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Original Research Article

A Comparative Study of Professional Competencies of HandiCrafts in a Few Countries and Explaining Its Neglected Aspects in the Iranian Undergraduate Curriculum*

Hossein Norouzi Gharagheshlagh¹, Iman Zakariaee Kermani^{**2}, Amadreza Nasr Esfahani³

1. Ph. D. Candidate, Art Research, Art University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran.

2. Assistant Professor, Art University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran.

3. Professor, Department of Educational Sciences, University of Esfahan, Isfahan, Iran.

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Abstract

Problem statement: Considering the importance and necessity of developing Handicrafts as a cultural-economic component, studying all aspects affecting it and determining a solution in this regard is necessary. Higher education in this field is attracting students at the undergraduate level since 1983 and has followed a fixed curriculum with the same approach. Because competencies and the need to consider them as a developer of curriculum is essential, it must be reviewed and evaluated in every field continuously and according to the current situation. Accordingly, the present study seeks to answer the question of what are the professional competencies of Iranian undergraduate Handicrafts that have received less attention in its curriculum. This study can be considered as an introduction and a solution to the need to pay attention and review the curriculum in this field.

Research objective: The main purpose of this study is to identify the Neglected aspects of professional competencies in the Iranian Handicrafts undergraduate curriculum.

Research method: The present research is of qualitative type and is done by documentary method and qualitative content analysis. The use of a comparative approach in this study is done with the objective of examining the professional competencies of Handicrafts in higher education in Iran, Turkey, Malaysia, India and England in the three dimensions of knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Conclusion: The results show that in order to promote the field of Handicrafts in Iran, in addition to the emphasis of the curriculum on technical skills and cultural and historical knowledge – which are themselves very important – other essential competencies are needed to be seriously considered with entrepreneurial, economic, and social approaches.

Keywords: *HandiCrafts, professional competency, higher education, curriculum.*

Introduction and statement of the problem

In relation to the concept of competency, two general approaches can be considered for the intellectual

foundations of this field. The first school claims that knowledge and skill signify competency, and the second intellectual foundation considers effective performance as one of the important and main characteristics of competency. But the consensus of experiences and opinions indicates that the concept of competency is more supported where knowledge and skills are recognized equal with other

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** Corresponding author: i.zakariaee@aui.ac.ir, +989131268863

characteristics (attitude, habit, behavior, personality and ability) (Hedayati, 2016, 28). Accordingly, competency is the context of action that enables a person to use its components (knowledge, skills, and attitudes) that are relevant to his or her profession for effective application in the face of action (Kein 1992, quoting from Jamebozorg, 2012, 18). Ability and willingness to use personal knowledge, skills and characteristics to professionally perform tasks in a particular field and the manifestation of independence and creativity in solving problems and a sense of responsibility for the results of the activity (Zimnaya, 2003, 32). The concept of professional competency is derived from the definition of competency that arises specifically in a certain range of a profession. In other words, when competencies are defined in a particular profession and field of specialization, they create the conditions for performance improvement, methods and activities, which are referred to as professional competencies. Quality and competency in each profession has its own definition that distinguishes that profession from another and forms its essence and nature and organizes its professional competency (Mahdavi Hazaveh, Maleki, Mehr Mohammadi & Abbaspour, 2016, 24).

Professional competency behaves as a tool for professional activities, with the aim of solving a number of problems, especially in the acquisition of knowledge, which is done systematically and thoughtfully (Budkeev, Kiryushina & Shokorova, 2016, 3396). Professional competency is a set of integrated basic knowledge, summarized skills, abilities, significant professional and personal characteristics, high level of adaptation, culture and mastery, creative approach to organizing activities, and tendency to continuous self-progress that occurs in a specialized field (Kenzhebekov, 2004, 178). Often in art education, professional competencies have to cover many areas to meet the needs. Therefore, extensive research should be done on them and in compliance with the changing conditions in each society (Haanstra, 2013). When the objective is to “improve the quality of art education”, in the

first step, different types of research on artistic competencies and skills are required (ibid.).

The active developments of modern society have led to a change in professional education in the field of art. The formation of a purposeful and objective-spatial environment in the modern world and its coordination with the environment, creates new demands on the quality of art education with the aim of developing creative thinking and mastering design, technology, etc. In these situations, the most important task of the art education system is to become a fully professional education in the field of specialization, with global integrity and to able to solve social problems by understanding human beings in their cultural environment and diverse cultures. The priority in educating future art students should be the formation of professional competencies that are necessary for artistic, creative and research activities in this field (Budkeev et al., 2016, 3395). In an age when constant change play a role, crafts have become a creative economy and a new pattern of work for manufacturers and other experts. Crafts are evolving in response to the world around them, and while maintaining their core values and purpose, they are responding to economic, cultural, technological and social changes. Up-to-date knowledge and strong data are crucial to support the craft sector. A number of salient issues need to be addressed, including the value of technical knowledge skills and knowledge in an economy in which skills play a key role. The impact of digital technology in “craftsman”, which is a practical requirement, the growing need for environmental sensitivity, and re-evaluating various aspects of professional life are components that must be measured in the professional competencies of the crafts.

Yair (2011) believes that more professional development is achieved through formal education opportunities. The application of technical and theoretical skills and knowledge to make progress in new services or to create the focus needed for professional guidance in works in the field of crafts comes from higher education (Burns, Gibbon,

Rosemberg & Yair, 2012, 2). To improve education in crafts, there are professional fields derived from work, business, and the culture of life. Conscious existence, self-motivation, aesthetics, customer service, entrepreneurial skills, principles of sustainable and healthy business activity, explain the pivots of professional competencies in higher education in this field. In other words, the objectives of sustainable cultural, social, economic and environmental development express the main approach of education in this field (Lindroos & Ketonen, 2013, 8; Garber, 2012). Students in this field must acquire the skills to learn how to think and act creatively and intelligently as an artist, craftsman and designer. Respect for crafts, innovation and development, and understanding of the creative and cultural industries that enrich their lives are from key issues in the face of professional competency (Atkinson, 2010). One of the final and emphasized goals of higher education is to create appropriate conditions and structures in order to acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes that can be provided to learners in the form of competencies (Mohammadi, Naseri jahromi & Shahraki Mieini, 2012, 84). The present research seeks to identify the neglected aspects of the crafts curriculum in Iran at the undergraduate curriculum by taking a comparative look at the issue of recognizing the professional competencies of Iran, Turkey, Malaysia, India and the United Kingdom. Accordingly, the research questions are posed as follows: What is the approach of selected countries to professional competencies in higher education of crafts? Also, what are the most important professional competencies of the Iranian crafts undergraduate course that is less considered in the curriculum of this course? It should be noted that so far there has been no evidence of research on these competencies in Iran and such important issues are neglected.

Research background

According to England (2018), there are several basic and influential components related to the development of professional skills of craft students in higher

education that can be transferred and expanded. He states that each and a combination of them can organize and explain the teaching methods of this field. England knows some of the components, such as traditional skills and technology, communication with the community and the outside world, business and learning styles, to be effective in the formation and development of competencies. In another study, England (2107) addresses the economics of higher education in relation to crafts. With regard to the British higher education approaches to economic income, England states that today, to meet this need, it is necessary not to emphasize only technical skills in craft education. The knowledge needed to innovate and join crafts in creative industries will expand the economic fields of the field. National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD) (2019) states that Art and Design is a profession that requires talent, knowledge, skill and guidance, but more work is needed to function as an efficient student force. Talent without skills, inspiration without knowledge, and creativity without technique have little potential for development. Hence, this scientific institution has examined competencies for most fields of art, and especially crafts, in a structure consisting of knowledge and skills, general competencies and basic competencies. Sergey Mikhailovich Budkeev et al. (2016) in an article dealt with the formation of professional competencies of design students through indigenous arts and crafts. The components of national indigenous culture play an essential role in forming the design of artistic objects and its continuity in the development of various fields of material and artistic culture. The integrated education of designers and intra-group communication of disciplines in the curriculum changes the learning process and makes it more effective than before. The formation of professional competency should be based on knowledge of labor laws in global, national and regional arts and crafts, advanced artistic perception and development of practical skills in production planning of a real nature. Lindroos & Ketonen (2013) in a study examined the professional

competencies required in Finland crafts. In this research, after explaining the role, competency issues and also describing the competencies and models, the professional competencies required in crafts are expressed in the form of a title and detailed instructions for their diagnosis and evaluation is expressed. Most of these competencies are concentrated in the field of practical and skill knowledge and fall into three general categories of: product design, product manufacturing, production and operations of a handicrafts business. Haanstra (2013) in a research on competency patterns in art education states a report of researches from the council of European Network for Visual Literacy (ENVIL) that for the analysis of relationships and differences and using the results to design new models, we need descriptive researches in the form of international surveys of the competency models available in different countries. The present research, by respecting the competencies as a developer and a leader in education, examined it based on the experiences and outputs of several countries.

Research methodology

The research method used in this research is qualitative method of documentary analysis and comparative study. In the documentary method, by systematic and regular use of textual data, the researcher tries to discover, extract, classify and evaluate materials related to the research subject (Sadeqi Fasai & Erfanmanesh, 2015). This method is used for a wide range of sources and potentially has a good cost-effectiveness level and also results in access to background data (Jamali Mahmoudi, 2011). Research population is the collection of research documents, regulations, instructions and curriculum outputs related to the competencies of higher education in crafts obtained from the websites of universities, institutes and research centers of the chosen countries. The selection of study samples in each country is done according to their activities and researches related to competency in crafts. Based on this, sampling is done in a purposeful and theoretical

way. In targeted sampling, environments, individuals, or events are consciously chosen for important information that they can provide and that cannot be obtained from other choices (Maxwell, 1997; quoted from Mohammadpour, 2013, 32). Finally, 9 sources (universities and research institutes, focusing on documents and curricula) from Turkey, Malaysia, India and the United Kingdom were chosen. In relation to Iran, the undergraduate curriculum in this field was used as the most important source and educational document to analyze the competencies. The data collection form was used as the main tool in data collection. Due to the nature of research, data analysis in the form of qualitative content analysis was performed in two stages of: 1) identifying the general approaches of countries in craft education and their main and pivotal competencies in crafts, and 2) explaining professional competencies in the structure of the three components of knowledge, skills and attitudes for each country. In the next step, and with a comparative view, the general approaches of the studied countries were described and evaluated in relation to the competencies of crafts, and finally, those competencies that are considered among most countries and are more important were introduced as neglected competencies in the Iranian crafts higher education curriculum.

Introducing study samples

The three countries of Malaysia, India and Turkey, each have some commonalities in the historical, cultural, economic and religious fields with Iran. India, Malaysia and Iran are among the developing countries in terms of economic status. Malaysia and Turkey are two large countries with a predominantly Muslim population that have religious similarities with Iran. From the perspective of art history, India and Turkey have had influences on and were influenced from Iranian culture and art in different historical periods. In particular, Turkey, was selected as one of the study examples as a country that has many historical and artistic similarities with Iran. India derives a significant portion of its economy and

per capita income from crafts and exports and is one of the most successful countries in this field. Hence, it has made extensive efforts to maintain and produce it. In all four countries, as a rich identity and cultural component remained from the past, crafts has a new cultural-economic significance in the current situation for these countries. The United Kingdom is also a developed country and a leader in the development of higher education and the use of a variety of education methods in the arts and crafts. The formation and activity of art movements, and especially its most important, the Arts and Crafts Movement, and the presence of intellectual and philosophical foundations in relation to arts and indigenous arts and its current path in this country, are from important points in choosing this study sample. On the other hand, the importance of this country on its crafts and cultural products and how to deal with traditional art and how to expand and promote it, may also provide solutions in the process of improving the arts in education. In relation with Malaysia, in addition to the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), the documents and research of the Development of Skills Development, which deals with competencies in the general field of crafts, is reviewed. In the Higher Education Department of India, to obtain the competencies, documents and research of the Government College of Art and Craft, Calcutta, and the crafts research institute of Design Innovation and Craft Resource Centre at CEPT University, is examined. From Turkey, the Turkish traditional arts curriculum at Marmara University and Mimar Sinan Guzel Sanatlar Üniversitesi is examined. From the UK, in addition to the University of the Arts London, there is also a look at the approaches and research of the UK Crafts Council. Apart from the above-mentioned cases, which have dealt with research, documents and curricula of various universities and institutes, articles that have specifically dealt with issues related to competencies in the crafts of the mentioned countries are evaluated. In relation to Iran, since no research is done on the competencies related to this field, the curriculum approved by the Ministry

of Science in the field of crafts for undergraduate (1987) was chosen as the most important source and document for analyzing the competencies. This curriculum is currently active and used in all universities that accept students in the field of crafts (Table 1).

Findings: Explaining the professional competencies of crafts in study samples

- **Iran:** The root and beginning of formal craft education in Iran should be sought in the late Qajar era and in the three important schools of “Dar al-Fonun”, “Sanaye Mustazarfeh” and “Sanaye Ghadimieh”. The beginning of the activity of Mustazarfeh School of crafts under the direction of “Kamal Al-Molk” in 1910 was a turning point in the promotion of national arts and crafts in Iran. The crafts arts that were educated in this school included: carpet weaving, golden embroidery, pen holder making, cover making, illuminated manuscript, khatam making, vitreous enameling, engraving, steel carving and gold carving. In 1930, in order to revive the national arts of Iran, Fine Arts School was established (Houshiar, 2011, 280). After the Islamic Revolution, the most important developments in higher education in this field is the development and approval of an undergraduate curriculum in crafts in 1987. This approval was compiled in the art department with the objective of reviving, strengthening and guiding Islamic art, culture, and ethics in the field of Iranian crafts and has sought to protect the continuity of traditional Iranian arts (Kafili, 2015, 178). The important point in this regard is the current activity of this curriculum in Iranian universities. Therefore, it is very important to do formulated researches related to the approach of this field and the required competencies and to review its curriculum. What can be identified as one of the objectives of this field and the overall curriculum in relation to competencies is: “Emphasis on the historical knowledge of Iranian Islamic art and culture and technical skills in most crafts” which is generally a comprehensive view for the growing of experts in this field. In other words, the

Table 1. Study samples and reasons for the choice. Source: Authors.

Country	Reasons for the choice as a study sample	University, institute or research department
Iran	Rich crafts and finding a way to develop higher education in this field	Approved undergraduate curriculum for crafts
Turkey	Historical, cultural, artistic and religious commonalities / Paying attention to the past tradition / Giving importance to developing and promoting art and its economy	Mimar Sinan Üniversitesi / Traditional Crafts and Design Research Center of Marmara University
Malaysia	Giving importance to economic development / Being a developing country / Religious commonwealth	International Islamic University / Department of Skills Development
India	Success in promoting crafts and exports / Presence of novel approaches in education / Historical and artistic commonalities	Government College of Art and Craft, Calcutta / Design Innovation and Craft Resource Centre at CEPT University

“cultural approach and protection of past traditions” is of high importance (Table 2).

- **Turkey:** John Dwey has been lecturing on education in Turkey for several months since 1924 and has provided several reports on the education system. Dwey’s philosophy of pragmatism was very influential on the art education system at the elementary level and provided the basis for such an approach in contemporary art education (Ozsoy, 2012). However, in relation to traditional arts and what is observed in the current situation of higher education in this country, approaches to preserving the position of tradition and traditional production processes in universities have become important. According to studies conducted related to the professional competencies of students in these fields at Marmara University and Mimar Sinan, much importance is given to knowledge, aesthetics and methods of art production by traditional method. On the other hand, the process of studying and applying these arts in accordance with today’s conditions, training designers for workshops and other fields of application is also considered. The interaction between the fields of traditional arts is also one of the things that can be seen in the education of these universities in the field of traditional arts. For example, in the art of cover making, in addition to historical and technical knowledge of traditional construction methods, some perspectives on the modern functions of this art are also mentioned. The formal education of this country uses research methods to solve problems that hinder the development of traditional arts (Mimar Sinan

Guzel Sanatlar Üniversitesi, 2019). Accordingly, “protection and development of traditional arts with a scientific approach and emphasis on innovation and job creation and promotion of non-technical competencies”, are among the pivots that form the model of competencies in this field. The most important competencies identified in the studies are: knowledge of culture and aesthetics of classical art, traditional technical skills, interaction in traditional arts, innovation and job creation, documentation and research (ibid.); (Table 3).

- **Malaysia:** As a developing Islamic country that in addition to strengthening its national and international economy, pays attention to the infrastructure of its education system and seeks to repair, reform and develop them. Malaysia is one of the leading countries in Asia in crafts and its products and seeks to dominate the global craft markets. Crafts in Malaysia are given serious attention for economic development since 1951, and in 1980 it reached a level of prosperity in production and its expansion in different parts of the country. The Ministry of National and Rural Development, which is the main developer and supporter of crafts in Malaysia, has played an important role in this process so far (Redzuan & Aref, 2011, 257). In general, Malaysian government centers have a good effect on the quantitative and qualitative process of craft education. In Malaysia, general policies related to crafts are defined based on job position; and the competencies of each job related to crafts are stated. For example, several areas are identified such

Table 2. Professional competencies of Iranian crafts undergraduate course in three components of knowledge, skills and attitude. Source: Authors, based on the Analysis of General Characteristics, Curriculum and Titles of Undergraduate Courses in Crafts, 1987.

Knowledge component	Skills component	Attitude component
Culture, civilization and works of art of Islamic lands / History of art in different cultures / Knowing traditional Iranian arts / Knowing different patterns in crafts / Knowledge of design and its relationship with human soul and body / Knowing objects design in Islamic civilization / Knowing traditional materials in crafts / Evolution of crafts in other countries / Knowing contemporary art disciplines / Wisdom and beauty in Islamic art.	Relative technical skill in most craft arts / Skill of understanding visual elements / Skill of drawing / Photography skill / Skills in ideation of nature / Skill in drawing traditional patterns / Skill of research in arts, artists and methods of making arts in the past / Skill in presenting research / Skill in knowing and using materials and tools / Skill in repairing and preserving works of art	Protecting and expanding cultural knowledge and traditional arts of Iran./Respecting tradition and preserving traditional production methods./Understanding the general spirit of traditional arts. \Understanding the place of crafts in today's life and promoting it.

Table 3. Professional competencies of Turkish crafts undergraduate course in the three components of knowledge, skills and attitude. Source: Authors, based on Turkish Traditional Arts Curriculum Analysis, Marmara University, 2016; Qualifications of the Traditional Art Curriculum of Cover Making of Mimar Sinan University, 2107.

Knowledge component	Skills component	Attitude component
Awareness of the culture and aesthetics of classical art at specialized level / knowledge of consulting about traditional arts and design materials / Awareness of interdisciplinary interaction related to the field of specialization in arts and crafts / knowledge of art history specific to the field of art	Mastery of methods, techniques and design process / Ability to detect and create original designs / Awareness of research and documentation methods / skill of evaluation of sub-disciplines related to the specialized field / Skills of analysis and interpretation of art and possible problems in that field / Skill of critical thinking / Skills in the protection and repair of crafts / Collection, interpretation, application and transfer of data related to the specialized field and action in accordance with social, scientific, cultural and moral values.	Tendency to acquire cultural knowledge /Respect for tradition and the tendency to change and update it./Tendency to promote craft knowledge / interested in solving problems in crafts

as: management and supply of craft raw materials, production of craft products (which is divided into sub-categories of craftsman, designer, workshop supervisor, and production manager), quality assessment and marketing. Skills and competencies appropriate for each of these areas are defined (Department of Skills Development, 2013). Formal education in this country, with structural differences, also deals with craft education with a modern look. In universities and educational institutions, the term Art & Design has replaced the word crafts, which indicates that crafts in formal education are far from the traditional method. In higher education, crafts are seen as a creative art and try to train students who have the ability to create new opportunities in crafts. In university education, crafts approach the applied arts in which aspects of innovation is emphasized. Following some developed countries, Malaysia focused on “creativity and innovation and reform of production and manufacturing methods in crafts” and

dealt with its economic and entrepreneurial fields. Accordingly, the main pattern of craft competencies in Malaysia is based on “entrepreneurship, economics and creativity” and its most important competencies include: design knowledge in applied arts and its development, practical skills, skills and social responsibilities, values, attitudes and professionalism, communication, leadership and team skills, problem solving and scientific skills of information management and lifelong learning skills, management skills and entrepreneurship (International Islamic University Malaysia, 2019); (Table 4).

- **India:** In the higher education of this country, crafts are also welcomed and given serious attention. What can be said about the general process of educating this field and by analyzing the competencies of this field in the sources is that higher education and university have explained a clear vision for achieving their goals in the field of crafts. Attention to creativity and innovation and the environment, relying on the beliefs,

identity and cultural and indigenous needs of society, forms the path of artistic creations of students with a different approach to discovering and understanding indigenous identity and traditional values of India (Houshiar, 2011, 74). In addition to preserving the tradition and learning it, the university has chosen methods to promote crafts that are different from what the community outside the university is engaged in. In general, crafts in academic centers are considered as a thought-provoking and research-centered practice, and in the field of production and practical work, a very wide relationship with design and interior design topics is found. In higher education centers, the objective is to, in addition to honoring traditional art and studying it in depth, use the methods of its application in accordance with today’s conditions and act in a way to develop it. Therefore, research teams of students and professors are constantly present outside the classroom and in traditional production centers, and the stages of learning and ideation take place in those places. On the other hand, the constant presence of traditional professors in universities and holding advanced workshops for ideation, correction and updating of the arts is also an important educational process in this field. In general, by creating ideas that take place in the university, the craftsman also uses the optimal process of design, materials and application in his art and causes its development, the foundation of which is the result of scientific studies of university

centers. Craft education in higher education of India seeks to discover the true capacity of crafts in innovative products to empower the productive community (Mehta & Katiyar, 2007). The most important characteristics that students of this field have as essential competencies include: “Theoretical and technical knowledge of traditional art, knowledge and design skills, field study and helping to create extensive employment and innovation and new applications based on culture and tradition (Thakkar & Shah, 2010); (Table 5).

- **England:** Crafts are used in higher education texts (content outlines and specifications of the program) primarily in relation to the development of specialized skills. In fact, few courses at different universities, despite disciplinary links, promote their relationship with crafts (in the traditional sense). In general, in expressing the concept and position of crafts, it is again preferred to use terms such as “design”, “designer maker”, “creative practice” and “making”. It seems that despite the efforts to revitalize and make it effective in the university, there is a general elimination of the word and subjectivity of “crafts” in its traditional sense, in order to improve courses in higher education. On the other hand, the inclusion of the title of crafts in the crafts produced of this field shows its cultural and commercial value (England, 2108, 6). In general, and given the institutional ideologies and educational approaches in the England,

Table 4. Professional competencies of Malaysian crafts undergraduate course in the three components of knowledge, skills and attitude. Source: Authors, Based on Applied Arts Curriculum Analysis, International Islamic University of Malaysia, 2019; Skills Development Department Job Analysis Document, 2013.

Knowledge component	Skills component	Attitude component
Knowledge of materials and quality control and troubleshooting / Knowing supervisory organizations / Knowledge of product design and knowing original designs / Knowledge of the operation of various devices and equipment and the latest technology / Knowledge of desired production processes / Knowledge of planning and organizing the use of human force of financial resources / Knowledge of OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Act) / Knowledge of SIRIM quality standards / Basic knowledge in mathematics / Knowledge about the process of packaging and product delivery to the customer / Knowledge of marketing and customs regulations	Technical skills: Skill of knowing materials and preparation / Specialized skill in the field of production (material use, design and production skill, role transfer, working with various tools and equipment) / Testing and quality control skill / Skill of knowing new sources of raw materials Soft skills: Interpersonal skill / Problem solving skill / Communication and negotiation skill / Analytical skill / Supervisory and managerial skill / English language mastery / Computer skill / Ability to plan for the production design	Tendency to capability and efficiency and preserve it. Customer-centered approach. Entrepreneurial and strategic thinking. Capital creation and financial value creation. Maintaining and creating superior quality in works. Local, national, and international interaction. Belief in continuous and sustainable learning. Considering and respecting the rights of stakeholders of crafts.

Table 5. Professional competencies of Indian crafts undergraduate course in the three components of knowledge, skills and attitude. Source: Authors, based on The Analysis of Documents published by the Center for Design Innovation and Craft Initiative, 2019; Objectives of Pottery and Ceramics, Calcutta State University of Arts and crafts, 2019.

Knowledge component	Skills component	Attitude component
Psychological knowledge and understanding of consumer needs / Knowledge of various forms of folk arts / Knowledge of craft production methods, products, materials (from traditional to modern), and technology used / Experimental knowledge of materials in achieving new products / Knowledge of ecology, sociology and structural skills to better understand the crafts of a particular area / Knowledge of the relationship between crafts, culture and technology.	Skill in combining crafts with other arts (including interior design and industrial design). Skill in different crafts practices. Skill in research and field visits. Communication skill with a large community of manufacturers. Skill in study planning and designing. Skill of developing skills. The process of strategic thinking. Creativity and innovation skills.	Understanding deep goals in crafts. Giving importance to thinking trend in the study of crafts / Learning crafts beyond the workshop environment / Gaining experience and terminology from traditional, cultural and lifestyle environments of the master. Belief in continuous and sustainable learning. Giving importance to and respect for the craft producing community.

the common themes that are emphasized are: mastering “thinking through making”, “intellectualizing the craft process”. Developing specific technical skills, emphasizing on new technology combined with traditional techniques and digital production and design processes, developing transferable skills, communication skills, and the ability to communicate ideas effectively with the audience are the most important aspects of competencies (ibid.; UK Crafts Council, 2104). At Royal College London, for example, it is stated that ceramics and glass are not merely a fixed set of materials, but a place for discourse, where cultural, social, personal, historical and aesthetic concerns intersect. It is believed that activities in this field are rooted in having an applied art. In this “application”, process is defined as skills, understanding of materials, and development of ideas through “making” (University of the Arts London, 2019). Currently, 64% of craft actives in the England have a bachelor’s degree in crafts, indicating the advancement of craft higher education centers in the England (Burns et al., 2012, 195); (Table 6).

In order to understand the approach and the pivots of competencies of crafts in different countries, it is necessary to make a comparison of their general pivots. What is stated in the above texts and specific to each country, is studied and some categories of the text are extracted according to their external and internal meaning, in a way that show the general approach of countries to competencies (Table 7). In appropriation with their educational conditions, the

studied countries have fundamentally changed the process and approach of craft education and have made the pivots of “development and efficiency” a priority in the educational process. According to the extracted competencies, Iran emphasizes the preservation of traditional methods in crafts, which will be expressed in the next section. Turkey has also, to some extent, preserved its traditional view of art education and, at the same time, emphasized on “promoting the traditional arts and the need to use scientific methods” in keeping alive “employment, production and expansion” under various branches. Accordingly, the competencies raised in this country can be considered more closely related to what is educated in Iran. But the presence of essential competencies and the emphasis on “economic and efficiency” aspects make it distinctive. Malaysia also offers a wide range of knowledge and skills in crafts. Competencies that show a leading approach to crafts and provide comprehensive knowledge of the field. What is inferred from the competencies in this country more than anything else is the strengthening and importance of the “entrepreneurial and economic aspects” approach. Combining with modern conditions and creating a modern business environment and changing the position of traditional products to up-to-date products has a fundamental presence in the education of this country.

Competencies in India’s higher education indicate that “the presence of purposeful research in the development of crafts” plays a crucial role. India’s

Table 6. Professional competencies of the British crafts undergraduate course in the three components of knowledge, skills and attitude. Source: Authors, based on The Analysis of the Pottery and Ceramics Curriculum of London University of the Arts, 2019; UK Craft Council Documents, 2012, 2010.

Knowledge component	Skills component	Attitude component
Awareness of sustainable development and ecological effect of the field / Cultural and social history / Art history and contemporary art topics / Objects and their related works and concepts / Contemporary lifestyle and its cultural significance / Critical and historical studies / Knowledge in the field of market and community	<p>Technical Skills:</p> <p>Skill in designing and making unique objects / Skill in traditional methods of producing and promoting a work / Skill in combining thinking, creativity and technique at an advanced level / Ability to use materials, processes and environments to transfer ideas into practice / Skill of advanced research methods and its application in works / digital design / Knowing of foreign examples / Holding exhibitions and skill in teamwork / Application of new technology.</p> <p>Professional skills:</p> <p>Guiding one’s studies by setting goals, managing time and resources effectively / Skill of lecturing and discussing about the intellectual and technical process of the work produced / Development of communication skills / Skill to participate in industry projects through competitions / Ability to carry out participatory projects / Improving and developing skills / Skill in relating theoretical knowledge to practical work / Documenting one’s work / Marketing and customer relationship skill / Costing and pricing skill / Self-reflection and understanding of opportunities in a creative economy.</p>	Crafts are a place for discourse and cultural, social, personal, historical and aesthetic concerns / Understanding the process, skills, materials and development of ideas through “application” and “making” / Educating is a creative communication to examine and solve social, cultural and material challenges / Being a creative thinker and being able to collaborate with a global industry / Active, thoughtful and responsible member of a community / Creating a creative identity or visual and innovative language / Intellectualizing the crafts process / Having a characteristics of: Leadership, hard work, independence, risk-taking, creativity, originality and innovation / Understanding professional identity (Who am I as a profession?)

university community has taken an approach to educating crafts that is different from what exists outside of universities and larger craft production environments. The purpose of university education is to change Indian crafts, but with a scientific and completely purposeful view, which preserves the cultural and indigenous aspects of the products and respects them. In general, India’s higher education sees its future goal in “greater relationship with the traditional productive community” in order to expand the appropriate changes in their products. Crafts find a different function and identity in India’s higher education and are more closely linked to interior design. This point is reflected in the results of students’ projects as well as the emphasis on competencies that indicate the new composition and application of crafts and its design process. England also has a very creative and modern approach to educating this field, and in addition to extensive changes in crafts, it also places great emphasis on its distinction from machine-made and mass-produced products. Craft education in this country is a “conceptual and practical” element that aims to express some issues related to society by an active and knowledgeable member of

society. In addition, the position of entrepreneurship and acquisition of income and customer-centered approaches are also considered important in its education.

Neglected professional competencies in Iranian crafts curriculum

Competencies are among the essential developmental components of a discipline, university, and educational system that determine their path to development and need to be systematically reviewed and evaluated. According to studies, the focus higher education of Iran’s crafts is on traditional approaches and technical skills to art and its promotion and having historical and cultural knowledge in this field. In general, it can be said that the view of higher education of Iran’s craft continues to emphasize the development of technical and artistic skills, which to some extent covers most of the arts in the field of crafts. The lack of competencies and abilities that are appropriate to the current situation and in line with the development of crafts from a social, economic and entrepreneurial perspective is quite obvious. Foroughinia, Sohrabi Nasirabadi & Mohammadi (2019) recently stated in

a study that teaching crafts in Iranian universities has prioritized cultural attitudes and educating people in the service of culture. Recently, in Iran, following the educational developments and economic approaches in technical education of the secondary education, is considered that this attitude should be extended to university levels in order to develop specialized technical knowledge and skills, so as to guide the student in order to create and develop employment in accordance with the knowledge and tastes of the day. Paying attention to the promotion of non-technical competencies in the undergraduate program in the field of crafts can lead to appropriate achievements (p. 36). In general, the current curriculum does not emphasize non-technical competencies and essential practical skills required in order to preserve and develop past traditions with new methods, and only mentions learning technical and artistic skills on a large and scattered scale of traditional arts.

According to the obtained results, it is possible to consider the degree of movement of different countries towards change and creation of new approaches in craft education according to the competencies. Iran can be considered more committed than other countries to the traditions of the past, their preservation and repetition. In the next stage, in addition to preserving the tradition, Turkey has a view tailored to the needs of today’s life in its education. India is also trying to communicate extensively with the productive community and promote study approaches and updated experiences used in the educational environment in the community. Malaysia, considering the developing movement of the country, also has a completely economic and entrepreneurial

view of crafts and considers the presence of important knowledge in this subject. England also considers crafts to be of an intellectual, scientific and practical identity whose economic aspect is also important and crafts in this country are considered as “creative industries” and various components of knowledge and skills are active in this approach.

Given the above, and data analysis, some competencies focusing on the three components of knowledge, skills and attitudes have the most applications and frequency among most of the countries studied. It seems that these components have an important place in the field of craft education in selected countries and it is necessary to pay attention to them in order to develop crafts and new educational approaches. Therefore, by analyzing and classifying the competencies of all the studied countries, their common points and components are identified as what has been neglected in Iranian craft education at the undergraduate level and are introduced in [Table 8](#).

Conclusion

The experiences of the studied countries show that each of them looks at the discussion of professional competencies in crafts from one angle. According to the first question of the research, general approaches to competency can be expressed for each of them: Iran with a cultural approach and with criteria such as preserving tradition and emphasizing technical skills educates this field. In addition to this view, Turkey has also taken into account the economic needs and the promotion of tradition. Malaysia has prioritized the economic and entrepreneurial approach. Based on research and continuous

Table 7. Comparison of the main pivots and approaches to professional competencies in higher education of the selected countries. Source: Authors.

Country	Main pivots of professional competencies
Iran	Preservation of traditional art and Iranian Islamic Culture, technical skills in traditional arts (cultural attitude)
Turkey	Preservation and development of traditional arts, innovation and job creation and promotion of essential competencies (cultural, economic attitude)
Malaysia	Entrepreneurship, economics and creativity, skills and social responsibilities and essential skills (economic attitude)
India	Entrepreneurship and broad employment, innovation based on culture and tradition, development of essential skills (cultural, economic, social attitude)
England	Entrepreneurship, conscious making, traditional skills, new technology, development of essential skills (cultural, economic, social attitude)

communication with the traditional productive society, India has simultaneously achieved cultural, economic and social approaches, and England, by placing crafts among the creative industries, simultaneously emphasizes social, economic and cultural issues. However, commonalities can also be found in some general criteria among countries. Cultural importance can be considered as the main common aspect of all the studied countries in the discussion of competency. In the three countries of Iran, India and Turkey, what can be mentioned about preserving the characteristics of tradition and cultural manifestations in crafts is the use of different educational methods and different components of knowledge and skills. The difference in method has led to different performance and results in these countries, which in general India has a better position in this regard. According to the definitions and capacities that the field of crafts has for each of the countries, the second component and approach should be considered in its economic and entrepreneurial perspective, which is important in most examples of face-to-face studies. In relation with the component of economics and entrepreneurship and its presence in higher education, it is clearly observed that all countries except Iran have seriously considered this principle in the competencies of this field. India, Malaysia, Turkey and England have chosen criteria that have strengthened the required entrepreneurial and economic competencies in the field. The absence of this important aspect in the higher education of Iranian crafts is a turning point for the necessity of conducting codified researches and reaching

appropriate models of competency in promoting entrepreneurial and economic components in the higher education of this field. Also, the third important approach should be considered on its social aspects. India and England pay close attention to the social aspects of crafts and consider its presence as an expressive and influential component in society. Accordingly, in order to answer the second question of the research, which considers the neglected aspects of competencies in Iran, it can be stated that in addition to the emphasis of the curriculum on technical skills, cultural and historical knowledge, which is very important and is one of its strengths in Iranian university education, it is necessary to consider the competencies mentioned in Table 8 as well. In this table, entrepreneurial, economic and social approaches are described in the three components of knowledge, skills and attitudes, which have been neglected in the Iranian curriculum. Finally, crafts in the current situation, in addition to cultural and identity issues, can create a very high capacity from an economic and entrepreneurial perspective. Therefore, there is a need for changes in the field of competencies and the process of teaching and learning in higher education in this field. Comparing the results of the present study with the achievements of the research background, it can be said that the results are a set of successful experiences of several countries with different patterns, which also affects the transnational approaches to Iranian craft education.

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Table 8. Neglected professional competencies in the Iranian crafts undergraduate curriculum. Source: Authors.

Knowledge component	Skills component	Attitude component
Knowledge of materials and quality control / Knowledge of product design (product development) / Knowledge of sustainable development / Understanding and supporting consumer needs / Interdisciplinary interaction in crafts / Contemporary lifestyle awareness / Entrepreneurship, marketing and knowing capacities of the field of crafts / Awareness of occupational safety	Problem solving skill / Communication and negotiation skill / Creative and critical thinking skills / Creativity and innovation skill / Skill in planning and creating a production plan according to customer wish / Computer 3-D design / Skill of communication with the large manufacturer community and joint work with the experts / Skill in using technologies and equipment in the field of expertise / Skill in cost calculation and pricing.	Customer-centered / Belief in continuous and sustainable learning / Learning through communication with others / Importance and respect for the craft community / Intellectualizing the craft process / Understanding one's position and job identity / Belief in the goals of sustainable cultural, social, economic development and environment.

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