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Social Marketing for Consumption of Modernized Iranian Traditional Clothing with a Look at Asian Experiences

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ABSTRACT

Like in some other Asian countries, the Iranians' tendency to wear traditional clothing has decreased significantly. This paper aims to achieve an appropriate social marketing intervention mix to solve this problem, considering the successful Asian countries' solutions. Therefore, this study has used documentary and library methods to investigate the main causes of the abovementioned problem in Iran and the countries' solutions for the same problem. Then, the thematic analysis approach is used to analyze the countries' actions, considering the mix of strategic social marketing interventions. Results show that the best solutions for updating traditional clothing in Asian countries are media-related solutions. Finally, we achieved a "communicative-interactive social marketing intervention mix." This refers to a set of complementary marketing interventions that include the use of media tools, as well as non-media social relationships. The study's main contributions were using strategic social marketing to analyze the consumption of updated traditional clothing and suggest a new model that can also be used to improve the strategies applied in Asia and other countries after cultural adaptation.

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1. Introduction

Fashion is a multidimensional industry with cultural, social, economic, and political dimensions. Furthermore, as a sign of identity, it is one of the essential industries in the globalization era, especially in countries with a rich cultural heritage. Therefore, fashion policy in the aforementioned countries is crucial, especially because the other countries' fashion, promoted through new media during globalization expansively, has attracted consumers in countries with a wealthy cultural heritage to modern and global fashion. Moreover, some of these countries have their traditional clothing (TC) listed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Therefore, preserving this TC as a national identity sign and cultural heritage is essential, not only for the mentioned countries but also for the world. On the other hand, we cannot ignore the consumers' need to keep up with global fashion and meet individual identity needs through clothes. Iranian TC is also part of Iran's cultural heritage and identity, despite not being listed on the World Heritage List. The issue of clothing in Iran, particularly over the last 100 years, has held significant importance and led to considerable controversy. Although the beginning of these controversies can be traced back to the late Qajar dynasty era (approx. 1848–1925), with the popularization of Western-inspired fashion and its opposition to Iranian TC (Mohammadipour & Seyed Ahmadi Zavieh, 2018; Kalantar & Hatami Dehlaghi, 2023), these tensions intensified during periods such as the Pahlavi I dynasty era (1925-1941), which focused on mandatory and uniform dress policies (Yousefifar & Jangjou Gholenji, 2020; Aalami et al., 2025). Similar issues have also emerged in recent years concerning other topics, such as the hijab. Such policies have led to the creation of social groupings that, on the one hand, have fostered solidarity within these groups, but on the other hand, have eroded social capital and negatively impacted state-nation relations (Bicharanlou & Aref, 2022; Arab Khorasani et al., 2024). One of the consequences of these controversies and conflicts is the marginalization of TC, such that the Iranian people's opposition to dress policies has never

necessarily led to an increased interest in or modernization of TC. On the contrary, since the beginning of this century, and following the recent conflicts of the past few decades, Western fashion has gained greater popularity among Iranian consumers. As a result, experts, particularly in recent decades, have considered the decline in Iranian consumers' interest in TC a threat to the country's cultural identity and economy. Consequently, researchers have explored ways to strengthen the Iranian fashion chain by improving its value chain. Some studies in Iran have highlighted the following obstacles and challenges to achieving this goal:

There is a lack of governmental understanding, as well as ambiguity in examples, concepts, and indicators of desirable fashion. Additionally, there is a lack of knowledge at all levels of clothing modernizing, from policymaking to design, production, distribution, and consumption. Other obstacles in the realm of Iranian clothing policy include a weak understanding of the target audience, a disregard for cultural variables and consumers' persuasion, as well as a lack of consensus among officials on clothing policies. The vulnerability of Iran's fashion economy has also led to problems, including increased production costs and a lack of economic security for producers. Other issues include weak advertising and the designers' and producers' inability to brand according to Iranian national and religious values. Furthermore, the legal and illegal imports of clothing and consumerism are other challenges for the Iranian fashion industry and TC consumption (Afrough & Mehrabanifar, 2018: 13, 16-17, 21; Zare & Shadghazvini, 2020: 248; Arab Khorasani et al., 2024; Salimi & Aalami, 2024; Salimi, 2025). In continuation of Iranian research to solve the problem of Iranian consumers' decreasing interest in wearing this country's TC, this paper, which is written based on a research project, seeks to investigate the reasons for this problem and find solutions according to the experiences of some Asian countries with a rich cultural heritage that have been able to find ways to solve this problem at different levels. Specifically, this paper proposes a new model to deal with these challenges by studying how

successful East Asian countries (SEAC), including China, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, and Indonesia, have revitalized their TC consumption. From specific perspectives, these countries are somewhat similar to Iran, particularly in their rich cultural history, diversity in both cultural regions, and TC. Furthermore, Islam is the main religion in Iran, Indonesia, and Malaysia. All these nations faced the same challenge in revitalizing their clothing industries. This study focuses on the behavioral and social dimensions of the declining consumer interest in TC as the main problem. To achieve our goal, we investigate how these countries have adopted social marketing (SM) strategies to shift public attitudes toward consuming their country's TC. Therefore, this research has an innovative aspect in reorganizing French and Gordon's (2019) SM intervention to change Iranian attitudes toward the consumption of modernized TC. Additionally, another innovative aspect of this research is proposing the "communication-interactive social marketing intervention mix" to change Iranian attitudes toward the consumption of modernized TC.

In the following sections, after explaining the "Theoretical framework and literature review" in section 2, the "Methodology" will be presented in section 3. The strategies employed in SEAC and their feasibility of application in Iran will then be analyzed in the "Results and discussion" section. Finally, section 5 will conclude by offering suggestions for applying these strategies to address the challenges facing modernized Iranian TC in consumption.

2. Theoretical framework and literature review

Social marketing (SM) seeks to influence behaviors by marketing tools for a more significant social good. Additionally, SM reinforces values. As Gordon et al. claim (2018: 12), values have six main dimensions: functional, economic, emotional, social, societal, and ecological. These dimensions play a role in constructing the identities and, therefore, orienting an individual's cultural consumption and choices. Individual value-belongings and identity orientation affected, to some extent, fashion consumption and each other.

However, many former values have changed today, in the age of modernity and the era called globalization, an era known for characteristics such as media domination and increased individualism (see Giddens, 1991; Beck, 1992; Lash & Urry, 1994). As a result, it has lost interest in TC as one of the valuable symbols of local culture and identity. Thus, SM can be used as a tool to address the systematic problem of declining TC use in the global era. It can glocalize TC. Indeed, since fashion is an economic, social, cultural, national, and individual issue, any plan to solve problems must consider all of these dimensions. As a result, all the upstream/macro, midstream/meso, and downstream/micro levels should be considered in SM for the described problem. Downstream/micro usually aims to change target audiences' behavior voluntarily (Wood, 2016: 282). Some scholars believe that it effectively changes both individual behaviors and some factors that impact individuals, such as the community (Kennedy, 2016: 15; Russell-Bennett et al., 2009: 4). Moreover, some advocate that relationship approaches and co-creation are essential principles for working within a downstream intervention framework. Co-creation empowers target audiences to participate in interventions (Eagle et al., 2013: 61), such as teaching consumers basic sewing techniques at events. Also, some scholars consider co-creation to be an essential principle at the midstream/meso level. They believe that, at this level, co-creation happens in community-based models that 'rest on the principle of recognizing the value of community assets' (Gordon, 2013; Luca et al., 2019: 3). These interventions, like downstream level, use the association of community actors and personal networks, such as family members and friends, to make social and behavioral changes (Luca et al., 2019: 3), while French and Gordon, consider the community at exo level, the next level to macro level (French & Gordon, 2019).

However, there is more agreement on the upstream/macro definition. At this level, strategic social marketers solve problems by changing population-wide behaviors through external factors. These factors could be as follows: economic, media, systems, services, change in the decision-making

environment, and policy or legislation, such as the prohibition of Western fashion (Eagle et al., 2013; French & Gordon, 2019: xv, xvi; Kennedy et al., 2018: 5). These interventions have obligation characteristics and seek to 'effect systemic change' (Kennedy, 2016: 1) to shift attitudes, perceptions, social norms, and values (French & Gordon 2019: xv, xvi; Kennedy et al., 2018: 5). According to the aforementioned definitions, it is difficult to distinguish SM levels and allocate interventions accordingly. Considering this point and based on French and Gordon's strategic SM intervention mix model (French & Gordon, 2019), this study proposes Model 1, in Figure 1, to analyze and identify the most effective interventions in fashioning the modernized TC. In this model, the marketing interventions of the exo, micro, and individual levels of French and Gordon's model are divided among the micro and meso levels. Therefore, there are only macro, meso, and micro levels.

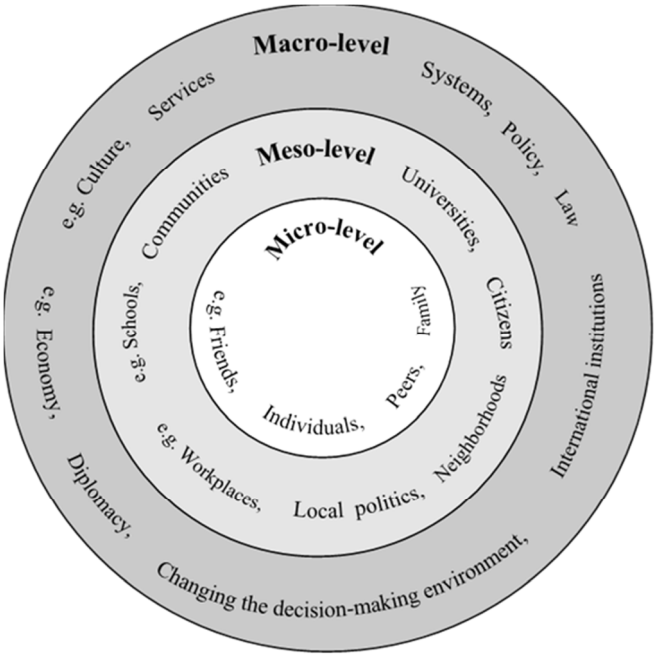

Figure 1. Model 1, Strategic Social Marketing Interventions Levels
Source: French & Gordon model (2019) rearrangmented by researchers

Although there are many studies, especially in English, on encouraging the conception of modernized TC, some of which will be used in the results section, a review of the available literature reveals that only the research by Jafari Haftkhani and Mohseni (2020) suggests the use of SM to influence consumer behavior to purchase Iranian-made clothing. However, that study does not focus on the identity-bearing nature of this clothing as modernized TC. The present study also differs from Jafari Haftkhani and Mohseni's (2020) research in the type of SM theory and model used. This distinction, along with the use of global experiences in the current paper, gives the two studies different orientations and analytical depths, despite some similarities in their findings and results. Other studies that have employed an SM approach to promote clothing consumption have primarily focused on environmental issues and the promotion of sustainable fashion. These include: "Change of mind: Marketing social justice to the fashion consumer" (Heim, 2022); "The restless desire for the new versus sustainability: The pressing need for social marketing in fashion industry" (Atik & Ertekin, 2023); "Sustainable fashion, circularity and consumer behavior–systematic review and a social marketing research and policy agenda" (Faludi, 2025); "The role of social marketing on promoting sustainable fashion consumption" (Saricam & Okur, 2025); "Online shopping for a cause: Social marketing in second-hand fashion stores" (Medina, 2025). About the marketing of modernized Iranian TC, the article titled "Usage of consumer-centric cultural marketing in the cycle of reproduction of Iranian costumes; using the East Asian countries' experiments" can also be mentioned (Roustakhiz et al., 2022). While this article shares similarities with the present study in terms of topic and methodology, that study does not employ an SM approach. In sum, this paper is innovative and distinct from most of the aforementioned studies due to its methodology of using global experiences, its focus on modernized TC, its analytical depth, and the final SM intervention mix it proposes.

3. Methodology

This qualitative and descriptive-analytical case study focused on the SEAC strategies to sustain TC. According to 'the selection criteria for social marketing interventions' (French & Gordon, 2019: 495), in order to select some interventions to modernize TC in Iran, the present study considered SEAC approaches, by documentary and library methods, as pieces of evidence of the effectiveness of these approaches. In addition to the analysis of previous studies' results, the current research analyzed their raw data, including interviews and statistics.The sources used for this study included articles, books, policy and news reports, interviews, and statistics. A systematic review approach was employed to select these sources. During this review, various resources were gathered from databases such as Google Scholar, Web of Science, Scopus, ResearchGate, and Academia, as well as reputable foreign websites, including governmental and news websites. The search utilized a combination of keywords related to the study's goals and topics, including "social marketing," "clothing policy," and "modernizing the traditional clothing." These sources were then selected based on their relevance to the research topic and their credibility. To assess the feasibility of applying the experiences of SEAC to Iran, various sources were also collected, reviewed, and analyzed using library and documentary methods. This process involved searching for relevant keyword combinations in Iranian databases such as Magiran, Noormags, Irandoc, the Islamic Parliament Research Center of I.R.Iran, the Cultural Monitoring Center of the country, and reputable news and governmental websites. The data were then analyzed using a thematic approach focused on the SM interventions mix that will be discussed. Regarding the approaches of SEAC, this paper focused on the usage of a kind of SM that covers all levels that should be considered in planning for the fashion industry, including individual, micro, meso, exo, and macro levels. This SM adds value to social policy selections to change social behavior (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). As other marketing approaches do, strategic SM uses a marketing mix. This paper considered the

way SEAC had applied this marketing mix. Unlike Lee and Kotler (2011), multiple scholars believe that the 4Ps model (Product, Price, Place, Promotion) is not sufficient for macro SM (Gordon, 2012; Tapp & Spotswood, 2013; French & Gordon, 2019), especially for non-product-related goals, like identity value promotion. Thus, following the second group, this research considered some of the SM mix interventions that were suggested for strategic SM, including product, that is, behavioral offers for target adopters, including tangible or intangible products (Gordon, 2012: 123); price, that is 'the costs that the target audience have to pay or barriers that they have to overcome to adopt the desired behavior' (Gordon, 2012: 123); place, that is the channels for behavior change promotion and places for encouraging and supporting this change (Gordon, 2012: 123); promotion, that is a means for behavior change promotion to the participants (Gordon, 2012: 123) and also social media, branding.

This study applied this list as a guide to analyzing the strategies of SEAC, but we neither emphasize that this list is exhaustive nor intend to prove that all of them are applied in the SEAC to sustain and recreate their TC. In summary, this paper has considered how SM mix and values have been used in SEAC to sustain the national clothing industries' consumers, concerning the feasibility of the strategies for Iran based on Model 1, as shown in Figure 1. It is classified according to the impact levels, but they cannot be delimited because the impact factors co-work and co-create values. Finally, regarding French and Gordon's 'strategic social marketing intervention mix' model (2019), the present research offered a model and some suggestions about recreating the national clothing industry in Iran.

4. Results and discussion

4.1. Social marketing of national TC at the macro level

We begin by considering the macro level. According to Table 1, as a symptom of national identity, the tendency to consume national fashion shows the value of national and cultural identity for citizens. Consumption

also causes support for these identities. As a result, the reinforcement of citizens' national identity can be a promotional tool to encourage people to consume national fashion. This essential activity relies on effective political strategies in various domains, including amplifying the country's global political, economic, and scientific power, as well as reminding and increasing its cultural capital. Furthermore, nation branding, which can reinforce the international 'image of the country' as a marketing tool, amplifies citizens' self-esteem and communicates values and identities to them (Browning, 2015: 2; French & Gordon, 2019). For example, by focusing on technological, cultural, and economic development, Japan and China have strengthened their nation brand images, national identity, and pride ("Global Soft Power Index", 2021; Chew, 2007: 147; Dinnie, 2008).

Table 1. Upstream/Macro Social Marketing Level for Promoting the National TC

The Applied Approaches	Marketing Interventions Mix
Amplifying the global political, economic, and scientific power and reminding and increasing the country's cultural capital to reinforce citizens' national identity (see Chew, 2007: 147; Dinnie, 2008; Lee, 2015: 7; Jin, 2020)	**Nation branding**
Holding some global fashion competitions for competitors from other countries (Pimenta, 2021)	**Nation branding** **Events**
Setting a day for TC (see Jang & Lee, 2011: 16)	**Nation branding** **Legislation**
Using new products by leaders (see Lee, 2015)	**Nation branding**
Introducing traditional or modernized TC in global events (see Zeng, 2011; Lee, 2017: 7; Lee, 2015)	**Nation branding** **Events**
Making regional brands through competitions or media and export exchanges related to clothing in foreign policy (Fahmi, 2019)	**Media** **Regional branding**
Registering TC and production places in national or global heritage lists (Su, 2019; Fahmi, 2019)	**Support** **Place branding**

The Applied Approaches	Marketing Interventions Mix
The politicians' agreement on specific issues and continuity in the politicians' ideological tendencies	**Nation branding**
Investment in the national fashion industry alongside the hijab fashion industry as a tourism opportunity (Kamarudin & Nizam, 2013)	**Religious-nation branding**

Source: Research findings

Reinforcing nation branding as a tool encourages youth to be proud of the consumption of national fashion styles. In SEAC, policies applied for nation branding are not focused on national TC but on all cultural aspects of the country, during which national TC are revived. For example, South Korea has promoted Korean culture abroad through dramas, pop band performances, and modernized clothing (Lee, 2015: 7; Jin, 2020; Kunkunrat, 2024). Moreover, Korean politics have made the traditional and modernized hanbok an internationally important cultural product by organizing fashion competitions abroad (Pimenta, 2021). This strategy can also be used to promote modernized Iranian TC abroad. However, due to the existence of specific rules, customs, and cultural values among Iranian ethnic communities regarding their clothing, it is recommended that these communities be consulted before implementing the strategy. For example, a notable prohibition exists against women wearing Bakhtiari men's TC (Zaheri Birgani, 2014).

Another example of Korean politics sustaining hanbok is governmental identification and propagation by setting hanbok day (Jang & Lee, 2011: 16). Although Iran has set a day for modesty and hijab, it merely promotes the belief in modesty and Chador. However, it could also be an occasion to introduce various TC that follow Islamic rules.

In sum, Korean fashion investment has been part of the Korean government's policy to promote Korean culture by the 'Korean Wave' (Cheon, 2020; So-Yeon, 2021; Verma, 2021; Kunkunrat, 2024). In the same

strategy, Iranians could gift their TC to politicians who visit Iran. Iran's diverse climate and culture have fostered common cultural values between Iran and many countries. Furthermore, the variety of Iranian TC is appropriate for this variety. Thus, Iranians can gift foreign politicians some Iranian TC that are suitable for their cultures. This approach simultaneously improves international cultural communications and nation brand image. Moreover, it invites foreign politicians to participate in value co-creation for national fashion. Media coverage of these activities fosters national identity values among people, leading them to prefer domestic clothing.

Furthermore, leaders' use of new products could be a significant factor in consumers' adoption of them. This strategic approach, often termed "fashion diplomacy," has been effectively used by SEAC. For example, former South Korean President Park Geun-Hye has implemented 'hanbok diplomacy' since 2013 (Lee, 2015), while Madame Oei Hui-lan, the wife of a Chinese diplomat, employed fashion diplomacy around 1930 (Shi, 2024). Moreover, both China and South Korea applied the excitement and emotional memory of participants and audiences of the Asian and Olympic Games by introducing traditional or modernized TC in these events (Zeng, 2011; Lee, 2017: 7). Iran can utilize this strategy, but certain limitations on the official attire of Iranian leaders must be considered, such as the prohibition on wearing clothing with short skirts or thin headscarves. Additionally, to avoid being perceived as favoring a specific ethnic community, it is necessary to use the TC of various ethnicities in appropriate contexts. Furthermore, clothing could be designed and used that incorporates cultural elements common to all Iranian ethnicities.

However, Iran has not been able to take advantage of these opportunities. The causes of this failure need further study. Sometimes, competition between countries highlights the value of regional identity and, as a result, fosters regional brands. For example, since UNESCO registered the Indonesian batik as an Intangible Heritage of Humanity (2009), Malaysia and Indonesia have competed to reproduce it. Registering the batik TC and

associated rituals as intangible world heritage of UNESCO has entailed financial, media, and sustaining support and has created a nation brand for Indonesia. Thus, support for this TC has grown nationwide and internationally. For instance, in 2020, the Indonesian government held a virtual event titled 'Buy Batik, Wear the Art, and Respect the Artist' (Whan-woo, 2020). Furthermore, the government promoted some batik clusters in Indonesia as creative industries, revitalizing and turning local kampongs into tourism destinations (Fahmi, 2019: 10). This strategy revives the TCs' cultural and national importance and creates brands for these clothes by place-brands and vice versa. Iran and other regional countries have a common historical and cultural basis, but there appears to be no significant competition to register their TC in the Intangible Heritage of Humanity. Apart from the competition, Iran and these countries have not even tried to develop a regional brand in this industry. Such communications cause 'national identity symbols to be more accurately defined' (Salehi Amiri & Azimi Dolatabadi, 2008: 165). Moreover, Iran has many traditional textile and clothing production sites, making place branding easy. These strategies could also make the nation brand. Nation branding is impossible without political institutions' cooperation and citizens' support (Azar et al., 2019; Sharei et al., 2020). Also, it needs the politicians' agreement on specific politicians' ideological tendencies and their continuity, which may be reflected in citizens' behaviors and their perception of national values. It seems that the diversity, especially in contemporary Iranian politicians' ideological preferences, has caused social and ideological multiplicity. However, the contradiction between modern and traditional lifestyles is another reason for this multiplicity. The main parts of the Islamic Republic of Iran's ideology are Īrānīyat, which mainly relates to the culture of Iran before Islam, and Islāmīyat. Some politicians tend to adopt the first ideology, and some the second. Furthermore, some politicians prefer Western culture and ideologies, such as liberalism. The tendency towards the third ideology has been increasing since Seyyed Mohammad Khatami's

government (see Ashna & Roohani, 2010; Ashraf & Banuazizi, 2001; Bayat, 2007; Holliday, 2010), although he agreed to the enactment of placing some limitations on fashion style. This law is called Strategies for Spreading the Culture of Modesty (SCM) (IPRCI, 2005). These contradictions have continued in subsequent governments with inadequate enforcement and reform of this law. The youth's fashion style has reflected this multiplicity (Farzaneh & Amirian Zadeh, 2017; Rafatjah & Cefidkooh, 2019; see Bayat, 2007). Also, it has reinforced people's tendency towards other countries' fashion.

The SCM has four dimensions: 1) Obligatory, which refers to the law grounding to prevent the consumption of clothes that are contrary to religious and national principles, and supervision for following them. The primary target audience of this dimension is consumers; 2) Promotional, which refers to encouraging strategies for designing, producing, and distributing Islamic-Iranian clothes; 3) Cultural grounding, including communication strategies and also making famous individuals, such as managers or celebrities, into leaders, as a marketing strategy; 4) Evaluation of applying the mentioned strategies. Except for the first dimension, others are not obligatory, at least for citizens. However, the first one has been more regarded, and the essential dimensions have not been executed. It seems that this misfocus, multiplicity, and contradiction of politicians' ideologies and strategies, the powerful communication policies, and Western marketing cause the absorption of most citizens into Western fashion. According to a study, this law lost popularity in 2014 compared to 2006 (Ghanavati, 2014). It shows that this law has not successfully created value for the consumption of Islamic fashion; instead, it has even destroyed its value and caused discontent. Islam accepts diversity, beauty, and bright dress despite its clothing rules. As an Islamic country, Malaysia has invested in the batik industry, alongside hijab fashion, as a tourism opportunity (Kamarudin & Nizam, 2013: 399). This strategy enhances citizens' global economic and cultural influence, as well as their national identity. It can be called 'religious-nation branding.' Although Iranian political goals are partly the

same as Malaysia's, and Iranian laws emphasize taking strategies to satisfy people's taste in clothing, these tastes have only been met by legal or even illegal clothing imports in practice. In short, there are various strategies at the macro level that necessitate the cooperation of global institutions, legislative bodies, and governments. However, macro-level strategies will not be effective without the collaboration of factors at the meso and micro levels.

4.2. Social marketing of national TC at the meso level

As shown in Table 2, social values are the sources of collective and even personal identities. Thus, social values could train consumer behaviors because social identity is essential in orienting consumers' behavior; for instance, in China, wearing qipao as a sign of rejection of foreign products shows the citizen's responsibility (Ng, 2015: 58). Therefore, in China, being blamed for social values incompatibility with Western-style causes people to avoid these styles (Chew, 2007:157). This socio-moral obstacle is a value co-creation or co-sustain; it could be seen as a peer-to-peer intervention. In Iran, common values can strengthen solidarity and national identity in rural areas and towns more than in large cities because correlation networks and group correlations in cities are less than in rural areas and towns.

Table 2. Midstream/Meso Social Marketing Level for Promoting the National TC

The Applied Approaches	Marketing Interventions Mix
The effect of socio-moral obstacles as a result of common values (Ng, 2015: 58; Chew, 2007: 157; Valk, 2017: 27)	**Peer-to-peer**
Applying rituals, even inventing traditions, as an opportunity for value co-creation (see Valk, 2018: 133)	**Events** **Peer-to-peer** **Social media** **Relationship /network building**
Decreasing the cost of TC in these ways: cutting, restitching, resizing, redyeing, and selling second-hand clothes (Valk, 2020a; Valk, 2020b)	**Costs**

Applying the Internet and social media as tools for creating communication networks, cultivating the aesthetic taste of local and global consumers, exporting culture and TC, and enforcing nation brands (Clark, 2013: 222)	**Social media** **Peer-to-peer** **Relationship building** **Events** **Community development**
Making the modernized TC more viewable (Clark, 2013: 408)	**Social media** **Peer-to-peer** **Relationship building** **Events** **Media** **Social media**
Creating networks of stakeholders, such as designers, producers, retailers, celebrities, bloggers, and loyal customers (Valk, 2018; Fahmi, 2019)	**Network building / Relationship building**
Applying characters wearing modernized or original TC in computer games, movies, and animations (Chew, 2007: 155)	**Storytelling** **Media**
The side events of movie festivals	**Events** **Cinema** **Media**

Source: Research findings

Performing rituals is a way of strengthening the correlation. Moreover, the involvement of consumers in functional value co-creation during the rituals, as events, is an opportunity for TC revival. Furthermore, the value of beliefs and emotions adds to the TCs' cultural and functional value. Even Valk believes that the emergence of the new formal kimono may be related to 'invented traditions' (Valk, 2018: 133). However, in Iran's urban contexts, because the sense of solidarity and national identity is reduced (Jahangiri & Moeini, 2011: 61-62), traditional rites are being converted to Western ones. Therefore, traditional values are decreasing, which is unavoidable because of globalization. Thus, social marketers should preserve traditional values by localizing converted rituals and designing modernized clothes, especially for these rituals. Nevertheless, another

obstacle is the cost of ritual clothes. SEAC stores have promoted the use of second-hand clothes to solve this problem. For example, in Japan, second-hand kimonos initially lacked customers at first because of their unknown previous owners. However, the growth in the number of kimono magazines and articles about kimonos and the economic value of buying from second-hand stores has created societal value and acceptance for these kimonos (Valk, 2020b: 10, 13). Instead of this solution, Iranians use more economical textiles or omit some pieces of TC because, in Iran, using second-hand TC is a sign of poverty and the lower class. Furthermore, workshops can be held along with the rituals to provide audiences with information about rituals, as a context of TC and their historical and cultural values. Consequently, rituals, which are events that are marketing interventions, will be empowered. These events can also create opportunities to teach some primary lessons about sewing TC, and participating in TC production. In these events, participants can rent TC, take selfies and photos, and share the events on social media; thus, they increase the TC's visibility and co-create value for the TC through peer-to-peer and social media interventions. Generally, communication through the Internet and social media forms a network of younger stakeholders and, as a result, causes more views. Through these media, they make a virtual campaign about TC and promote it by commenting on and resharing each other's posts, co-organizing events, encouraging each other's products, and simultaneously competing. Additionally, due to the global nature of this media, it develops the aesthetic tastes of both local and global consumers (Clark, 2013: 222); thus, it exports its culture and TC, enforcing national brands. In this way, simultaneously, social media, peer-to-peer relationship building, events, and community development apply as marketing mix interventions to promote TC. These interventions have been used in Iran via Instagram, Telegram, and WhatsApp.

Overall, the more modernized and reproduced TC is viewed, the more people are encouraged to consume them because they will be etched in customers' minds and make them fashionable. For example, Malaysian

people faced modernized TC everywhere: museums, fairs, fashion events, and even magazines on the tables of coffee shops (Clark, 2013: 408). The last one is very effective because people view TC in magazines in a situation related to a memorable event, so the emotional value adds to the TC. Additionally, a museum in Kuala Lumpur regularly hosts batik-making classes and textile demonstrations (Clark, 2013: 408). In these ways, they utilize training interventions to make batik more visible, popular, and accessible, resulting in increased affordability.

Iran has employed similar tools for propagation, such as holding international Fajr fashion festivals, competitions, and television programs. Still, according to the stakeholders, such as Hamid Ghobadi, the Former Secretary of the Fashion and Clothing Working Group, the government's advertising support has not been enough (Zeinolabedin, 2019). Consequently, existing domestic brands that suffer from other problems and are not competitive enough are not able to stand up to the widespread advertising of foreign brands. Furthermore, according to the Article of Law on the Organization of Fashion and Clothing, 'holding seasonal fashion and clothing fairs by the Ministry of Commerce' should cause accessibility for modernized TC (IPRCI, 2007); however, the accessibility is still not sufficient. Creating networks of stakeholders, such as designers, producers, retailers, celebrities, bloggers, and loyal customers, is another strategy that Japanese and, to some extent, Indonesians have adopted to revive their TC (Valk, 2018; Fahmi, 2019). Indonesian designers and producers share their knowledge of techniques and customer needs (Fahmi, 2019). Moreover, the Japanese hold events and tours, including speeches and workshops, to show their commitment to the kimono (Valk, 2018: 203-214). Being in a group of people who value TC emotionally and add entertainment to the learning parts of the event with celebrities, in addition to evoking nostalgia, creates a deep emotional value for TC and retains the gained knowledge about TC. These strategies have not yet been applied in Iran, possibly due to the

weakness of teamwork among Iranian clothing stakeholders (Afrough & Mehrabanifar, 2018: 22).

Storytelling is another effective marketing mix for TC revival. Examples of storytelling have been applied in Japanese computer games, movies, and animations in which their characters wear Chinese TC (Chew, 2007: 155). Gaming has a more profound impact on the audience's mind due to engaging the mind with more mental and emotional challenges than movies and animations. Since the primary audience of animations is children, the belief in the value of this TC will be imprinted on children's minds through an emotional opportunity of storytelling. Considering these strategies in Iran, Iran has achieved notable international success in movie production, e.g., The Salesman by Asghar Farhadi, awarded in 2016 (Festival De Cannes, 2016), in animations, e.g., The Last Fiction by Ashkan Rahgozar submitted for 2019 Oscars Academy (Oscars, 2019), and computer games, e.g., The Cat and The Coup, the finalist in 2011 Independent Games Festival (Games for Change, 2011). In addition to the movies, the side events of movie festivals are good opportunities to present and promote Islamic-Iranian clothes. Nonetheless, Iranians have rarely used these opportunities to reproduce their TC. If the characters of animations and computer games wore Islamic-Iranian clothes, character merchandising could be applied to promote these clothes. In sum, at the meso level, events, media, and peer-to-peer are the most applied marketing mix interventions to promote traditional and modernized TC. As mentioned, marketing mix interventions at all levels are not definitely separable. Therefore, some interventions shared with the above levels will be discussed in the next section.

4.3. Social marketing of national TC at the micro level

At the micro level, as demonstrated in Table 3, celebrities play a role. They can orient consumers' behaviors by endorsing both original and modernized TC through wearing them. According to SM, these individuals can be seen as distribution channels because they distribute the behavior of wearing

modernized TC (see French & Gordon, 2019: 119). Due to the Western media's success in branding itself, its celebrities have become global leaders in fashion, creating value for their clothes worldwide. For instance, a study shows that, in 2012, satellite channels and the Internet were among the first three influential factors in Iranian people's fashion (Khorshidian et al., 2015: 86). However, due to the strategies at the macro or meso level, celebrities have been able to create value for hanbok at the micro level (Song, 2023; Rahmawati & Patrianti, 2023). According to another study, more than 60 percent of consumers have considered factors from abroad, such as foreign countries, satellite channels, and the Internet, to be influential in fashion development in Iran. Manufacturers say most role models have been from European countries (Bahar & Zaree, 2009: 42, 43).

Table 3. Downstream/Micro Social Marketing Level for Promoting the National TC

The Applied Approaches	**Marketing Interventions Mix**
Wearing original or modernized TC by celebrities	**Social media** **Press** **Cinema** **Television** **Distribution**
Wearing original or modernized TC by characters in television series and movies (e.g., *In the Mood for Love*, Wong, 2000)	**Media**
The educational systems can play an influential role in promoting TC in two ways: scientific education about TC and using TC as uniforms (Valk, 2017: 23)	**Training**
Holding ethnic clothing festivals in schools	**Events**
Using narrative-based methods, such as theater by student actors wearing legal original or modernized TC	**Events** **Storytelling**
Participatory design or co-design (Lee et al., 2018: 2; Valk, 2017: 28; Hirscher & Niinimäki, & Armstrong, 2018: 3)	**Asset**
Promoting the use of second-hand TC	**Cost**
Repairing the ragged parts of TC by family members (Valk, 2020b: 13)	**Cost** **Relationship reinforcing**

Source: Research findings

As another successful example of the media's ability to promote the modernized TC, the Chinese have utilized TV series and movies, such as *In the Mood for Love* (Wong, 2000). This success has several reasons: they showed a variety of designs inspired by TC, which persuaded the audience to appreciate the modernized taste while adhering to the TC. Moreover, original and modernized TC were displayed luxuriously. Also, wearing these clothes by the hero or favorite characters inspires the value of clothes to the audience. Conversely, in Iran, TC design is rarely valued in cinema and TV programs ("Movie Costume Designer," 2021). According to Iranian studies, in changing fashion consumers' behavior in Iran, cognitive reform and raising individuals' awareness are more valuable than formal controls and imposed measures. As a result, internalizing values is more effective (Talebi & Karimi, 2020: 124). In order to internalize values, holding ethnic clothing festivals in schools while encouraging students to wear their local TC can help strengthen the belief in the value of TC (see "Students wearing local clothes," 2019). Using narrative-based methods, such as theatre by student actors wearing legal original or modernized TC, can be an excellent way to familiarize children with TC and their cultural and identity values. It is a strategy to engage people in creating value for TC from their childhood. In this way, storytelling and event marketing interventions can be applied simultaneously to improve children's tastes. In addition, it is necessary to create various designs according to diverse preferences because personal identity is essential in developing people's tastes. Some consumers prefer to design their clothes themselves. Wearing unique clothes gives a sense of being more valuable and having a unique identity. These clothes will become popular and help create a new fashion trend. For example, in Japan, some retailers employ this strategy to attract consumers and win their loyalty (see Valk, 2017: 28). Participatory design or co-design, in which the customers are design partners, is a value-creation method in the modern fashion industry (Lee et al., 2018: 2). Moreover, this method adds emotional value due to consumers' experiences, nostalgia, and emotional satisfaction

associated with making clothes. This value may encourage consumers to use clothes for a longer time; thus, it also makes the ecological value (Hirscher et al., 2018: 3). It is a kind of asset intervention. Asset interventions focus 'on the resources, skills, talents, and ideas within communities for generating change' (Stead et al., 2013: 27). Using second-hand TC adds to the ecological value and makes other values. For young Japanese customers of second-hand kimono stores, the shape and material of kimonos that connect them to the past are sources of value for their individual identity, as opposed to the world fashion (Valk, 2020b: 13). Furthermore, the media has had an essential role in making sense of the individual value of second-hand kimonos by focusing on the uniqueness of antique pieces (Valk, 2020b: 14). According to previous comments, fun and peacefulness are other emotional values second-hand stores create. Also, for older customers, utilizing their inherited knowledge about second-hand kimonos craft skills, in addition to obtaining the quality kimono at bargain prices (Valk, 2020b: 13), creates the emotional value of being knowledgeable and economic value. Furthermore, in Japan, family members repair the ragged parts of the TC with needlework while blessing the person who will receive it. This ritual, blessing, and the participation of family members add emotional value to the TC. Thus, in addition to reinforcing the family identity and relations and co-creating symbolic, emotional, and financial value (Valk, 2020b: 13), this method creates ecological value. Appliqué is the same historical technique in Iran (see Ostad Agha, 2007). Using this technique in modernized TC production can add economic value. Additionally, recalling grandmothers' art adds emotional value to TC.

5. Conclusion and policy suggestions

This article examined the marketing interventions applied by SEAC to increase the modernized TC consumption to achieve the appropriate SM mix in Iran. Considering French and Gordon's five strategic SM intervention levels, we divided interventions into three levels (2019): macro, meso, and

micro. As the word 'mix' suggests, these interventions work together to solve the systematic problem of reduced desire to wear national clothing. Since SM develops and employs marketing concepts and techniques to create and foster values (French & Gordon, 2019), the appropriate tools must be used to reinforce or create neglected or at-risk values after understanding the value roots of the problem. To this end, evidence shows that two of the most critical factors in the decreased tendency towards the use of TC in Iran are ideological policies and ambiguous legislation, some of which have been interpreted in opposition to the use of modernized clothes and in line with the global fashion. However, politicians must consider that due to the nature of the modern era, globalization, and especially the professional use of media as a marketing tool by Western countries, being affected by global fashion as a value seems inevitable.

Nevertheless, as the SEAC did, national fashion can be globalized by localizing Western fashion and employing various marketing tools, especially the media. Such activities show that a country's culture is not a passive category that is merely influential without affecting other areas (Tomlinson, 2006: 151). On the contrary, it is possible to orient people to participate in creating glocal cultural values by taking measures along with strengthening the sense of local belonging (Robertson, 1995), like nation branding and holding events. In particular, the formation of a kind of collective perception —among Iranians in various aspects— of being in a 'risk existential situation' in the present era seems to be the result of a sense of detachment from the global identity. As Ulrich Beck (1992) points out, this perception can reduce people's trust in the government. Also, the Iranian politicians' ideological multiplicity has led to the arbitrary implementation of the laws in society; as a result, it has fueled these people's distrust and sense of risk. Thus, in the age of reflexivity or individual choices (Beck, 1992; Giddens, 1991; Lash & Urry, 1994), and while the media manipulates people's tastes with biased awareness-raising, the Iranian political system's insistence on orienting citizens' choices reduces their sense of local

belonging. Hence, these factors increase people's craving for the consumption of global fashion. However, SEAC has been and is exposed to more or less the same risks; still, they have been able to lead people to reflect on their cultural values and the shared values co-creation by using the various marketing interventions seen in Tables 1 to 3. Generally, these interventions can be classified into three groups: 'communicative interventions,' 'interactive interventions,' and 'communicative-interactive interventions.' Communicative interventions focus on using media tools such as social networks, cinema, television, animation, media relations, and distribution. Interactive interventions operate through non-media social relationships and include legislation, events, support, cost, and assets. Ultimately, in communicative-interactive interventions, media, and non-media interactions are used, including peer-to-peer, relationship building or networking, social relationship reinforcing, community building, storytelling, gamification, training, and various brandings such as national, regional, religious, and nation-religious. As Model 2, in Figure 2, shows, all of the above interventions can be applied in the 'communicative-interactive social marketing intervention mix' to increase the consumption of modernized TC in Iran.

Overall, the media seems to play a more significant role in examining the marketing interventions applied in the SEAC. Therefore, given these interventions and the fact that in a risk society, it is the media that defines and acts as a field of politics (Beck, 2009: 98), the Iranian political system, apart from reflecting in its fragmented politics and ambiguous legislation, should focus on media tools as a SM tool to persuade people to use Iranian TC. Furthermore, in policymaking, the issue of modernizing TC should not be viewed as a pure artistic, cultural, economic, religious, or political matter. Instead, its social-behavioral, multi-level, and multi-dimensional nature, as well as its reciprocal impact on the nation's cultural and social capital, should be given greater consideration.

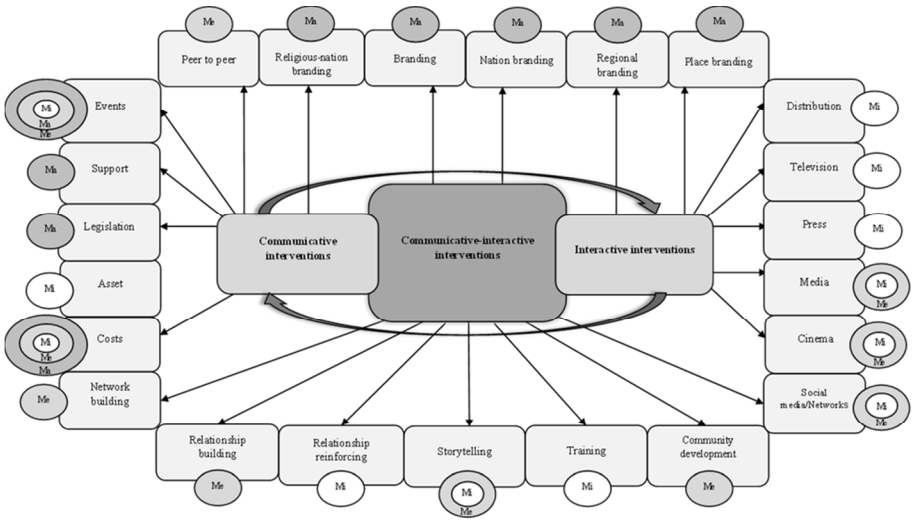

Figure 2. Model 2, The Communicative-Interactive Social Marketing Intervention Mix for Uupdated Iranian TC Consumption, Source: Research findings

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