

Effect of Citizenship Rights Education on Social Resilience and Career Interest in Students of Abadan Islamic Azad University

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The aim of the present study was to determine the effect of citizenship rights education on social resilience and career interest of students of Abadan Islamic Azad University.

Methods: In terms of its applied purpose, this study was a semi-experimental study with a pre-test and post-test with a control group in terms of field data collection. The statistical population of the study consisted of all students of Abadan Islamic Azad University in 2024, from which 30 people (15 people for each of the experimental and control groups) were selected by purposive sampling method and were randomly assigned to the experimental and control groups. In order to collect data, Connor and Davidson's Resilience Questionnaire and Holland's Career Interest Questionnaire were used. The data were analyzed using multivariate analysis of covariance.

Results: The results showed that citizenship rights education was effective on social resilience and career interest in students ($P < 0.01$).

Conclusions: The results obtained can be utilized in formulating interventions that effectively enhance students' career interest and psychological resilience.

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Introduction

The concept of *citizenship rights* was first introduced in the 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen in France, later enshrined in the French Constitution of 1791 ([Glendon, 1997](#)). The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948, drew significant inspiration from this French declaration ([Morsink, 1999](#)). Contrary to popular belief and common rhetoric, rights are not naturally granted to people solely by virtue of their residency or citizenship. Human rights, from a moral standpoint, are inherent simply by virtue of being human ([Cnaan et al., 2008](#)).

The discourse surrounding citizenship rights and its foundations in Iran is of particular importance. Without clarifying the nature and historical evolution of these rights, transparency cannot be achieved, nor can one reasonably expect the practical realization of citizenship rights in Iranian society ([Zolfaghari & Ashayeri, 2022](#)). Understanding the concept of citizenship reveals that it is fundamentally tied to access to economic and political rights and participation ([Boyte & Farr, 2023](#)). Those who advocate for expanding citizenship to encompass social rights typically aim to promote equality in support of socioeconomic cohesion. Accordingly, citizenship confers upon individuals the right to participate in political power and to benefit from civil and social rights ([Ghaderzadeh & Shaban, 2018](#)).

Citizenship rights encompass multiple dimensions—civil, political, economic, social, cultural, and judicial. Within economics and the social sciences, *social capital* functions as a key driver among other forms of capital such as human, financial, and technological. In the absence of adequate social capital, other forms of capital lose much of their effectiveness. In contrast, strong social capital can compensate for deficiencies in other areas ([Salehi et al., 2023](#)).

Citizenship is a concept of global relevance, integrating both individual and social principles. Since citizenship is intrinsically concerned with human relationships, a singular, static definition applicable across all societies and eras is unattainable. This raises important questions about which social and political structures enable the exercise of citizenship. Although citizenship is not exclusive to urban populations, many of its related variables—such as access to mass media, diversity of public domains, and extent of civic participation—are more prevalent in urban areas. Moreover, a broader middle and upper class in urban settings underscores the significance of

studying citizenship among university students ([Dastranj & Mallahi, 2018](#); [Heydari, 2019](#); [Mirlohi et al., 2017](#)).

The concept of *social resilience* first emerged in sociology, emphasizing the importance of strong interpersonal networks built on trust and cooperation as essential for building cohesive communities ([Dai et al., 2015](#)). *Security*, as one of humanity's intrinsic needs, is inextricably linked to the essence of human existence. The sense of safety and peace is essential for creativity, the realization of potential, and the sustainable development of individual and social life ([Dastranj & Mallahi, 2018](#)). In contrast to the objective notion of security, *perceived security* refers to an emotional reaction to social violence and physical harm ([Heber, 2011](#)). Scholars agree that the belief in the absence of safety undermines one's feeling of security, even in the absence of real threats. If a citizen does not feel safe walking the streets of their city, they will experience constant anxiety and unease, regardless of the actual level of safety ([Sajjadian et al., 2017](#)).

In this context, social capital plays a crucial role in both the provision of social security and the subjective sense of safety. It not only contributes to the prevention of deviant behavior and social crime but also promotes active and constructive participation in society through the internalization of social norms and values ([George, 2018](#)). Thus, social capital is a key component in enhancing security and creating a peaceful, healthy society. Furthermore, for a social system to function effectively, it must rely on citizens who are aware of their rights and responsibilities. Such awareness enables them to demand accountability from governing bodies and participate meaningfully in civic life (([Sajjadian et al., 2017](#)).

The issue of citizenship rights, on the one hand, relates to the dignity and recognition of individuals as social beings and, on the other hand, involves the development of mechanisms to institutionalize and expand these rights. Doing so not only promotes cultural development but also reduces the social, legal, and administrative costs associated with governance. Understanding citizenship, at its core, reveals that it pertains primarily to access to and participation in economic and political domains. Those advocating for broader inclusion of social rights tend to focus on promoting equality as a means of sustaining economic integration. Therefore, citizenship confers the right to political participation as well as access to civil and social entitlements ([Ghaderzadeh & Shaban, 2018](#)).

Despite the recognized importance of education in shaping individuals' understanding of their citizenship rights, social resilience, and occupational tendencies, this area has not been sufficiently explored in Iran. While education is widely acknowledged as a key factor in fostering awareness of rights and responsibilities, facilitating resilience in the face of societal challenges, and guiding career aspirations, little empirical research has examined these dynamics specifically within the Iranian context. One notable concern is the lack of comprehensive data on Iranian students' educational experiences and outcomes, particularly in relation to their understanding and application of citizenship rights. This includes issues such as equitable access to quality education, inclusion of civic education in curricula, and opportunities for student engagement in civic life. Overall, there is a pressing need for further research into the complex interplay between education, citizenship rights, social resilience, and career aspirations among Iranian university students. Addressing these knowledge gaps will enable policymakers and educators to more effectively support youth in realizing their full potential as active citizens and contributing members of society. Therefore, the present study seeks to answer the following question: Does citizenship education influence social resilience and occupational interest among students at Abadan Islamic Azad University?

Material and Methods

This study was applied in terms of purpose, field-based in terms of data collection, and employed a quasi-experimental design with a pretest-posttest and control group structure. The independent variable had two levels (experimental group and control group), and the study included two dependent variables. The statistical population consisted of all associate and undergraduate students at the Islamic Azad University, Abadan Branch, who were enrolled in the first semester of the 2023–2024 academic year, with an estimated population size of approximately 2,000 students.

A total of 35 participants were selected through purposive sampling based on defined inclusion and exclusion criteria. Of these, 15 participants were assigned to each of the experimental and control groups, and an additional 5 participants were included to enhance the external validity of the study and to address potential attrition. The participants were recruited voluntarily and were randomly assigned to either the experimental or control group.

Instruments

Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC): This scale Developed by [Connor and Davidson \(2003\)](#) based on a review of resilience-related research literature from 1979 to 1991, this scale has been validated across six groups, including the general population, primary care patients, psychiatric outpatients, individuals with generalized anxiety disorder, and two groups of patients with post-traumatic stress disorder. The developers assert that the CD-RISC effectively differentiates between resilient and non-resilient individuals in both clinical and non-clinical populations and is suitable for use in both research and clinical settings. The scale consists of 25 items rated on a Likert scale from 0 (not true at all) to 5 (true nearly all the time).

Holland's Career Interest Inventory: This inventory, designed by [Holland et al. \(1990\)](#), is composed of four sections—activities, experiences, occupations, and self-assessment—and aims to evaluate individuals' career interests. In the first section, students are assessed using multiple-choice questions across six domains: social, artistic, technical, scientific, cultural, and general activities, to determine which types of activities they prefer. In the second section, students' work experience across the same six domains is assessed. The third section presents a range of occupations categorized into the same six domains, allowing students to indicate their job preferences. In the fourth section, two self-assessment tools are used for students to rate their abilities and skills in comparison to their peers, scoring themselves from 1 to 7.

Citizenship Rights Training Sessions: These sessions were designed based on the "Charter of Citizenship Rights of the Islamic Republic of Iran" and delivered through a researcher-developed protocol comprising 4 units across 8 sessions (table 1).

Table 1. Summary of the citizenship rights training sessions

Session	Content
1	Chapter 1: Concepts of Rights and Freedom
	Lesson 1: Meanings of Rights in the Sciences of Ethics, Wisdom, and Law
2	Lesson 2: Western Approaches to Understanding the Term of Rights
	Lesson 3: Islamic Law Approaches to the Concept of Rights
3	Lesson 4: Effects and Valid Results of Knowing the Concept of Rights
	Chapter 2: The Concept of Citizen
4	Lesson 5: Elements of the Political System and Characteristics of Citizens
	Lesson 6: Characteristics of the Concept of Citizenship in the Middle Ages
5	Lesson 7: The Relationship Between the Word of Citizenship and Citizenship, Nationality, and Subjection
	Chapter 3: Fundamentals of Citizenship Rights
6	Lesson 8: Fundamentals of Citizenship Rights in the West
	Lesson 9: Islamic Fundamentals of Citizenship Rights
	Chapter 4: Examining Examples of Citizenship Rights

	Lesson 10: Examples of Citizenship Rights
	Lesson 11: The Right to Security
7	Lesson 12: Equality
	Lesson 13: Economic Rights in Citizenship Rights
8	Lesson 14: Cultural Rights
	Lesson 15: Political Rights in Citizenship Rights
	Lesson 16: Freedom

Results

In order to investigate the effectiveness of citizenship rights education on students' social resilience, a multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) test was used. The results of this test and the examination of its assumptions are presented below.

First hypothesis: Citizenship rights education has a significant effect on students' social resilience.

Table 2. Results of multivariate analysis of covariance to compare social resilience in the experimental and control groups

	Effect	Value	F	Effect DF	Error DF	P	Effect size
Group	Pillai's Trace	0.563	4.894	5	19	0.005	0.563
	Wilks' Lambda	0.437	4.894	5	19	0.005	0.563
	Hotelling's trace	1.288	4.894	5	19	0.005	0.563
	Roy's Largest Root	1.288	4.894	5	19	0.005	0.563

According to Table 2, the significance level of all four relevant multivariate statistics, namely the Pillai's Trace, Wilks' Lambda, Hotelling's trace, and Roy's Largest Root, is less than 0.01 ($p < 0.01$). Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected and it is determined that there is a significant difference between the resilience of the two experimental and control groups in the post-test. Accordingly, it can be concluded that citizenship rights education has been effective in increasing social resilience. In order to examine the difference between the two experimental and control groups in each of the components of social resilience, the between-subject effects test was used, the results of which are presented in table 3.

Table 3. Between-subject effects test for comparing the components of social resilience of the experimental and control groups in the post-test

Variable	Source	SS	DF	MS	F	P	Effect size
Personal Competence/Strength	Between group	50.859	1	50.859	9.635	0.005	0.295
	Error	121.404	23	5.278			
Trusting One's Instincts	Between group	39.513	1	39.513	6.027	0.022	0.208
	Error	150.781	23	6.556			
Accepting Positive Emotions	Between group	25.218	1	25.218	5.343	0.030	0.189
	Error	108.552	23	4.720			
Restraint	Between group	49.348	1	49.348	9.393	0.005	0.290
	Error	120.838	23	5.254			
Spirituality	Between group	39.574	1	39.574	8.565	0.008	0.271
	Error	106.272	23	4.621			

Table 3 shows the results of the between-subject effects test for comparing the components of social resilience in the experimental and control groups in the post-test. According to the results presented in Table 3, the F value obtained for all components is significant at the 0.05 alpha level ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the research hypothesis is confirmed. Considering the higher mean scores of the experimental group in the post-test stage compared to the control group, it is concluded that citizenship rights education was effective and increased the social resilience of students.

In order to examine the effectiveness of citizenship rights education on students' career interest, the multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) test was used. The results of implementing this test and examining its assumptions are presented below.

Table 4. Results of multivariate analysis of covariance to compare career interest in the experimental and control groups

	Effect	Value	F	Effect DF	Error DF	P	Effect size
Group	Pillai's Trace	0.612	4.465	6	17	0.007	0.612
	Wilks' Lambda	0.388	4.465	6	17	0.007	0.612
	Hotelling's trace	1.576	4.465	6	17	0.007	0.612
	Roy's Largest Root	1.576	4.465	6	17	0.007	0.612

As can be seen, the significance level of all four relevant multivariate statistics, namely the Pillai's Trace, Wilks' Lambda, Hotelling's trace, and Roy's Largest Root, is less than 0.01 ($p < 0.01$). Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected and it is determined that there is a significant difference between the career interest of the experimental and control groups in the post-test. Accordingly, it can be concluded that citizenship rights education has been effective on students' career interest. In order to examine the difference between the experimental and control groups in each of the career

interest components, the between-subject effects test was used, the results of which are presented in table 5.

Table 5. Between-subject effects test for comparing the career interest components of the experimental and control groups in the post-test

Variable	Source	SS	DF	MS	F	P	Effect size
Social	Between group	53.604	1	53.604	6.092	0.022	0.217
	Error	193.569	22	8.799			
Artistic	Between group	121.579	1	121.579	12.518	0.002	0.363
	Error	213.668	22	9.712			
Enterprising	Between group	52.157	1	52.157	10.470	0.004	0.322
	Error	109.594	22	4.982			
Investigative	Between group	65.251	1	65.251	9.254	0.006	0.296
	Error	155.128	22	7.051			
Realistic	Between group	6.635	1	6.635	2.174	0.154	0.090
	Error	67.128	22	3.051			
Conventional	Between group	21.981	1	21.981	1.929	0.179	0.081
	Error	250.744	22	11.397			

In Table 5, the results of the between-subject effects test for comparing the career interest components in the experimental and control groups in the post-test are shown. According to the results presented in Table 5, the F value obtained for the social, artistic, adventurous and searching components is significant at the alpha level of 0.05 ($p < 0.05$) and is not significant for the realism and conventional components ($p < 0.05$). Considering the higher average scores of the social, artistic, adventurous, and exploratory components of the experimental group in the post-test phase compared to the control group, it is concluded that citizenship rights education was effective and increased students' social, artistic, adventurous, and exploratory interests.

Discussion

Although no prior research has specifically investigated the effectiveness of citizenship rights education on students' social resilience, a number of studies have reported findings that align with the present research. The results of this study are consistent with those of [Amiri Fahlani and Abin \(2022\)](#), as well as [Yaghoobi et al. \(2024\)](#).

In explaining these findings, it can be argued that citizenship rights education may enhance students' social resilience by equipping them with the knowledge and skills necessary for active participation in their communities and for advocating social change. When students understand their rights as citizens, they become better prepared to navigate complex social issues and to

engage in meaningful dialogue with others. Moreover, such education can foster a sense of belonging and connection to their communities, while also strengthening students' sense of social responsibility and empathy toward others. This, in turn, may encourage greater cooperation and collaboration among individuals, ultimately contributing to the reinforcement of the social fabric of society.

Citizenship rights education can also aid students in developing critical thinking skills and the ability to analytically assess information and media sources. This empowers them to become more informed and engaged citizens, capable of countering misinformation and advocating for justice and equality. Overall, by equipping students with the necessary knowledge, skills, and values for active civic participation and positive social change, citizenship rights education plays a significant role in fostering social resilience among students.

Furthermore, the findings of this research partially align with [Kafshchian Moghadam et al. \(2024\)](#). These findings suggest that citizenship rights education may positively influence students' career interest in several ways:

Enhanced Awareness and Understanding: Educating students about their citizenship rights increases their awareness of their rights and responsibilities as members of society. This awareness can help them better understand their roles and how they can contribute to society, which may lead to a stronger sense of purpose and job satisfaction.

Empowerment: Citizenship education empowers students to advocate for themselves and others in the workplace. When students feel empowered to stand up for their rights and resist injustice, they are more likely to feel satisfied with their work environment and more interested in their careers.

Sense of Belonging: Understanding citizenship rights can foster a sense of belonging and community among students. When students feel connected to their peers and colleagues, they are more likely to feel supported and valued, which can enhance career interest and satisfaction.

Ethical Decision-Making: Citizenship education can help students develop strong ethical values and principles. Guided by a well-defined moral compass, students are more likely to make ethical decisions, which may also positively affect their career motivation and engagement.

In summary, citizenship rights education can play a significant role in enhancing students' career interest by promoting awareness, empowerment, belonging, and ethical decision-making skills.

One limitation of this study is the limited generalizability of its findings to other populations and cultural contexts. Additionally, the reliance on self-report questionnaires may have introduced response bias. It is recommended that educational policymakers provide teachers with the necessary resources and tools to deliver career interest education from high school levels onward. Furthermore, mass media outlets should take an active role in supporting students' social resilience by producing and broadcasting targeted programming aimed at student audiences.

Data availability statement

The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article/supplementary material, further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author.

Ethics statement

The studies involving human participants were reviewed and approved by the ethics committee of Islamic Azad University. The patients/participants provided their written informed consent to participate in this study.

Author contributions

All authors contributed to the study conception and design, material preparation, data collection, and analysis. All authors contributed to the article and approved the submitted version.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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