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Transformative Cultural Policy-Making Model with an Organizational Learning Approach and Cultural Rethinking

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the present study was to identify a transformative cultural policy-making model with an organizational learning approach and cultural rethinking based on an interpretive structural model. This study is developmental-applied in terms of its purpose, because the researcher seeks to present a model with a combined approach of interpretive structural modeling and fuzzy Delphi. The method used in this study is a combined method that includes the historical method (data collection) and the survey method (questionnaire distribution). Also, articles, books, and reliable sources available to the researcher were used to collect and write the theoretical foundations of the research. The population and statistical sample of this study are financial experts, professors, and researchers in the field of organizational management. The sampling method is purposive. The methods used in this study are Delphi techniques and interpretive structural model. The software used was EXCEL and MICMAC. 9 indicators were identified. These indicators include: motivating and inspiring employees in transformative policymaking, organizational evaluation and learning, participatory and consensus policymaking, modernity and transformation in cultural policy, organizational cultural resilience, creating capacities for cultural diplomacy and international communications, social participation and dynamism in cultural policymaking, strengthening and consolidating indigenous-national identity in a global context. The research findings showed that the transformative cultural policymaking model in the context of Iranian cultural organizations is based on nine key indicators, each of which plays an effective role in realizing organizational learning, cultural rethinking, and sustainable transformation. ©authors

Introduction

In recent decades, social, technological, and value-based developments at the national and global levels have caused countries' cultural systems to face complex challenges in the field of policymaking (Baily, 2025). In Iran, the cultural policy-making structure has often been followed with a bureaucratic, centralized, and top-down approach; in such a way that less attention has been paid to the dynamics of the cultural environment, stakeholder participation, and the role of organizational learning in the process of policy formulation and implementation (Ansari et al., 2021). As a result, many cultural policies have failed to align with the rapid changes in values, media, and lifestyles of new generations and pave the way for sustainable and learning cultural transformation (Dunlop, 2024). On the other hand, cultural policy-making in the current situation requires a transformative perspective; A perspective that moves away from a static and prescriptive model and moves towards continuous learning, rethinking, innovation and adaptability (Figueira, 2025).

A transformative cultural policy does not simply reproduce past values, but also creates new meanings and synergies between tradition and modernity (Torgaloz et al, 2023). By utilizing the capacities of organizational learning, systems thinking and inter-organizational partnership, this type of policy can provide a platform for the cultural adaptation of society to global developments and at the same time strengthen the national cultural identity. However, in the Iranian administrative and cultural system, there is still no comprehensive model for designing and implementing transformative cultural policies (Angzi et al, 2022).

The lack of learning mechanisms in policymaking, the weakness in the use of cultural data, and the lack of an effective feedback system between policymakers, implementers, and society have made the cultural policymaking process more reactive and short-term in nature (Cetindamar et al, 2021). Therefore, identifying the dimensions, components, and causal relationships of transformative cultural policymaking in order to provide a native and learning model for government organizations, especially the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance (Amirmohammadi et al, 2022), is a scientific and practical necessity so that more effective, participatory, and forward-looking cultural policies can be designed and implemented based on it (Bandola-Gill, 2024).

In the current era, societies are experiencing extensive and multifaceted transformations in the social, technological, economic, and cultural fields. The emergence of digital technologies, social media, artificial intelligence, and the free flow of information have led to changes in communication patterns, lifestyles, and value systems of individuals and groups (Jungsberg et al, 2025). In such circumstances, cultural institutions are faced with a reality in which stability, top-down control, and prescriptive policies no longer respond to the complexity and dynamism of culture. Therefore, cultural policymaking requires a new, flexible, and learning perspective in order to preserve the continuity and cultural identity of society on the one hand, and to pave the way for innovation, transformation, and the reproduction of values appropriate to the times on the other. This necessity is felt more than ever in countries like Iran, which enjoy cultural and historical richness but are simultaneously facing rapid social and global changes (Kantek, 2025).

In Iran, cultural policymaking has traditionally been pursued with a centralized and prescriptive approach. Many cultural policies and programs are formulated and implemented from the top down and are less designed based on organizational learning, horizontal interactions, cultural networking, and social feedback. This has led to a significant gap between official cultural policies and the biocultural realities of society. In other words, the country's cultural policy-making system has failed to effectively keep up with cultural changes and generational developments and exploit new capacities in the production and reproduction of culture. The consequence of this situation is a decrease in the effectiveness of cultural policies, a weakening of public trust in cultural institutions, and a failure to achieve the goals of cultural transformation (Dâmaso, 2025).

In such a context, the concept of transformative cultural policy-making is proposed, which goes beyond mere planning to preserve or reproduce values and seeks to create fundamental changes in the attitude, structure, and processes of cultural policy-making (Dragičević Šešić, 2024). This type of policymaking relies on dynamism, innovation, participation, and continuous learning, rather than a passive response to cultural issues. In the transformative approach, cultural policy is not a tool for cultural control, but a platform for the cultural empowerment of society and the development of capacities for creativity, critical thinking, and cultural dialogue. In this approach, cultural institutions play the role of learners and facilitators rather than commanders, and focus on “cultural growth” rather than “cultural management” (Kezar et al, 2024).

In this context, organizational learning is considered as one of the key approaches to creating transformation in the cultural policy-making system. Organizational learning helps organizations to take steps towards continuous improvement by reflecting on experiences, evaluating results, sharing knowledge, and creating feedback loops (Wang et al, 2025). In cultural institutions, organizational learning can lead to rethinking the values, goals, and tools of policy-making and increase the ability to respond to changes in the cultural environment. In fact, institutions such as the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance can, by utilizing organizational learning, become dynamic and transformative organizations that both learn from the past and have the ability to create the cultural future of society (Martin et al, 2024). On the other hand, the concept of cultural rethinking also plays a fundamental role in transformative cultural policy-making (Patel et al, 2023).

Cultural rethinking refers to the ability of a society and its institutions to reflect on their cultural beliefs, values, and practices and to revise them in accordance with new circumstances. In the absence of rethinking, cultural policymaking becomes stagnant and repetitive, and fails to understand social developments. Cultural rethinking forces policymakers to think about cultural polyphony, intergenerational dialogue, and redefining the role of culture in national development, rather than making one-dimensional decisions. As a result, the combination of organizational learning and cultural rethinking can serve as the basis for designing a local model for transformative cultural policymaking in Iran (Naser et al, 2024). Currently, one of the fundamental challenges of cultural policymaking in the country (Arbabi Isfahani, 1404) is the lack of coherent mechanisms for institutional learning and feedback on the results of policy implementation (Sánchez et al, 2023).

Many cultural projects and programs are implemented without continuous evaluation, documentation of experiences, and transfer of organizational knowledge, and after the end of each management period, previous experiences are lost. This causes a break in the continuity of organizational learning and prevents the institutionalization of a learning culture in cultural policy-making bodies. On the other hand, the cultural decision-making system is often carried out in closed frameworks and with limited participation of stakeholders; while cultural transformation requires open, participatory, and interactive policy-making (Rivera et al., 2024). In addition, the centralized structure of cultural policy-making in Iran has caused many policies to be formulated in the same way and without considering the cultural diversity of different regions of the country (Arbabi Isfahani, 2021).

Such an approach not only prevents cultural dynamism, but in some cases causes conflict between official culture and local cultures. From this perspective, transformative cultural policymaking should be based on the distribution of cultural power, the recognition of cultural diversity, and mutual learning among different levels of the cultural community. This is only possible by utilizing mechanisms of organizational learning and cultural rethinking in which policymakers, implementers, cultural elites, and the public play an active role in the policymaking process (Rahim et al., 2024). At the theoretical level, the current models of cultural policymaking are often based on the classical perspectives of public management, control, and centralized planning. However, in today's turbulent and changing environment, these models seem ineffective. For this reason, a new model is needed that can

transform cultural policymaking from a linear and prescriptive process into a dynamic, open, networked, and learning process by combining transformative perspectives, organizational learning, and cultural rethinking. This model should be able to increase the capacity of cultural institutions to respond to social changes, create a new understanding of the role of culture in development, and provide the possibility of reforming and improving cultural policies through continuous learning. Therefore, the main gap in the Iranian cultural policy-making system is the lack of a theoretical and practical model that can explain the link between organizational learning, cultural rethinking, and cultural transformation (Karimi et al., 2023). Such a model should specify how cultural organizations can take steps towards cultural transformation through internal and reflective learning processes and how cultural policies can benefit from environmental experiences and feedback for continuous reform. Designing such a model can lead to a deeper understanding of the mechanisms of learning and rethinking in cultural policy-making and ultimately improve the quality of cultural policy-making in the country.

Accordingly, the present study aims to present a model for transformative cultural policymaking with an organizational learning and cultural rethinking approach in order to bridge the gap between theory and practice in the field of cultural policymaking. It is expected that the findings of this study will help cultural policymakers to upgrade the country's cultural system from a reactive and centralized state to a dynamic, participatory, and transformative state with a learning and rethinking perspective. This model can also be used as a basis for redesigning the structures, processes, and policies of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance to take steps towards realizing cultural transformation based on continuous learning, innovation, and Iranian-Islamic cultural identity.

Literature Review

Transformative Cultural Policymaking

Transformative cultural policymaking can be defined as a dynamic, learning and forward-looking process that aims not only to maintain or reproduce the existing cultural situation, but also to create fundamental changes in the attitudes, structures and cultural processes of a society (Dâmaso et al, 2025). This type of policymaking moves away from the traditional and prescriptive model and is based on principles such as cultural innovation, stakeholder participation, continuous learning, systems thinking and adaptability. In this approach, culture is considered as a living system, learning and interacting with the environment; therefore, the cultural policymaker has the role of a “facilitator of change” rather than a “controller of cultural behavior”. Such policymaking, by utilizing cultural data, lived experiences, intercultural dialogues, and analysis of social trends, seeks to construct and reconstruct meaning in society in order to redefine cultural values and norms in accordance with new social and technological conditions (Aldaarmi, 2024).

On the other hand, transformative cultural policymaking goes beyond formulating a set of policies and programs; it creates a learning culture in policymaking, in which policies are modified and improved based on feedback, evaluation, and continuous reflection. By combining the principles of “organizational learning” and “cultural reflection,” this approach transforms policymaking into a cyclical, open, and interactive process in which all cultural actors—from government to elites and the public—play a role in shaping and implementing policies. The result of such an approach is a cultural policy that is able to adapt to environmental changes, supports innovation and creativity, strengthens the cultural identity of the society, and ultimately, lays the groundwork for sustainable and spontaneous cultural change in society (Taremi et al., 2024).

Organizational learning and cultural rethinking Organizational learning is a process through which organizations achieve continuous improvement of their performance and adaptation to the surrounding environment through experience, feedback, and knowledge exchange. In this approach, the organization is considered as a living and dynamic entity that has the ability to learn collectively and transfer knowledge (Yan et al, 2023). Organizational

learning includes the ability of members to identify errors, revise mental assumptions, document experiences, and transform them into organizational knowledge. In such an organization, systems thinking, knowledge sharing, organizational dialogue, and reflection on past experiences lead to strengthening collective understanding and smarter decision-making. In the field of cultural policy-making, organizational learning helps cultural institutions move away from static and prescriptive approaches and design their policies based on experience, data analysis, and continuous dialogue with the social environment (Esmailzadeh et al., 2022). In contrast, cultural rethinking refers to the ability of individuals and institutions to critically reflect on their cultural beliefs, values, symbols, and practices and to revise them based on social and historical changes (Abane et al., 2022).

Cultural rethinking is a process through which a society achieves a deeper understanding of its cultural self and can balance tradition and modernity, stability and evolution, and identity and change. This concept has its roots in modern sociology, and from the perspective of thinkers such as Anthony Giddens, rethinking is one of the main characteristics of late societies in which actors continuously revise their knowledge about the world and themselves. Within the framework of cultural policy-making, cultural rethinking allows policymakers to move away from a linear and one-dimensional view of culture and, by recognizing emerging cultural dynamics, formulate policies that both preserve the cultural identity of the society and pave the way for innovation, dialogue, and sustainable cultural transformation (Jafari et al., 2014).

Cultural policymaking environments can be conceptualized as dynamic learning systems in which knowledge is continuously generated, shared, and reinterpreted in response to evolving cultural, social, and global contexts. From a systems-theoretical perspective, these environments operate through ongoing cycles of feedback, reflection, and adaptation that enable policymakers to sense changes in cultural demands, shifts in societal values, and emerging global cultural trends. Learning occurs at multiple levels—individual, organizational, and societal—where actors develop new cultural insights, question existing assumptions, and adjust their strategies accordingly. In this sense, cultural policymaking does not function merely as a regulatory or administrative mechanism but as an adaptive knowledge ecosystem that evolves through iterative learning processes.

Moreover, viewing cultural policymaking as a learning system highlights the centrality of collective knowledge production and participatory mechanisms. Cultural systems draw heavily on diverse sources of experiential knowledge, including artistic communities, cultural institutions, civil society, and international cultural networks. These multisource interactions enhance the system's reflexivity and its ability to learn from both internal practices and external cultural environments. As learning systems, cultural policymaking structures become capable of reinventing themselves, fostering innovation, and supporting transformative cultural change. This theoretical perspective underscores the importance of organizational learning, cultural reflexivity, and stakeholder engagement in shaping policy environments that are resilient, forward-looking, and responsive to complex cultural challenges.

Method

This research was conducted in a mixed method (Delphi and interpretive structural model). This research is developmental-applied in terms of its purpose, because the researcher seeks to identify a transformative cultural policy-making pattern with an organizational learning approach and cultural rethinking with a combined approach of interpretive structural modeling and fuzzy Delphi. The method used in this research is a mixed method that includes the historical method (data collection) and the survey method (distribution of questionnaires). Also, articles, books, and reliable sources available to the researcher were used to collect and write the theoretical foundations of the research.

The population and statistical sample of this study consists of financial experts, professors and researchers in the field of organizational management and policy. The sampling method is purposive. The methods used in this study are Delphi techniques and interpretive structural model. In order to reach a consensus on the questionnaire, the method of taking fashion was used.

The software used was EXCEL and MICMAC. The statistical sample includes 25 empirical experts and theoretical experts. The Delphi section and interpretive structural model of this study were conducted based on the views of 25 experts in the field of study. In terms of gender, 18 people are male and 7 are female. In terms of age, 3 people are under 35 years old, 10 people are between 35 and 45 years old, and 12 people are over 45 years old. In terms of education, 11 of the experts have a master's degree and 14 have a doctorate.

Finally, 13 people have between 10 and 20 years of work experience and 12 people have over 20 years of work experience.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of experts

Demographic characteristics		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	18	72%
	Female	7	28%
Age	< 35	3	12%
	35 to 45	10	40%
	>45	12	48%
Education	Master's degree	11	44%
	PhD	14	56%
Work experience	10 to 20 years old	13	52%
	Above 20 years old	12	48%
Total		25	100%

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the study participants. Of the total 25 respondents, 72% were male (n = 18) and 28% were female (n = 7), indicating a predominantly male sample. Regarding age distribution, nearly half of the participants (48%, n = 12) were over 45 years old, 40% (n = 10) were between 35 and 45, and 12% (n = 3) were under 35, suggesting that the sample largely consisted of mid-to-late career professionals. In terms of educational background, 56% (n = 14) held a PhD degree, while 44% (n = 11) had a master's degree, reflecting a highly qualified group. Work experience was also substantial, with 52% (n = 13) having 10 to 20 years of professional experience and 48% (n = 12) exceeding 20 years. Overall, the participants represent a well-educated, experienced, and mature workforce, providing a robust basis for exploring the study's objectives.

Findings

Based on the fuzzy Delphi technique, the components extracted from texts and expert interviews were examined and screened. The extracted components were identified in Table 2.

Table 2. Identified and symbolized variables

Identified factors	Symbol
Motivating and inspiring employees in transformative policymaking	C1
Organizational assessment and learning	C2
Participatory policymaking and consensus	C3
Innovation and transformation in cultural policy	C4
Organizational cultural resilience	C5
Creating capacities for cultural diplomacy and international communications	C6
Social participation and dynamism in cultural policymaking	C7
Strengthening and consolidating indigenous-national identity in a global context	C8
Transformative culturalization in cultural policymaking	C9

The experts' views on the importance of each indicator are compiled with a 7-degree fuzzy spectrum.

Table 3. Seven-degree fuzzy spectrum for evaluating indicators

Fuzzy number scale	Fuzzy value	Linguistic variable
(0, 0, 0.1)	$\hat{1}$	Not at all important
(0, 0.1, 0.3)	$\hat{2}$	Very important
(0.1, 0.3, 0.5)	$\hat{3}$	Unimportant
(0.3, 0.5, 0.75)	$\hat{4}$	Moderately important
(0.5, 0.75, 0.9)	$\hat{5}$	important
(0.75, 0.9, 1)	$\hat{6}$	Very important
(0.9, 1, 1)	$\hat{7}$	Definitely important

The fuzzy mean and defuzzified output of the values of the indicators are given in Table 4. A defuzzified value greater than 7 is accepted and any indicator with a score less than 7 is rejected.

Table 4. Results of screening indicators (first round)

Indicators	Lower bound	Probable value	Upper bound	Fuzzy Mean	Definite value	Round 1 Result
C1	0.646	0.798	0.890	(0.646,0.798,0.89)	0.778	Accept
C2	0.604	0.754	0.854	(0.604,0.754,0.854)	0.738	Accept
C3	0.569	0.756	0.898	(0.569,0.756,0.898)	0.741	Accept
C4	0.623	0.796	0.913	(0.623,0.796,0.913)	0.777	Accept
C5	0.681	0.833	0.923	(0.681,0.833,0.923)	0.813	Accept
C6	0.660	0.825	0.923	(0.66,0.825,0.923)	0.803	Accept
C7	0.833	0.956	0.996	(0.833,0.956,0.996)	0.928	Accept
C8	0.771	0.917	0.983	(0.771,0.917,0.983)	0.890	Accept
C9	0.569	0.756	0.898	(0.569,0.756,0.898)	0.741	Accept

No questions were eliminated in the second round, which is a signal to end the Delphi rounds. In general, one approach to ending the Delphi is to compare the average scores of the questions from the first and second rounds. If the difference between the two rounds is less than a very small threshold (0.2), then the survey process is stopped (Cheng and Lin, 2002).

Table 5. The difference between the first and second round's final values

Indicators	Round 1 Result	Round 2 Result	Difference	Round 1 Result
C1	0.778	0.795	0.017	Accept
C2	0.738	0.806	0.069	Accept
C3	0.741	0.790	0.049	Accept
C4	0.777	0.853	0.076	Accept
C5	0.813	0.852	0.040	Accept
C6	0.803	0.808	0.005	Accept
C7	0.928	0.908	0.021	Accept
C8	0.890	0.890	0.000	Accept
C9	0.741	0.790	0.049	Accept

The first step in structural-interpretive modeling is to calculate the internal relationships of the indicators. To reflect the internal relationships between the indicators, the experts' perspective is used. The matrix obtained in this step shows which variables a variable affects and which variables it is affected by. Conventionally, symbols such as Table 6 are used to identify the pattern of element relationships.

Table 6. Forms and symbols used in expressing the relationship of research indicators

V	A	X	O
Variable i affects j	Variable j affects i	Bidirectional relationship	No relationship

According to the signs in Table 6, the structural self-interaction matrix will be as in Table 7.

Table 7. Structural self-interaction matrix of SSIM

C9	C8	C7	C6	C5	C4	C3	C2	C1	Variable
V	V	A	A	V	A	A	X		C1

V	V	A	A	V	A	A			C2
V	V	X	A	V	X				C3
V	V	X	A	V					C4
V	X	A	A						C5
V	V	V							C6
V	V								C7
V									C8
									C9

The received matrix is obtained by transforming the structural self-interaction matrix into a two-valued matrix of zero and one. In the received matrix, the main diagonal elements are set to one. Therefore, the received matrix of the ISM technique is presented in Table 8.

Table 8. Received matrix of identified indicators

C9	C8	C7	C6	C5	C4	C3	C2	C1	Variable
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1		C1
1	0	0	0	0	0	0		1	C2
1	1	1	0	1	1		1	1	C3
1	1	1	0	1		1	1	1	C4
1	1	0	0		0	0	1	1	C5
1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	C6
1	1		0	1	1	1	1	1	C7
1		0	0	1	0	0	1	1	C8
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	C9

The final access matrix of the model indicators is presented in Table 9.

Table 9. Final access matrix of the indicators

C9	C8	C7	C6	C5	C4	C3	C2	C1	Variable
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	C1
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	C2
1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	C3
1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	C4
1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	C5
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	C6
1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	C7
1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	C8
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	C9

The output set includes the criterion itself and the criteria that it is affected by. The input set includes the criterion itself and the criteria that it is affected by. Then, the set of two-way relationships of the criteria is determined. After determining the achievement set and the prerequisite set, the intersection of the two sets is calculated. After determining the level, the criterion whose level is known is removed from the entire set and the input and output set is formed again, and the level of the next variable is obtained.

Table 10. Input and output set for each variable and leveling

Component	Variable	Input	Output
Motivating and inspiring employees in transformative policymaking	C1	3	8
Organizational assessment and learning	C2	3	8
Participatory policymaking and consensus	C3	8	4
Innovation and transformation in cultural policy	C4	8	4
Organizational cultural resilience	C5	3	8
Creating capacities for cultural diplomacy and international communications	C6	9	1
Social participation and dynamism in cultural policymaking	C7	8	4
Strengthening and consolidating indigenous-national identity in a global context	C8	3	8
Transformative culturalization in cultural policymaking	C9	9	1

For variable C_i , the reach set (output or effects) includes the variables that can be reached through variable C_i . The prerequisite set (input or effects) includes the variables that can be reached through variable C_i . After determining the reach set and prerequisite set, the intersection of the two sets is calculated. The first variable whose intersection of the two sets is equal to the reachable set (outputs) will be the first level. Therefore, the elements of the first level will have the most influence in the model. After determining the level, the criterion whose level is known is removed from the entire set and the set of inputs and outputs is formed again, and the level of the next variable is obtained.

Table 11. Determining the first level in the ISM hierarchy

Variable	Input	Output	Subscription	Level
C1	C1-C2-C3-C4-C5-C6-C7-C8	C1-C2-C9	C1-C2	2
C2	C1-C2-C3-C4-C5-C6-C7-C8	C1-C2-C9	C1-C2	2
C3	C3-C4-C6-C7	C1-C2-C3-C4-C5-C7-C8-C9	C3-C4-C7	4
C4	C3-C4-C6-C7	C1-C2-C3-C4-C5-C7-C8-C9	C3-C4-C7	4
C5	C3-C4-C5-C6-C7-C8	C1-C2- -C5- -C8-C9	C5-C8	3
C6	C6	C1-C2-C3-C4-C5-C6-C7-C8-C9	C6	5
C7	C3-C4-C6-C7	C1-C2-C3-C4-C5-C7-C8-C9	C3-C4-C7	3
C8	C3-C4-C5-C6-C7-C8	C1-C2- -C5- -C8-C9	C5-C8	4
C9	C1-C2-C3-C4-C5-C6-C7-C8-C9	C9	C9	1

Therefore, variable C6 is the fifth level variable. After identifying the first level variable(s), these variable(s) are removed and the set of inputs and outputs is calculated without considering the first level variables. The common set is identified and the variables that have the same common set as the input set are selected as the second level variables. Variables C1-C2 are the second level variables. Variables C5-C8 are the third level variables. Variables C3-C4-C7 are the fourth level variables. Variable C9 is the first level variable.

In the (ISM) model, the interrelationships and influences between criteria and the relationship between criteria at different levels are well illustrated, which leads to a better understanding of the decision-making space by managers. To determine the key criteria, the influence and dependency of the criteria are formed in the final access matrix. The power-dependency diagram for the variables under study is shown in Figure 1.

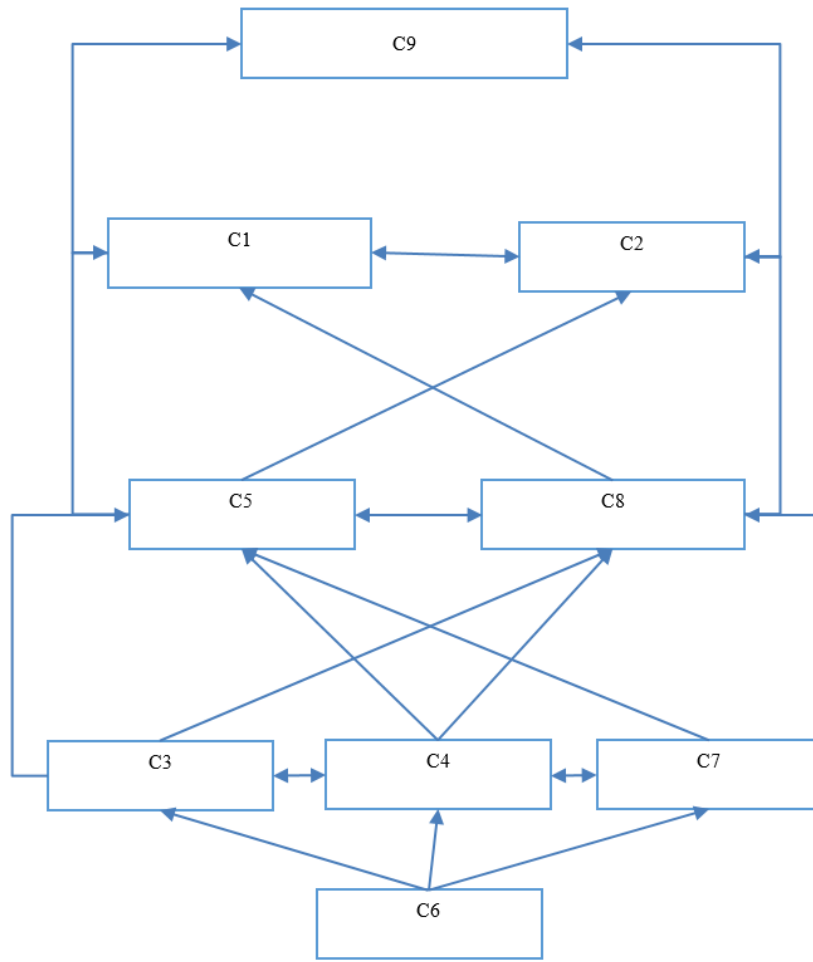


Figure 1. Interpretive Structural Model Influence-Dependency Analysis (MICMAC Diagram)

At the foundational level of the transformative cultural policy-making model, *organizational assessment and learning* operate as the primary drivers that determine the system’s adaptive capacity. Continuous learning enables institutions to reinterpret cultural challenges, update strategic assumptions, and develop the cognitive flexibility required for cultural rethinking. Alongside this, *creating capacities for cultural diplomacy and international communications* establishes the external interfaces through which cultural systems interact with global environments. These capacities expand the organization’s strategic horizon by integrating cross-cultural understanding, international partnerships, and knowledge flows. Together, these two components form the bedrock upon which higher-level cultural policy transformation is constructed.

Building upon the foundational drivers, *organizational cultural resilience* and *the strengthening of indigenous-national identity in a global context* create a stabilizing structural layer for policymaking. Organizational cultural resilience equips institutions with the ability to absorb shocks, withstand cultural disruptions, and maintain coherence while transitioning toward transformative policy directions. Meanwhile, reinforcing indigenous-national identity ensures that cultural policy transformation remains grounded in authentic values and historical continuity, even as it adapts to global cultural influences. These reinforcing elements preserve internal stability and provide cultural direction, enabling more dynamic participatory and innovative policy processes at higher levels.

The third level of the model emphasizes the mechanisms that mobilize stakeholders and strengthen collaborative governance. *Participatory policymaking and consensus-building* foster inclusive decision-making structures, ensuring that diverse cultural actors—ranging from policymakers and experts to communities and civil society—contribute to policy

formulation. Complementing this, *social participation and dynamism in cultural policymaking* stimulate public engagement, social energy, and cultural activism, which collectively enhance the legitimacy, responsiveness, and contextual relevance of cultural policies. These elements transform cultural policy from a top-down administrative function into a shared societal process that reflects collective aspirations.

At this level, the focus shifts to internal organizational processes that enable the workforce and institutional systems to actively engage in cultural transformation. *Motivating and inspiring employees in transformative policymaking* ensures that human capital becomes an active driver of cultural change rather than a passive executor of directives. Employee motivation fosters creativity, ownership, and commitment to cultural innovation. Complementarily, *innovation and transformation in cultural policy* provide the mechanisms through which new cultural ideas, policy frameworks, and strategic approaches can emerge and be institutionalized. These components act as catalytic forces that translate organizational learning, identity, and participation into practical and sustainable cultural reforms.

At the highest outcome level, the model culminates in *transformative culturalization in cultural policymaking*, where the combined effects of learning, resilience, participation, motivation, and innovation reshape the very logic of cultural governance. Transformative culturalization reflects a systemic shift in how culture is conceptualized, managed, and embedded within policymaking processes. It signifies a transition from reactive cultural management to proactive cultural rethinking, where cultural principles guide strategic decisions, policy orientations, and institutional behaviors. This final level embodies the overarching objective of the model: creating a culturally intelligent, learning-oriented, and globally engaged policymaking ecosystem capable of responding to contemporary cultural complexities.

Rank	Symbol	Direct Impact	Symbol	Effectiveness Direct	Symbol	Indirect Impact	Symbol	Effectiveness Direct
1	C6	2162	C9	1891	C6	3109	C9	2731
2	C1	1891	C3	1621	C1	2184	C3	1932
3	C2	1891	C7	1621	C2	2184	C7	1932
4	C4	1891	C8	1351	C4	2184	C8	1134
5	C5	1081	C5	1081	C5	168	C5	756
6	C3	540	C1	810	C3	84	C1	504
7	C7	540	C2	810	C7	84	C2	504
8	C8	0	C4	810	C8	0	C4	504
9	C9	0	C6	0	C9	0	C6	0

Table 12. Influence and dependency of research variables

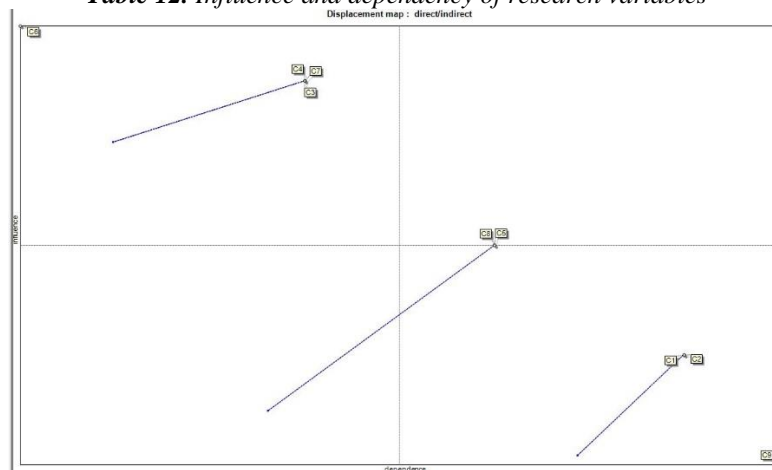


Figure 2. Influence and Dependency Graph (Mik-Mak Output)

Based on the dependence and influence of variables, a coordinate system can be defined and divided into four equal parts. In this study, a group of variables were placed in the driving subgroup, these variables have high influence and low dependence. The next group is dependent variables, which are in a way the results of the model development process and are less likely to form the basis for other variables. In this analysis, variables are divided into four groups: autonomous, dependent, linked (interface), and independent.

Autonomous variables: Autonomous variables have low dependence and driving power. These criteria are generally separated from the system because they have weak connections with the system. A change in these variables does not cause serious changes in the system.

Dependent variables: Dependent variables have strong dependence and weak guidance. These variables generally have high impact and little impact on the system.

Independent variables: Independent variables have low dependence and high guidance. In other words, high impact and low impact are the characteristics of these variables.

Linkage variables: Linkage variables have high dependence and high guidance. In other words, the impact and influence of these criteria are very high and any small change in these variables causes fundamental changes in the system.

Face validity was used to verify the validity of the questionnaire, and correlational validity and balanced grading were used to examine reliability.

Discussion

The aim of the present study was to identify a model of transformative cultural policy-making with an organizational learning and cultural rethinking approach based on an interpretive structural model. Nine indicators were identified. These indicators include: motivating and inspiring employees in transformative policy-making, organizational evaluation and learning, participatory policy-making and consensus, modernity and transformation in cultural policy, organizational cultural resilience, creating capacities for cultural diplomacy and international communications, social participation and dynamism in cultural policy-making, and strengthening and consolidating indigenous-national identity in a global context. The findings of the study showed that the model of transformative cultural policy-making in the context of Iranian cultural organizations is based on nine key indicators, each of which plays an effective role in realizing organizational learning, cultural rethinking, and sustainable transformation. The first indicator is motivating and inspiring employees in transformative policy-making. In cultural systems, human resources are not only the implementers of policies but also the creators and reflectors of cultural values. When policymakers can inspire and motivate, the ground is prepared for the emergence of creativity, ideation, and cultural participation. This finding is consistent with Schein's (2017) view that organizational culture transforms when leaders can arouse employees' intrinsic motivation through inspiration, meaning, and shared vision. The second indicator is organizational evaluation and learning, which is considered the basis of the dynamics in cultural policymaking. Organizational learning allows cultural institutions to learn from past experiences, identify policy errors, and incorporate continuous improvement mechanisms into decision-making. In such a framework, learning becomes a feedback loop that strengthens the organization's adaptability to cultural and social changes. According to Argyris and Schön (2018), double-loop learning allows organizations to rethink not only at the level of behavior, but also at the level of their fundamental values and assumptions; A crucial issue for transformative cultural policymaking. The third indicator is participatory and consensus-based policymaking, which emphasizes the importance of interaction and dialogue among cultural stakeholders. In a diverse society like Iran, cultural policy is effective when the voices of different social groups are heard and decisions are based on collective understanding and consensus. Fung (2015) shows in his "participatory governance" model that public participation increases the legitimacy of decisions and social acceptance of policies. As a result, participation in cultural policy is not only an executive

tool but also a key element in reproducing social trust and cultural solidarity. The fourth indicator is modernity and transformation in cultural policy, which indicates the need to move away from static patterns and focus on cultural innovation. Transformative cultural policy must be flexible and help create new values by utilizing the potential of technology, new media, and social creativity. Hesmondhalgh's (2019) research shows that cultural systems in the 21st century are successful when they can balance tradition and innovation and utilize modernity as an engine of cultural transformation.

The fifth indicator is organizational cultural resilience. In a world of continuous political, social, and technological transformation, cultural organizations need resilience to maintain their mission; that is, the ability to maintain identity, values, and functions in times of crisis or change. Lengnick-Hall et al. (2011) emphasize that organizational resilience is the result of learning from crises and the ability to rebuild cultural resources and meanings in unstable situations. This concept in cultural policymaking refers to the ability of a cultural system to adapt to change and transform threats into opportunities. The sixth indicator is building capacities for cultural diplomacy and international relations. In the era of globalization, cultural interaction between nations plays an effective role in national image-building and sustainable development. Cultural diplomacy allows countries to introduce their values to the world through cultural exchange, artistic production, and scientific cooperation, while learning from other cultures. Nye (2021) believes in the theory of “soft power” that culture is one of the most effective tools for positive influence in international relations and that countries should use it as the axis of their foreign policy. Therefore, transformative cultural policymaking should also consider international horizons in policy design. The seventh indicator is social participation and dynamism in cultural policymaking. Culture is a living phenomenon that is formed within society, not in administrative structures. Therefore, cultural policymaking should be designed in a way that transforms society from a passive audience to an active participant in the policymaking process. Bennett and Silva (2020) state that cultural dynamism is realized when citizens can play a role in creating meaning and shaping cultural symbols. Participatory cultural policymaking is the means to realize this dynamism. The eighth indicator is the strengthening and consolidation of indigenous-national identity in a global context. One of the fundamental challenges of cultural policymaking in Iran is how to deal with the process of globalization and its impact on national identity. Transformative cultural policy must, while taking advantage of global interactions, strengthen indigenous identity and Iranian-Islamic values. According to Smith (2017), cultural identity in the contemporary world is not a static thing but a dynamic and reflective process that is redefined through reflection and intercultural interaction. From this perspective, cultural policy-making must act in a way that both uses the potential of globalization and prevents cultural erosion. Finally, the ninth indicator, cultural dynamism and networking between institutions, refers to the connection between the components of the cultural system. Transformative policy-making requires continuous interaction between ministries, civil society organizations, artists, and the media so that knowledge, experience, and resources flow in a networked manner. This is consistent with Castells' (2011) view in “The Network Society” that cultural power in the digital age is formed through networking and inter-organizational synergy. In fact, transformative cultural policymaking cannot lead to collective learning and sustainable change without creating such links. Overall, the research results showed that achieving transformative cultural policymaking requires a change in the attitude of policymakers, a redefinition of the role of cultural institutions, and the institutionalization of organizational learning mechanisms and cultural rethinking. By linking human motivation, social participation, innovation, resilience, and national identity, this model can provide a basis for redesigning the country's cultural policies and moving towards a dynamic, learning, and forward-looking culture.

Cultural organizations can be understood as learning spaces in which knowledge, values, and creative practices are continuously produced, exchanged, and transformed. Learning space

theory emphasizes that learning is shaped not only by formal structures but also by the social, spatial, and relational environments in which individuals interact. In cultural organizations—such as museums, cultural centers, policy institutes, and creative institutions—these environments function as open, dialogic arenas where employees, artists, policymakers, and community members collaboratively construct meaning and experiment with new cultural ideas. Through shared experiences, dialogue, and reflective practices, these organizations stimulate collective learning processes that help redefine cultural priorities, reinterpret traditions, and co-create innovative cultural strategies.

Furthermore, by operating as learning spaces, cultural organizations provide the structural and cultural conditions necessary for creativity, experimentation, and policy innovation. Their flexible and participatory environments allow individuals to challenge existing cultural assumptions, test new approaches, and integrate diverse forms of knowledge, including indigenous, artistic, and global perspectives. Organizational learning becomes embedded in everyday interactions—such as brainstorming sessions, collaborative projects, feedback loops, and co-design activities—making the organization itself a dynamic platform for cultural innovation. This perspective underscores the idea that cultural policy transformation does not emerge solely from top-down directives but from the continuous, collective learning processes nurtured within these organizational learning spaces.

Conclusion

The findings of the present study showed that cultural policy-making in Iran requires a serious review of its theoretical foundations, structures, and decision-making processes in order to achieve sustainable cultural transformation. The results of the interpretive structural model indicated that the transformative cultural policy-making model is a dynamic and learning process that is based on nine key indicators: employee motivation and inspiration, organizational evaluation and learning, participatory policy-making and consensus, modernization and transformation in cultural policy, organizational cultural resilience, building capacities for cultural diplomacy and international relations, social participation and dynamism, strengthening and stabilizing indigenous-national identity, and cultural networking. These indicators, in interaction with each other, form a system of causal relationships that can underpin a change in attitude from prescriptive policy-making to transformative, participatory, and continuous learning-based policy-making. Data analysis showed that cultural organizations are able to play an effective role in cultural transformation when they institutionalize organizational learning and cultural rethinking mechanisms in their structure. Organizational learning increases the internal capacity of cultural institutions to adapt to changes, evaluate results, and transfer experiences, and prevents the repetition of past policy errors. On the other hand, cultural rethinking allows policymakers to think about the interaction between the cultural past and future, instead of focusing solely on preserving traditions, and to pave the way for the creation of new cultural meanings through critical rereading of values. In this framework, transformative cultural policymaking is not only a tool for managing culture but also a platform for collective learning and strengthening the cultural capital of society. From a theoretical perspective, the present study, by integrating the concepts of organizational learning, cultural rethinking, and cultural policymaking, provides an integrated framework for understanding the dynamics of cultural transformation in government organizations. This research showed that cultural transformation is not possible without a change in the policymaking paradigm, because cultural policies can only lead to real transformation when they are based on learning, participation, flexibility, and cultural dialogue. On the other hand, the findings imply that

promoting cultural resilience, cultural diplomacy, and indigenous-national identity is possible not through command and control, but through cultural empowerment, inspiration, and networking among cultural institutions. Thus, the presented model can be a theoretical basis for redesigning the country's cultural policymaking system in line with transformational goals. From a practical perspective, the results of this research can be important for the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, the Iranian Broadcasting Organization, the Cultural Heritage Organization, and other cultural policymaking institutions in the country. The implementation of this model can lead to a redefinition of the role of the government in the field of culture from "manager" to "facilitator of cultural learning." Also, establishing organizational learning mechanisms in cultural institutions improves decision-making, increases transparency, and promotes stakeholder participation. Creating institutional learning structures such as the "Cultural Knowledge Bank," the "Policy Feedback System," and the "Cultural Elite Network" are among the measures that can be effective in operationalizing this model. In summary, the transformative cultural policymaking model with an organizational learning and cultural rethinking approach provides an integrated framework for moving from passive policymaking to forward-looking and self-learning policymaking. This model can be used as a guide for cultural managers to improve the effectiveness of policies, increase intercultural interactions, and strengthen social trust. In other words, realizing cultural transformation in Iran requires a transition from the logic of "command" to the logic of "learning and dialogue"; a logic in which culture is not considered a tool for control, but a platform for growth, collaboration, and the creation of a common future. The recommendations based on the results are as follows: - It is suggested that the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance and other cultural institutions design a system for documenting experiences, exchanging knowledge between units, and continuously evaluating policies to establish a sustainable institutional learning cycle. - Forming an inter-institutional council with the presence of elites, artists, cultural managers, and civil society can provide a platform for open dialogue, analyzing cultural trends, and continuously reviewing policies. - Holding training courses in the field of transformational leadership, systemic thinking, and cultural diplomacy for managers and experts of cultural institutions can help create a learning and inspiring attitude. - It is suggested that international cultural interactions be expanded through artist exchanges, joint festivals, and global cultural projects to enhance intercultural learning while increasing the country's soft power. -It is suggested that in future research, the presented model be tested with quantitative approaches and in the context of other cultural institutions (such as the Iranian Broadcasting Organization, Education and Training, or local cultural institutions) to increase its generalizability. Also, examining the role of new technologies, artificial intelligence, and social media in the dynamics of cultural policymaking can help develop the model.

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The author declares that he has no competing financial interests or known personal relationships that would influence the report presented in this article.

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