In such conditions, understanding how families can remain a source of values that is both solid and flexible in guiding children is critical. Examining the role of the family in socialisation and identity formation provides a conceptual map for navigating these changes. This study can help formulate ways in which families can strengthen children's psychosocial resilience, equip them with the ability to think critically about various influences, and ultimately form a coherent and adaptive identity.

On the other hand, the increasing attention to issues of mental health, psychological well-being, and social inclusion makes understanding the roots of identity very relevant. Many challenges faced by adolescents and young adults, such as role confusion, low self-esteem, or difficulties in social relationships, can be traced back to the quality of early socialisation processes within the family. By examining how families build the foundations of a healthy identity, this study can contribute to mental health prevention and promotion efforts starting from the most basic social unit. This knowledge is valuable not only for parents and educators, but also for policymakers responsible for creating environments that support effective parenting and the positive development of every child's potential.

This literature study aims to analyse and synthesise scientific findings related to the role of the family as the primary agent of socialisation in the formation of a child's identity. Specifically, this study seeks to describe the internal mechanisms and dynamics of the family that shape a child's personal identity, as well as to examine the process of social and cultural identity transmission by the family and its influence on the child's position within the social structure. The expected theoretical contribution is the presentation of a comprehensive and integrated framework of understanding regarding the dialectic between family agency and the broader social context in the process of identity construction. In practical terms, this synthesis of knowledge is expected to serve as an informative reference for parents, education practitioners, and family counsellors in their efforts to create an optimal nurturing environment for the development of a healthy, coherent, and responsive child identity.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research is a qualitative literature study designed to investigate and synthesise scientific knowledge about the role of the family in the socialisation and identity formation of children. A qualitative approach was chosen because it is appropriate for the purpose of exploring and gaining a deep understanding of a complex social phenomenon, where meaning, process and interpretation are the main focus. This study does not collect new empirical data, but rather conducts an in-depth analysis of published academic texts to identify patterns, themes, and key concepts. Thus, this research is positioned as an integrative effort that seeks to connect various findings from previous studies to produce a more comprehensive and structured understanding of the topic under review, in line with the tradition of thematic reviews in qualitative research.

The literature search strategy was conducted systematically to collect relevant and credible study materials. The search focused on scientific journal articles, monographs, and academic book chapters. Academic databases such as Google Scholar, JSTOR, PsycINFO, and SAGE Journals were used. The inclusion criteria included: (1) publications that explicitly discussed theories or empirical findings related to family and identity socialisation; (2) written in Indonesian or English; (3) research-based works or theoretical reviews. Exclusion criteria included non-academic popular works, technical reports, and publications whose main focus was on other socialisation agents such as schools or the media without a strong analytical link to the role of the family.

The data analysis process followed systematic steps to ensure the precision and accuracy of the synthesis. After the literature was collected, open coding was conducted on the main ideas, theoretical arguments, and empirical findings contained in each text. These initial codes were then grouped based on their similarities and thematic connections through axial coding, resulting in a number of candidate themes. These themes were further refined and organised hierarchically to answer the research questions. The quality of the analysis was maintained through repeated readings of key texts, careful note-taking, and consistency checks of interpretations. The overall process aims to construct a coherent analytical narrative that not only summarises but also critiques and connects the various perspectives found in the literature on this topic.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Internal Family Dynamics and the Formation of Children's Personal Identity

The mechanism of personal identity formation in children within the family stems from basic interactions that are repetitive and systemic from an early age. The internal family mechanism in shaping children's personal identity takes place through a network of interrelated and continuous interactions. The main foundation of this process lies in parenting patterns that build the child's psychosocial environment from an early age. Parenting patterns convey repeated messages about the child's self-worth, the expectations placed on them, and their position in family relationships. The quality of these interactions also plays a central role in improving the child's psychological well-being, where the ability to manage emotions in daily life is one of the foundations (Irfan & Darmawan, 2021). Competent parenting patterns directly or indirectly influence the psychological well-being of the child (Pomytkina et al., 2021). Children who grow up in responsive and supportive parenting, with consistent affection and recognition, tend to develop an understanding of themselves as valuable and capable individuals. Conversely, parenting characterised by rejection or indifference has the potential to instil a fragile and doubtful self-perception. Children interpret the treatment they receive as a reflection of who they are, so that their self-image is formed through a continuous process of active interpretation (Baumrind, 2013; Deci & Ryan, 2012). Parenting patterns serve as the initial foundation that determines the direction of a child's personal identity construction.

In addition to parenting, family communication is the main channel in the process of shaping a child's sense of self. Family communication serves as the main medium for shaping the sense of self. Everyday conversations, parents' emotional responses, and repeated narratives about family experiences provide a framework for children to interpret their personal experiences. Stories about the struggles, failures, or successes of family members provide symbolic material for children to construct stories about themselves. A dialogical communication pattern encourages children to develop reflective abilities, emotional recognition, and confidence in their personal views. This experience fosters an internal locus of control, where children view themselves as active subjects in their life journey. Conversely, rigid and one-way communication risks creating an identity that is highly dependent on external validation (McLean &

Syed, 2015; Fivush, 2007). The quality of family communication greatly determines the depth of children's self-reflection and identity independence.

Identity formation is also influenced by micro-parenting practices present in daily interactions. Micro-parenting practices, such as forms of praise, criticism, assigning responsibilities, and setting boundaries, contribute directly to the formation of personal identity dimensions. Praise that emphasises effort and strategy encourage the development of a growth orientation, where children view abilities as something that can be developed. Age-appropriate responsibility conveys messages about competence, contribution, and meaningful membership in the family. Through this series of interactions, children continually test and adjust their understanding of their own capacities and the social expectations they face. Consistent constructive feedback helps children build a realistic and adaptive self-image (Haimovitz & Dweck, 2017; Dweck, 2012). Micro-parenting practices become a concrete means of shaping children's self-evaluation and developmental orientation.

Social interaction within the family is not limited to parent-child relationships. Sibling relationships add an important layer to the formation of personal identity. The competition, cooperation, and conflict that arise between siblings provide an early opportunity to learn social roles, negotiation, and empathy. Birth order often influences how children perceive themselves within the family structure, although it is not deterministic. These interactions encourage ongoing social comparison, allowing children to assess their strengths and limitations through close and intense relationships. These dynamics enrich the identity formation process with diverse and real social experiences (Feinberg et al., 2012; McHale et al., 2012). Sibling relationships contribute significantly to expanding the social dimensions of a child's personal identity.

The quality of emotional bonds within the family is a determining factor in enabling safe identity exploration. The emotional security created within the family is an important prerequisite for healthy identity exploration. Secure emotional bonds with primary caregivers provide a basic sense of trust in oneself and the social environment. This sense of security allows children to try new roles, take developmental risks, and reflect on their choices without being overshadowed by excessive anxiety. A stable family environment supports the formation of a flexible and authentic identity, while

a conflict-ridden or unpredictable atmosphere encourages the emergence of defensive identity strategies. These internal dynamics must be viewed in a broader social context, including the challenges of urbanisation that complicate the development of social cohesion in urban environments (Mardikaningsih, 2021). Thus, the quality of emotional relationships within the family directly influences the direction and resilience of a child's personal identity (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2010; Thompson, 2016). In other words, family emotional security is the psychological foundation for adaptive identity development.

The formation of personal identity is not a one-way process, but rather the result of reciprocal interactions between children and their environment. The identity formation process is dialectical because children act as active agents who continuously reshape their socialisation environment. Innate temperament, such as activity level, regularity, and intensity of emotional reactions, influences how parents respond and the patterns of interaction that develop at home. Children who are sociable tend to receive different social stimulation compared to children who are more reserved, and these differences in response can reinforce the child's initial tendencies. Personal identity arises from the ongoing transaction between biological disposition and family social experience. When parents are able to read their child's temperamental signals and adjust their parenting style, a relational harmony is formed that supports healthy identity development. Prolonged incompatibility has the potential to give rise to internal conflict and identity confusion (Rothbart, 2011; Sameroff, 2010). Harmony between the child's character and the family's response is key to personal identity stability.

Changes in a child's development are often marked and interpreted through symbolic practices within the family. Developmental transitions and family rituals serve as symbolic markers that affirm changes in a child's identity status. Birthday celebrations, religious ceremonies, or changes in daily independence patterns convey micro-scale cultural messages managed by the family. Such rituals communicate that the child is growing and facing new expectations. These family rituals and traditions are key elements in the formation of social identity, connecting individuals to inherited collective values (Binti Ismail, 2021). Families that consciously give meaning to these transitions help children integrate changes into a continuous narrative of self. When recognition of

developmental changes is minimal, children risk feeling stuck in old roles, resulting in a less-than-optimal identity maturation process (Fiese et al., 2002). Thus, family rituals play an important role in the continuity and coherence of a child's identity.

The identity formed within the family subsequently influences how children interact with the outside world. The self-concept formed from internal family dynamics then functions as the main filter in interpreting experiences outside the home. Children who internalise a view of themselves as persistent learners will respond to academic difficulties with more adaptive strategies than children who view themselves as incapable. Personal identity operates as a cognitive and affective scheme that guides behavioural choices, friendships, resilience in the face of pressure, and future aspirations. Children's preparation for interacting outside the home is also influenced by a multidisciplinary educational environment, designed to encourage the growth of social competence (Hariani et al., 2021). Through this process, families provide a psychological framework that allows children to continue to build and reshape their identities throughout their lives (Schwartz et al., 2011). Personal identity becomes a bridge between family experiences and children's social adaptation.

The effectiveness of identity socialisation is largely determined by the consistency of the message's children receive within the family. The success of identity socialisation is greatly influenced by the consistency between verbal messages and actual behaviour within the family. Parental role modelling in daily practices has a strong influence on the formation of children's moral identity. Parents' expectations and desires largely confirm and reinforce the descriptions they have given of their children (Little, 2020). Values conveyed through words lose their meaning when they contradict the actions observed by children. Consistency between words and deeds creates a trustworthy and coherent environment, allowing values to be clearly internalised. Inconsistency, on the other hand, causes cognitive and affective confusion that hinders identity integration (Bandura, 2012). Role modelling is a central mechanism for the internalisation of values in children's identities.

The formation of a child's identity is also influenced by relationships with family members outside the immediate family. Extended family figures, such as grandparents, enrich the dynamics of identity formation. They bring cross-generational experiences, traditions, and perspectives that can complement parenting patterns. Their presence often provides additional emotional support and alternative attachment figures that increase a child's sense of security. Exposure to cross-generational narratives broadens children's reflections on family origins and continuity, contributing to psychological resilience and identity exploration (Bengtson & Roberts, 2013). Extended families broaden children's identity horizons through cross-generational perspectives.

Adolescence is a critical period when identity dynamics reach their highest complexity. The complexity of family dynamics reaches its peak during adolescence, when identities formed since childhood are tested and reconstructed. Triggered by biological, psychological, and social changes, young individuals tend to reconsider their childhood perceptions of themselves and explore the possible directions their lives may take (Bogaerts et al., 2021). Families that are able to shift their parenting approach towards a consultative pattern and respect autonomy help adolescents navigate this developmental task constructively. The ability to think abstractly allows adolescents to reflectively assess family values and choose commitments that align with themselves. Family acceptance of this reflective process supports the achievement of identity, which is a commitment to values and life goals after sufficient exploration (Schwartz et al., 2012). At the macro level, the successful navigation of this critical stage is influenced by a sustainable legal system and social welfare policies that reflect social welfare theory in their legal foundations (Rizky & Udjari, 2021). The support provided by families during adolescence determines the success of personal identity consolidation.

Interactively, the formation of a child's personal identity is the result of the accumulation of various internal family mechanisms. Overall, this analysis shows that the internal mechanisms and dynamics of the family in shaping a child's personal identity are a multidimensional, transactional, and ongoing process. Parenting patterns, communication, micro-parenting practices, sibling configurations, psychological security, and transitions and rituals all intertwine to form a network of interrelated influences. This process involves the child's active agency in interpreting family experiences, while the family provides a framework of meaning, feedback, and a foundation of emotional security. The result is a personal identity that functions as the core of how the child understands themselves, which then becomes the

lens through which they engage with the wider world. The robustness and flexibility of this identity are greatly influenced by the quality of the interaction ecology built within the primary family environment. The family, as the first social unit, also requires effective leadership to enhance its capacity to face complex social challenges (Corte-Real et al., 2021). Thus, the family acts as the main foundation that determines the direction, quality, and sustainability of the formation of an individual's personal identity.

Transmission of Socio-Cultural Identity by the Family and the Child's Position in Society

From a sociological perspective on socialisation, the family is understood as the first institution that frames the process of internalising a child's social identity. The family functions as the primary channel and initial filter for the transmission of social identity to children through repetitive daily practices. This process begins earliest through the language used at home. Family language, including dialect, vocabulary choices, and patterns of verbal interaction, carries cultural baggage and social positions that are implicitly inherited. Children who grow up with a particular regional language internalise the perspectives, values of politeness, and social relationship structures inherent in that language. The choice to use the national language or a foreign language as the main language of the household also marks the cultural orientation and social aspirations of the family. Through this process, children learn to categorise social reality and position themselves as part of a particular group of speakers, with social judgements reflected in the family's attitude towards the language, either as a source of pride or as something to be suppressed (Swartz, 2022; Spolsky, 2012). Social stereotypes, which are often transmitted through language and family practices, play a significant role in shaping opportunities and inequalities in society, particularly in education, employment, and intergroup interactions (Sajjapong et al., 2022). Family language functions as an early symbolic medium that constructs the boundaries of a child's social identity.

Beyond language, the normative dimensions of social identity are also transmitted through belief systems institutionalised within the family. Religion and spirituality are transmitted within families through rituals, narratives, and ethical practices that are consistently observed. Joint worship, religious celebrations, and daily prayers are embodied learning processes, in which children directly experience the meaning of shared faith. The family becomes the primary mediator that translates religious teachings into concrete actions and daily moral choices. The way parents interpret life events through a religious framework shapes children's moral causality patterns and influences their understanding of life goals and social responsibility. The religious identity built within the family provides children with an existential framework that helps them navigate a diverse social life (King & Boyatzis, 2015; Saroglou, 2014). The family acts as the main agent in shaping children's moral and existential orientation.

Within the framework of social reproduction theory, the family's social class is subtly transmitted through daily domestic practices. The family's social class is transmitted through cultural capital and social capital that are implicitly present in household life. Cultural capital includes tastes, communication styles, aesthetic preferences, and orientations towards education and knowledge. Families with professional backgrounds tend to instil the values of formal education, reflective discussion, and mastery of dominant cultural symbols, while families with different backgrounds may emphasise community solidarity and practical skills. Children absorb these dispositions through repeated exposure, which then shapes their sense of what is normal behaviour. When children enter social institutions such as schools, this cultural capital is assessed differently and influences their academic opportunities and social experiences (Swartz, 2022; Lareau, 2015). The impact of this social differentiation must be managed through a robust legal system to strengthen the direction and structure of sustainable social welfare policies (Marsal et al., 2021). Families are the initial mechanism that determines the differentiation of children's social opportunities.

Children's social identity is also shaped through material practices that represent the family's social position. Family consumption practices and lifestyles serve as markers of social identity that are visible in everyday life. Choices of where to live, eating patterns, dress codes, leisure activities, and media consumption convey symbolic messages about the family's social position. Children learn to recognise social boundaries through these practices and develop habitus as a system of dispositions that guide their perceptions and actions. This habitus works latently, making certain patterns feel natural while other patterns feel foreign. Through the formation of habitus in the family, children internalise social boundaries that influence their

aspirations, sense of possibility, and self-assessment in the long term (Atkinson, 2023; Savage et al., 2013). The family's lifestyle functions as a latent structure that guides children's social orientation.

Conceptually, the transmission of social identity within the family is multidimensional. Thus, the family becomes the primary arena for the formation of children's social identity through language, religion, social class, and lifestyle intertwined in daily practices. This process is gradual and often unconscious, but its impact is long-lasting in shaping how children understand themselves and society. The social identity formed within the family then interacts with other institutions, reinforcing or challenging the initial dispositions that have been internalised. Therefore, understanding the role of the family in the transmission of social identity is key to reading the dynamics of social reproduction and opportunities for mobility in modern society. The family functions as a structural foundation in the formation of an individual's social position.

Social identity is also rooted in historical narratives that are managed and passed down within the family. The family is the primary source of collective narratives and historical memory that shape a child's ethnic or national identity. Stories about migration, struggles, achievements, and traumatic experiences of ancestors give children a sense of continuity across generations. These narratives answer questions about origins and connect individuals to broader groups, such as tribes or nations. The way families frame historical stories, whether through pride, caution, or ambivalence, influences the level of children's emotional attachment to their group identity. In immigrant families, efforts to preserve traditions of origin while adapting to new cultures often give rise to hybrid identities. Children develop the ability to switch codes between domestic and public spaces, which influences their strategies for positioning themselves in a multicultural society (Verkuyten, 2013; Rumbaut, 1997). Through this approach, families also build continuity of collective identity across generations.

The transmission of social identity is not a process free from conflict and negotiation. The process of social identity transmission is often marked by friction and negotiation. Children may change their identity during periods of transition or significant life events that require them to reconsider who they are and the direction they want to take in their lives (Branje, 2022). When children begin to engage more intensely with school and peer groups, they are confronted with identity alternatives that differ from family values. Questions about religious beliefs, embarrassment about dialect, or new cultural preferences are a natural part of identity development. The family's response to these dynamics is crucial. Families that open up space for dialogue and rational explanation provide opportunities for more stable identity integration, while coercive approaches have the potential to create identity fragmentation. In a dialogical situation, the identity inherited from the family is not passively copied, but rather processed and reinterpreted by the child as their own (Eriksen, 2015; Brubaker, 2004). Family dialogue is a key mechanism for the integration of children's social identity.

Technological developments have significantly expanded the arena of identity socialisation beyond direct, face-to-face interactions within the family. Digital media and communication technologies now play an important role in shaping how children perceive themselves and others. Exposure to online content introduces diverse values, lifestyles, and social expectations that may differ from those encountered at home. As a result, identity formation increasingly occurs through both offline and digital interactions. This shift requires families to reconsider traditional approaches to socialisation.

Within the home environment, families manage digital exposure through rules governing screen time, content access, and patterns of media consumption. Parents often engage in selecting age-appropriate content and monitoring online activities to protect children from harmful influences. Family discussions about media messages help children understand the intentions behind digital content. These practices support the development of interpretive skills that allow children to engage with media more thoughtfully. Through guidance and supervision, families remain actively involved in digital socialisation.

At the same time, children independently explore online spaces that connect them with interest-based communities across social and cultural boundaries. Digital personalisation increases exposure to tailored information, which may reinforce certain viewpoints while limiting others. This situation requires parental awareness of children's psychosocial development and digital literacy needs. Families are encouraged to promote literacy skills that enable children to assess online information critically and responsibly (Rice & Cun, 2021). Such guidance helps children balance exploration with reflective understanding.

The family plays a crucial role in strengthening critical literacy related to representations of gender, class, race, and culture in digital media. Open discussions about stereotypes, inequality, and power relations encourage children to question dominant narratives. These conversations help children develop awareness of social diversity and form more reflective identity positions. By fostering critical interpretation and dialogue, families help children navigate digital influences more effectively. In this way, the family functions as a critical buffer in the ongoing process of digital socialisation (Buckingham, 2019; Livingstone, 2014).

Gender is a social category that is introduced early through family domestic practices. Gender becomes a dimension of social identity that is instilled from an early age through daily family practices. Choices of clothing, toys, division of tasks, and emotional expression become means of implicit learning about gender expectations. Parents and siblings serve as behavioural models that mark what is considered appropriate for boys or girls. Family values regarding equality or traditional role division form early gender schemas that influence educational choices, career aspirations, and interpersonal relationships. Families that consciously challenge stereotypes provide more space for children to explore their potential (Ridgeway, 2014; Bussey & Bandura, 1999). Every family has a strategic position in reproducing or transforming gender norms.

The identity formed within the family interacts directly with formal social institutions that individuals encounter throughout their lives. Family engagement with institutions such as schools, places of worship, and public service organizations connects early social experiences at home with broader social arrangements. Through these interactions, children observe how rules are negotiated, authority is respected, and expectations are communicated. Such experiences shape children's understanding of institutional roles and their place within structured social environments. As a result, family practices contribute to the development of attitudes toward formal authority and social participation.

Parental interactions with teachers, religious leaders, and professionals significantly influence children's perceptions of legitimacy and trust in institutions. The recognition or neglect of a child's cultural background within educational settings interacts with dispositions developed through family socialization. Families that are able to bridge differences between home values and institutional expectations provide children with skills for navigating social structures. These skills, along with access to social networks, function as social capital that supports educational and social mobility. This form of capital plays an important role in shaping intergenerational opportunities and long-term outcomes (Lareau, 2015; Coleman, 1988).

In modern social change, the transmission of identity demands normative flexibility. Ultimately, the transmission of social identity within the family provides a map for understanding hierarchy, solidarity, and differences in society. Children learn social values from their identity as well as strategies for presenting themselves appropriately in various situations. These lessons shape the way children display or negotiate their identity in public spaces. Rapid social change due to urbanisation, globalisation, and the recognition of diversity requires families to instil a flexible ethical framework and reflective abilities. Successful families are those that foster a strong sense of belonging as well as a readiness to adapt through continuous critical dialogue (Giddens, 2014; Bauman, 2013). Therefore, the family functions as an arena for learning identity adaptation amid social change.

The transmission of social identity within the family can be understood as a process of primary socialisation that is embodied and reflective. Overall, this analysis reveals that families transmit broader social identities through a process that is practical, narrative, and embodied. Language, religion, class, and gender are taught through daily rituals, consumption choices, family stories, and interactions with the outside world. This process is not linear or deterministic; children actively interpret, question, and negotiate this social inheritance. The result is an understanding of the child's position in a complex social structure—an understanding that encompasses a sense of belonging, possibilities, and limitations. By serving as the first bridge between the individual and society, the family not only reproduces social structures, but also provides the raw materials and space for individual agency to understand, accept, or change these inherited social positions. Thus, the influence of the family on a child's position in society is fundamental and formative, setting the initial coordinates from which an individual's social journey begins. As such, the family occupies a central position in the dialectic between social reproduction and individual agency.

CONCLUSION

This literature review comprehensively confirms that the family operates as a central and irreplaceable primary agent of socialisation in the formation of a child's identity. This analysis successfully identifies two interrelated but conceptually distinct pathways of influence. First, through its internal dynamics, including parenting patterns, communication, sibling configuration, and the creation of psychological security, the family builds the foundation of a child's personal identity. This process is transactional and dialectical, whereby children actively interpret family experiences to construct a coherent understanding of themselves, including their self-concept, self-esteem, and locus of control. Second, the family functions as the first channel of transmission and translation for broader social identities, such as culture, religion, social class, and gender. This transmission occurs through daily practices, language, rituals, and habitus, which collectively provide children with a cognitive and moral map for positioning themselves within the structure and hierarchy of society. These two pathways together form an ecology of socialisation in which personal and social identities shape each other, producing individuals who understand themselves both as unique entities and as members of various collective groups.

The findings of this study have several significant implications. Theoretically, this study affirms the need for an integrative approach in understanding family socialisation, combining psychological perspectives (focusing on internal dynamics and personal development) with sociological perspectives (focusing on the transmission of social structures). The main practical implication is for parenting education. Parenting education programmes need to shift from simply providing behavioural tips to incorporating an understanding of how each interaction contributes to the construction of long-term identity. Parents need to be made aware that they are not only teaching values, but also building an identity framework that will become the foundation for their children to face the world. For educators and social policy makers, these findings highlight the importance of building sensitive partnerships with families, recognising that children bring with them a social identity heritage from home that needs to be understood and respected in order to create an inclusive and effective learning and growth environment.

Based on the above findings and implications,

several suggestions can be made. First, there is a need to develop intervention modules or guidelines that help parents to reflect more critically on their parenting practices, particularly in terms of message consistency, creating psychological security for identity exploration, and the ability to engage in dialogue about values in the digital age. Second, for future researchers, this literature review opens up opportunities for empirical research exploring how children and adolescents specifically negotiate and synthesise when identity messages from the family clash with messages from other socialisation agents in the contemporary era. Longitudinal studies that track the stability and change of identity from childhood to young adulthood, as well as its relationship to the quality of early family dynamics, are also urgently needed. Thirdly, it is recommended that institutions such as schools systematically integrate an understanding of the role of family socialisation into the civic education or character education curriculum, to help students understand the complexity of their own and others' identities, thereby promoting social cohesion.

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