

Identification and Rating Factors Affecting Introduction and Expansion of Iranian Handicrafts

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Abstract: Iranian handicrafts along with Chinese and Indian handicrafts comprise three poles of Asia and the world historically faced with tremendous transformations. However, currently due to appearance of modern technology and new sciences these handicrafts have lost their actual status and in some cases even have been forgotten. Therefore, the present research aims to identify and rate factors affecting introduction and expansion of Iranian handicrafts. So, it is a type of applied research using a survey to gather and analyze the data. The population consisted of all experts and staff at Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization of Tehran. The effective factors on introduction and expansion of the Iranian handicrafts were extracted after a review of literature and previous studies. In order to rate the factors, the fuzzy hierarchical analysis was applied. The obtained results indicated that in the participants' viewpoints, economic, political, and socio-cultural factors significantly affect development of handicraft industry respectively. Reduced costs of manufacturing and raw materials, attractive packing of handicraft products and governmental supports as well as supportive policies of the handicrafts are the most salient economic, cultural and political factors respectively.

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Key words: Handicrafts, manufacturing cost, packing products, industry backup, fuzzy hierarchical analysis

1-Introduction:

Handicrafts are the cultural manifestation and artistic symbols of any society categorized as practical and popular arts. Since any hand products represent historical, social and cultural context of its origin, it is regarded as a salient agent in introduction of every culture and civilization particularly for attraction of domestic and international tourists. In a traditional community handicrafts hold practical values. That is to say, people use their products because of practical advantages and social, economic and cultural needs. But in the modern age, handicrafts have changed to have symbolic value (Yazdan Panah, 2009).

In fact, handicrafts are products produced by hands and some simple instruments and generally convey a traditional or artistic nature. One common characteristics of all handicrafts is that their production method occurs only using primitive instruments which show no difference from methods used by the ancestors (Rezvanfar, 2006). In other definition, handicrafts are known as a group of industries that whole or part of its production procedure happens by hands (Redzuan,2011).

Alipour (2012) in an investigation indicated that handicrafts with such a few properties as being practical, high value added, supplying the raw materials from the domestic resources, need to little capital, using simple instruments and simple market for selling the products causes increase of national gross product, maximization of annual per capita, development of exports, earning foreign income, providing a social balance, making new jobs, and

balancing job market in addition to prevention from locals migration to cities, making a supplementary income for family, expansion of tourism industry and cultural exchanges and finally increase of economic participation of women.

Generally speaking, it should be mentioned here that handicrafts production directly affect gross national income and any increase in rate and quality of products will also directly affect increase of gross national income. The raw materials of wool and other materials in case of becoming new products like carpet, klim, jajim and gabbeh and so forth will worth more that become more economically valuable when they are exported.

The handicrafts industry too can leave a significant effect on the national economy through foreign business, making new jobs, and sustainable economic growth. Funds injected into the handicrafts industry, will immediately back to the local society. In fact, handicraft industry is an opportunity for replacing imports are not a good representative of the local culture and do not contribute to the economic development (Navab Akbar, 2000).

Moreover, handicrafts are an integrated part of tourists' experiences. Many countries enjoy from handicrafts as a part of cultural tourism besides ancient sites and cultural heritages as they provide some income resources and job opportunities (O'Connor, 2006). In this regard, Iran as a developing country and one of three poles of global handicrafts can through benefiting from its potential along with using domestic and international experiences, parallel

to technological development reach the desirable economic development with the local handicrafts industry as well (Yazdan Panah, 2009).

In recent years, in spite of attention many countries have given to national arts due to diversity of governmental and public centers for handicrafts industry, lack of necessary arrangements for policy makings and planning, absence of appropriate investment and banking credits in this industry besides lack of some rules to support producers and

encourage handicrafts industry have caused this old and beneficial industry many problems. Although per capita investment costs for making new jobs in the handicrafts industry is about half of investment in the industry sector, no serious funding has been allocated to this industry (Rostami, 2004). Accordingly, the present research seeks to answer the question what are the effective factors on introduction and expansion of Iran's handicrafts? And how should they be rated?

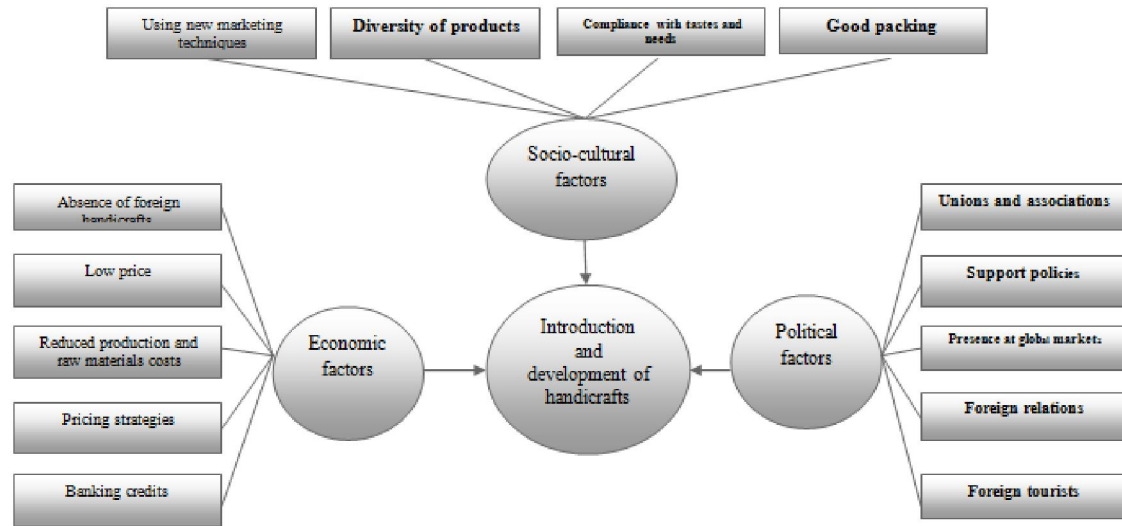


Fig. 1: The conceptual model

2-Literature and background:

Handicrafts describes as a part of art and industry using from local raw materials and working with hands and non-mechanical instruments in different manufacturing stages products are created that each product symbolizes artistic taste and innovation of its producer. In a way that this characteristic distinguishes such products from their similar factory made products (Fanaei, 2008).

Classification of Iranian handicrafts is as follows:

1. traditional drawing and painting, 2 - art with metal, 3 - weaving, 4 - pottery and ceramic building, 5 - Art with Wood, 6 - carved stone masonry, 7. Woven clothes, 8 - traditional dyeing and printing, 9 - mat weaving, 10 - traditional textile, 11 - binding and cover traditional, 12 - leather and leather products 13 - glass, 14 - lacquer and oil, 15 - other crafts.

In previously performed studies on the handicrafts industry, several different factors have been recognized as influential on introduction and development of Iranian handicrafts is listed here. Rezvani (2003) analyzed the factors affect recession of carpet industry in the rural regions of Malyer city. An exploratory method was used and according to the

participants' views, the most important reasons for slowdown of the industry as tendency of the families to the urban lifestyle and culture, inconsistency of these with rural life style, the most important factor and health problems caused by traditional carpet weaving at homes, the least significant cause.

Karami (2012) in a research concentrated on choosing a proper location for establishment of the handicrafts bazaars in south Khorasan province. The obtained results showed that establishment of such bazaars in city centers are economically useful due to their efficiency and effectiveness.

Karimian (2011) highlights formation and current situation of handicrafts on appearance of industrial revolution and believes that after industrial revolution a group of handicrafts faced with transformations and changed to be produced through modern procedures. However, some other group kept their originality and continued their competition with factory rivals. A group was forgotten and few others dealt with less popularity, a number maintained their tradition but were flexible enough and changed to some extent.

Papzan (2011) discusses about professional trainings of rural women for expansion and

improvement of the handicrafts quality and states that thanks to limited credits, economic production in micro level, the rural women are exposed to more constraints in the field of handicrafts.

Mir Katouli (2010) and Motiei (2006) in their research presented the factor of tourists' presence as one of effective factors in the handicrafts industry.

3-Materials and Methods

3-1- The conceptual model:

The factors affecting introduction and development of Iranian handicrafts are illustrated in Fig. 1.

3-2- The research hypotheses:

1. Presence of foreign tourists affects introduction and development of Iranian handicrafts.
2. Improved foreign relations affect introduction and development of Iranian handicrafts.
3. Presence at international markets affects introduction and development of Iranian handicrafts.
4. Governmental support policies affect introduction and development of Iranian handicrafts.
5. Establishing unions and associations affect introduction and development of Iranian handicrafts.
6. Appropriate packing affects introduction and development of Iranian handicrafts.
7. Compliance with taste and needs of market affects introduction and development of Iranian handicrafts.
8. Diversity of products affects introduction and development of Iranian handicrafts.
9. Using new methods marketing affects introduction and development of Iranian handicrafts.
10. Absence of foreign handicrafts affects introduction and development of Iranian handicrafts.
11. Lower prices of products affects introduction and development of Iranian handicrafts.
12. Reduced costs of production and raw materials affect introduction and development of Iranian handicrafts.
13. Pricing policies affect introduction and development of Iranian handicrafts.
14. Banking credits affect introduction and development of Iranian handicrafts.

3-3- Research population and sample:

The research population consisted of all experts at Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism

organization of Tehran. Due to limited number of population, all participants were interviewed. Accordingly, the sample size included 200 subjected.

3-4- The data and research method:

The present paper was a type of applied study using a survey to collect data and adopted descriptive-analytical procedures to analyze the data. a researcher-made questionnaire was utilized to gather the required data. For the data analysis, the Fuzzy AHP method and the Expert choice software were applied. When evaluating a subject we need some measures since they enable me to compare alternatives correctly. But when one or more measures are at hands, the process of evaluation becomes more complicated because measures may vary in terms of spatial and nature aspects.

Here, a simple subjective assessment and comparison will be inefficient and a more powerful analytical instrument will be needed. One of such instruments is analytical hierarchy process (AHP). This procedure is used for rating sometimes is utilized in social and economic analyses as well. The AHP method is one of the most well-known techniques for multi criteria decision making process devised first by T. L. Saaty in 1970s inspired by man's mental analysis for resolving complicated and fuzzy problems. Therefore, the Fuzzy AHP method was used in the present research to rate the identified scales and sub-scales.

4- Findings:

Examining the demographical characteristics of the sample shows that 85% of participants were male and 15% were female, 71% were married and 29% were single. Considering level of education, the participants' level of education was diploma in average. Generally, 75% of subjects had a license degree, and 25% had masters' and PhD degrees. The mean age of participant was 35 years old and ranged 22 through 51 years old.

Rating the major indexes:

As Table 1 shows, the index of economic factors scored 0.558 is in the first rank. After, the political factors scored 0.320 and finally socio-cultural factors scored 0.122 are the most important indexes in development of Iranian handicrafts respectively.

Synthesis with respect to: Goal: rating major components of development of handicrafts

Overall Inconsistency = .02



Diagram 2: rating major components of development of handicrafts

Table 1: rating major components of development of handicrafts

indexes	Score
Economic factors	0.558
Social and cultural factors	0.122
Political factors	0.320

Rating sub-indexes of the economic factors:

According to Table 2 the sub-indexes of reduced costs of production and raw materials scored 0.419, lower prices of products scored 0.263, providing proper banking credits scored 0.160, pricing policies by relevant organizations scored 0.097 and absence of

foreign handicrafts in the domestic markets scored 0.062 were rated as the effective economic factors on development of Iranian handicrafts.

Table 2: rating of economic sub-scales

Sub-indexes	score
Absence of foreign handicrafts	0.062
Lower price	0.263
Reduced costs of production and raw materials	0.419
Pricing strategies	0.097
Banking credits	0.160

Synthesis with respect to: Goal: rating of economic sub-scales

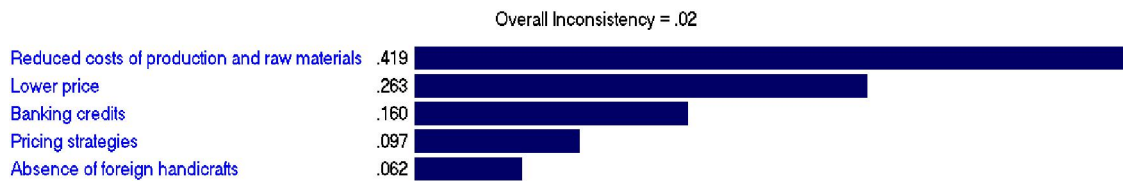


Diagram 3: rating of economic sub-scales

Rating sub-indexes of socio-cultural factors:

Considering Table 3, appropriate packing scored 0.467 is the most important socio-cultural sub-index. Other effective socio-cultural factors however are using the new marketing methods scored 0.277, compliance with the market needs and tastes scored 0.160 and diversity of products scored 0.095 respectively.

Table 3: rating socio-cultural sub-scales

Sub-indexes	score
Good packing	0.467
Compliance with tastes and needs of market	0.160
Diversity of products	0.095
Using new marketing methods	0.277

Synthesis with respect to: Goal: rating socio-cultural sub-scales

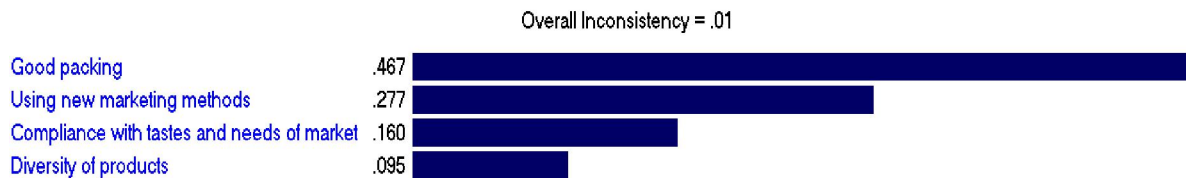


Diagram 4: rating socio-cultural sub-scales

Rating sub-indexes of political factors:

as Table 4 illustrates, governmental backup and support policies are the most salient political sub-indexes scored 0.417. After, improved foreign relations scored 0.279, presence of foreign tourists scored 0.168, presence in international markets scored 0.082 and establishment of unions and associations scored 0.054 are the next important political factors in introduction and development of Iranian handicrafts respectively.

Table 4: rating sub-scales of political factors

Sub-indexes	Score
Establishment of unions and associations	0.054
Support policies of government	0.417
Presence in international markets	0.082
Improved foreign relations	0.279
Presence of foreign tourists	0.168

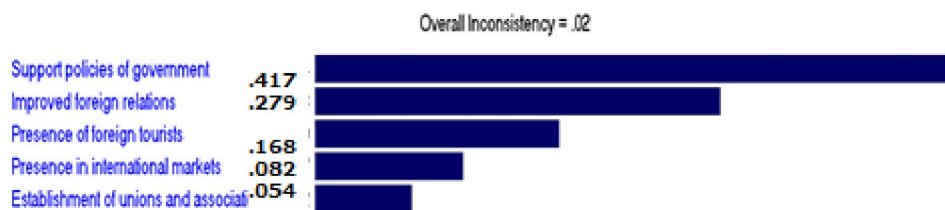


Diagram 5: rating sub-scales of political factors

5-Discussion and conclusion:

The Iranian handicrafts are of the most distinguished representatives of artistic industries are deeply rooted in Iranian history and culture which include a broad range of products. So, Iranian handicrafts are among top countries. Actually, the handicrafts are a part of traditional arts integrate the excellent essence of art with industrial skills and through a proflication in individual and collective contexts will be presented. The Iranian traditional industries due to owning a wide diversity are categorized into various branches which symbolize the rich history of Iran (Yavari, 2010).

The handicrafts or the synthetic arts possess many several unique characteristics require more attention. These properties including nationalism and independent, potential to be produced then expanded in all urban, rural and nomadic regions, independence from any foreign expert, easy access to raw materials, simple instruments and high value added, independence from a large amount of investment, making infrastructures from the tourism industry, lack of any environmental destructive effects, being a supplementary income and power to create new jobs (Yavari, 2010).

Since the handicrafts basically depend upon the domestic resources and more than 90% of the values including labor force, initial raw materials and professional instruments are produced inside the country, therefore, any increase in production and selling the products directly affects the per capita income in the country (Jouybari, 2012).

With Chinese and Indian handicrafts, the Iranian handicrafts are three poles of Asia and the world which have encountered with many transformations. However, by technological development the handicrafts have lost their historical status or have been forgotten. Therefore, the present paper aimed to identify and rate the effective factors on introduction and expansion of the handicrafts.

The obtained results indicated that according to the experts' viewpoints, the effective factors are the most influential factors. Moreover, it was observed that reduced costs of manufacturing and raw materials are of the most significant effective factors on

development of the handicrafts. Other effective factors are low price of products, providing banking facilities, pricing strategies and absence of the foreign handicrafts in the domestic markets.

Moreover, rating of the effective factors illustrated that although the socio-cultural factors are also influential, but they are placed third in terms of their significance. Ranking of sub-indexes show that proper packing is the most salient cultural factor. Accordingly, future studies could conduct some studies on packing issues. Of other socio-cultural factors, new methods of marketing, compliance of the handicrafts with taste and needs of market and diversity of products are important.

Rating of the effective political factors indicates that they are second on the basis of significance. Governmental support and backup policies are two critical political factors affecting the handicrafts. Other effective political factors include improved foreign relations, presence of foreign tourists, presence at global markets and establishment of unions and associations.

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