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## Redefining the Objective Foundations of the Islamic Republic of Iran's Cultural Diplomacy in India

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### Abstract

In the post – Cold War world, cultural diplomacy has become a key instrument of the foreign - policy apparatus of modern nation-states, serving to influence nations — alongside governments — through culture, identity, art, values, and norms. Iran and India, as two modern nation-states with shared racial, cultural, and identity roots, have not succeeded in establishing a balanced relational interaction. Accordingly, this study seeks to identify which foundations and components play an objective role in redefining and constructing such a relational interaction. The research hypothesis posits that the historical – civilizational, religious – ethical, and scientific – cultural – artistic foundations can be effectively applied within the cultural diplomacy of the Islamic Republic of Iran. These encompass components such as the Persian language, shared scientific and literary figures, architecture, the Muslim community (particularly the Shiites), and extensive historical–civilizational ties. This applied study employs a mixed - methods approach (quantitative – qualitative), documentary research, and soft - power theory to analyze the subject.

### Keywords

Culture, cultural diplomacy, civilizational, artistic, cultural relations

### Introduction

Since the events of September 11, the use of culture in its broad sense within

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states' foreign-policy structures has acquired a new identity and meaning, a function that manifests in cultural diplomacy. This process continues the trajectory of globalization, which began in the economic sphere and extended to politics and culture. Consequently, along this path, cultural diplomacy—in addition to its principal function as a state activity—reached new propositions and methods in which the involvement of non-state actors was also permitted, and attempts were made to influence the public opinion of nations, alongside governments, by employing civilizational, artistic-cultural, and religious components, as well as such instruments as language, literature, norms, and values.

Accordingly, this study seeks to determine which foundations and components play a concrete role in redefining and constructing such a relational interaction. The research hypothesis holds that the historical-civilizational, religious-ethical, and scientific-cultural-artistic foundations, through their available components—such as the Persian language, shared scientific and literary figures, architecture, the Muslim community, and, more specifically, the Shiites, together with extensive historical-civilizational relations—can be applied within the cultural diplomacy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in India. This applied study analyzes the subject using a mixed method (quantitative–qualitative), documentary research, and the application of soft-power theory. From the very outset of its foreign-policy activity, the Islamic Republic of Iran, mindful of its cultural identity, adopted a policy of negative balance and affiliation with the Non-Aligned Movement, of which India was a founding member. Iran–India relations have experienced numerous ups and downs owing to domestic policies and the conditions of the international system; nevertheless, Iran's cultural agents have continued their activities throughout this entire period.

To obtain more precise and in-depth information, this study employed a mixed-methods approach. Data collection began with a quantitative survey using a questionnaire, followed by qualitative in-depth interviews; documentary analysis was also conducted.

## 1- Background

Zolfaghari and Dashti (2019), in an article entitled *Components and Capacities of Iran's Soft Power in Its Cultural Diplomacy*, began their discussion by defining concepts such as soft power, public diplomacy, and cultural diplomacy, and highlighted the importance of cultural diplomacy on the international stage. They identified the soft-power components of the Islamic Republic of Iran's cultural diplomacy, introducing Persian, Iran's civilizational history and culture, Iranian-Islamic art and luminaries, rationalism, Islamic culture and values, and the tourism industry. They adopted neo-functionalism as their theoretical basis. However, some of the components they listed were not, in fact, soft-power elements of the Islamic Republic of Iran and pertained more to the field of moral philosophy. Accordingly, the present study focuses on analyzing practical, concrete components instead.

Ghorbani Golshan-Abad and Mohammadi (2017), in an article entitled *Components of the Islamic Republic of Iran's Cultural Diplomacy*, sought to determine which components constituted the country's cultural diplomacy and which of them carried greater weight. They classified the components under four headings—value-cognitive, methodological-programmatic, institutional-organizational, and agentive-operational—and allocated subcategories to each. However, the responses and components they proposed were general, omitted objectively testable elements, and did not directly address the hypothesis of the present research. Consequently, the current study incorporates objective components.

Martin Zamorano (2016), in an article entitled *Reframing Cultural Diplomacy: The Instrumentalization of Culture under the Soft Power Theory*, argued that no consensus existed on the definition of cultural diplomacy and that cultural diplomacy fell under the rubric of soft power, which enabled governments to achieve hegemony through persuasion and attraction without coercive force. He defined cultural diplomacy and, using soft-power theory, analyzed it, viewing cultural diplomacy as an instrument for attaining symbolic

power. He concluded that cultural diplomacy was initially linked to the expansion of neo-colonialism and propaganda and that post-industrial globalization processes—such as technological development and trade liberalization—drove states to present themselves as cultural brands. It should be noted, however, that this article did not address the principal topic of the present study. Accordingly, the current research also examines components that would position Iran as a cultural brand.

## **2- Conceptual and Theoretical Foundations**

### **2-1- Soft Power Theory**

From Joseph Nye's viewpoint, "soft power is an important part of a nation's power resources, and he insists on its use in foreign policy. Nye presented his theory in an article entitled *The Changing Nature of World Power*" (Solimani-Pour-Lak, 2013: 24; Ahmadi et.al., 2024A: 19). "Contrary to realist assumptions, 'soft power,' grounded not in military and economic strength but in the ability to achieve desired outcomes through effective communication and the operation of institutional instruments, entered the international arena with full force" (Sheludiakova et.al., 2022: 3). "According to Nye, the application of soft power became significant when an organic connection could be forged between the two spheres of power" (Ajdari et.al., 2017: 73).

For Nye, "soft power involves indirect or participatory behavior that relies on attraction rather than coercion to set agendas and influence preferences" (McClory, 2015: 8). "Conversely, the sources of soft power consist of political values, culture, and foreign policy, which shape others' preferences and generate appeal. Thus, soft power is linked to 'intangible resources such as institutions, ideas, values, culture, and the perceived legitimacy of policies.' These intangibles bring cultural diplomacy into the soft-power discourse" (Kim, 2017: 294–295), "whereby creative activities and knowledge constitute cultural exports. In this context, presenting culture to international audiences turns culture into an instrument for advancing 'interests, soft power, and influence.' Consequently, cultural diplomacy is the international promotion of national

culture to garner support for a country's ideas, interests, values, policies, and institutions" (Bell, 2022: 3). "The international-relations literature likewise describes the relationship between soft power and national identity" (Aukia, 2019: 309; Kim, 2017: 31). Nye identified the elements of soft power in three functional areas: foreign policy, culture, and political values.

## **2-2- Cultural Diplomacy**

Cultural diplomacy is that segment of diplomacy which "comprises a state's efforts to transmit its national culture to foreign publics with the aim of fostering an understanding of its ideals and national institutions as part of a broader endeavor to mobilize support for political and economic objectives. Soft power in international relations relies on public and cultural diplomacy to convey credibility, and cultural diplomacy is increasingly recognized as a valuable instrument for creating and sustaining external relations" (Bell & Anne Kennan, 2022: 6). "Today, cultural diplomacy figures both in the foreign-policy practice of nation-states and in cultural discourse; nevertheless, there is often no clear definition regarding how the concept should be employed, its significance, feasibility, or mode of operation" (Ahmadi et.al., 2024B: 318). "Given the contemporary complexities between transnational cultural communications and domestic cultural performance, this phenomenon ought to be a major concern within the cultural field. Yet, to date, scant attention has been paid to cultural diplomacy as a key component of the cultural landscape of contemporary foreign policy" (Anga, Isar & Mar, 2015: 365). "It can thus be understood that the conceptions of both culture and diplomacy have undergone significant change over time. Just as culture in contemporary society is no longer likely to be understood in relation to a narrow definition of high art, diplomacy is likewise no longer an exclusive dialogue among elite actors" (Luke & Kersel, 2016: 144; Cooper & Heine; Thakur, 2013: 23).

The concept of soft power, "in employing culture as a pragmatic instrument of power, addresses the state's more central role in cultural diplomacy and, with the help of cultural diplomacy, manages cultural security and domestic cohesion" (Thussu, 2018: 108; Hartig, 2016: 659; Gil, 2015: 207). "To move away from a

focus on projecting soft power, politics, cultural diplomacy, and practice, it is preferable to adopt an understanding of culture and communication drawn from contemporary cultural theory, which emphasizes culture as an ongoing, intrinsically relational and communicative process; such an understanding helps legitimate and reinforce dialogic and participatory approaches to cultural diplomacy” (Ang, Isar & Mar, 2015: 377; Zaharna et.al., 2013: 45). “Cultural diplomacy falls within the realm of Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA), under which culture is a dynamic force and an actor in the struggle for power” (Becard & Menechelli Filho, 2019: 2).

Patricia Goff maintains that “cultural diplomacy stands at a meaningful distance from governmental policies, because it serves as a tool for mitigating the negative mind-set created by high-level state policies. She regards the task of cultural diplomacy as eliminating differences and facilitating mutual understanding; therefore, this diplomacy may tell a story about the country that differs from what official politicians desire” (Goff, 2013: 3; Luke & Kersel, 2016: 144). “Among all these factors, ‘impression management’ is highly significant, as it leads some to view cultural diplomacy as a form of nation branding in which culture transmits signals concerning a set of national values and is framed as direct cultural communication between countries, coordinated by governmental organizations” (Smith, 2019: 2). “International nation-branding scholars recognize that national and international brands are built over time; thus each attribute that contributes to constructing a nation’s brand also counts among the components of soft power and cultural diplomacy” (Cull, 2022: 21). “A national brand can be defined by the cumulative set of images of a nation in the minds of international stakeholders, which may include elements such as people, place, culture, language, religion, history, cuisine, and fashion” (Dubinsky, 2022: 2). “Cultural diplomacy can be employed to communicate effectively and maintain relations with the world in order to enhance the national brand in line with new global conditions. Promoting a country’s cultural brand and maintaining relations with governments can lead to security as well as economic development” (Bajenaru, 2022: 158). “The globalization of a country’s brand

becomes apparent in social, political, economic, and cultural spheres” (Baylis, Smith et.al., 2017: 34; Alkatheeri & Khan, 2019: 21).

Cultural diplomacy is “usually defined in terms of power: the capacity to persuade and attract that enables a state to build hegemony without employing coercive methods” (Zamorano, 2016: 165). “The discourse of cultural diplomacy can be used by various actors as a tool for framing specific approaches to managing cultural relations with others. In many cases, policy-makers, think tanks, and cultural institutions can confirm that cultural diplomacy may pursue multiple goals simultaneously—from establishing peace and strengthening international understanding to promoting tourism and expanding trade” (Holden, 2013: 33). “Today, therefore, cultural diplomacy is marked by the multiplication of intervening actors at different scales and levels and by the growing prominence of transnational organizations. In addition to a nation’s government, businesspeople, artists, migrants, and diasporas also participate in this complex arena. Consequently, a synthesis of governmental policies designed to advance international culture, conceived as an overarching strategy, may be regarded as cultural diplomacy” (Topic & Sciortino, 2012: 9; Zamorano, 2016: 169). Within its principal function, cultural diplomacy draws on numerous tools, each of which offers the country vast capacities that can be leveraged for discourse formation and the expansion of diplomatic relations.

### **3- Statistical Population**

For the survey segment, the population consisted of a subset of students in the Persian Language Department at the University of Delhi and Indian students studying in Iran. For the qualitative interviews, the population included key informants (former Iranian cultural attachés in India and other countries) as well as university professors who have conducted research in the field of cultural diplomacy.

### **4- Sample Size**

The total population numbered 266. To determine the appropriate sample size for this project, Cochran’s formula was used, with  $N = 266$ ,  $t^2 = 3.84$ ,  $s = 2.2$ ,

and  $d = 0.25$ , resulting in a required sample of 158 participants.

$$n = \frac{Nt^2s^2}{Nd^2t^2s^2}$$

$$n = \frac{266 \cdot 3,84(2,2)^2}{266 \cdot (0/25)^2 \cdot 3,84 \cdot (2,2)^2}$$

$$n = 158$$

Therefore, random sampling was employed, and 200 questionnaires were distributed to ensure adequate coverage, from which 171 completed questionnaires were collected. In the qualitative component, interviews with key informants engaged in cultural diplomacy in India continued until theoretical saturation was reached, with a minimum of 10 interviews considered.

### 5- Validity and Reliability

In general, the validity of statements and items depends on the manner in which the concepts under investigation are presented; in this study, hypothetical validity was adopted to assess the accuracy of the questionnaire. Accordingly, the questionnaire was initially reviewed by experts in the field, and after the necessary revisions, a limited pre-test of 30 questionnaires was administered within the statistical population to obtain the reliability coefficient. Finally, to assess the reliability of the items, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was applied. It should be noted that after the preliminary test results were obtained, some items were revised.

The results of the Cronbach's alpha test are presented in the table below:

Items	Cultural diplomacy	Religious-ethical foundations	Scientific-cultural and artistic foundations	Historical-civilizational foundations
Cronbach's alpha coefficient	92.4	70.2	87.7	76.8

Table (1): Cronbach's alpha coefficient

Source: (Author, 2024)

After the questionnaires were collected, the data were coded and compiled,

and then analyzed using SPSS 17 in accordance with the study's hypotheses. The findings were presented in both inferential and descriptive formats. In the inferential analysis, which formed the core focus of the research, the relationships between paired variables in two-dimensional tables were analyzed, and the significance of these relationships was evaluated using chi-square and gamma correlation tests. In the descriptive analysis, frequency tables and percentages were analyzed.

## **6- Core Concepts of the Study**

### **6-1- Cultural Diplomacy**

Cultural diplomacy is the component of foreign policy through which governments structure their cultural assets to attain foreign-policy objectives. In contemporary practice, it encompasses any action that leads to purposeful cultural cooperation—whether between governments and nations, or between nations themselves. Accordingly, the principal elements of cultural diplomacy include states, private actors, goals, activities, and audiences.

### **6-2- Historical–Civilizational Foundations**

“Shared civilizational components foster consensus and cultural cohesion. Iran, as one of the world's oldest civilizations, has long interacted with other civilizational spheres. Located at a crossroads of cultures, it has connected Western and Eastern civilizations, as exemplified by the Silk Road. In this interchange, elements such as the Persian language and Nowruz have acted as unifying threads. Iranians have likewise played an unparalleled role in the growth and development of Islamic civilization” (Salehi Amiri & Mohammadi, 2010: 393).

### **6-3- Religious–Ethical Foundations**

“Within foreign policy and cultural diplomacy, religious–ethical foundations have become dominant because they are intertwined with the identity structures of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Islamic Revolution, through its religious and ethical components, not only revealed the social functions of religion but also introduced fundamental changes into both religious and non-religious value

systems” (Rajabi & Asari, 2021: 109).

#### **6-4- Scientific, Cultural, and Artistic Foundations**

Culture comprises “the set of norms, values, religion and beliefs, rituals, and dispositions that, through popular acceptance, achieve intergenerational continuity. Art and culture are likewise considered elements of soft power” (Ahmadi Dehka, 2018: 60). Art is one of the most authentic pillars of Iranian cultural identity, expressing that identity through its cultural heritage; a dialectical relationship therefore exists between them. In any society, its art is inspired by cultural influences and evolves as culture changes.

### **7- Operational Definitions**

#### **7-1- Dependent Variable**

Cultural diplomacy, along with its measurement foundations (historical–civilizational, religious–ethical, and scientific–cultural–artistic), is defined as the dependent variable, with the relevant indicators listed in the accompanying table.

#### **8- Independent Variables:**

8-1- Age: the elapsed time from birth to the present, recorded numerically and represented by a single questionnaire item.

8-2- Level of study: an ordinal variable; because the population consists of students, the categories are bachelor’s, master’s, doctoral, and post-doctoral.

8-3- Field of study: respondents indicate their academic discipline.

### **9- Research findings**

#### **9-1- Descriptive statistics**

According to the table, the largest age group is between 29 and 32 years old and 25 to 27 years old, at 30% and 27%, respectively, and the smallest age group is 37 years old and above, at 12%.

Table Age groups					
		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Valid Percentage
Item's	Between 21 and 24 years old	25	14.6	14.6	14.6
	Between 25 and 28 years old	46	26.9	26.9	41.5
	Between 29 and 32 years old	51	29.8	29.8	71.3
	Between 33 -36 years old	29	17.0	17.0	88.3
	37 years and above	20	11.7	11.7	100.0
	Total	171	100.0	100.0	

Table (1): Age groups

Source: (Author, 2024)

According to the table above, the highest educational group is Bachelor's and Doctoral (Ph.D.), 44% and 34%, respectively, and the lowest is Postdoctoral, 6%.

Educational level					
		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Item's	Bachelor	73	42.7	44.0	44.0
	Master's Degree	27	15.8	16.3	60.3
	Ph.D.	56	32.7	33.7	94.0
	Postdoctoral	10	5.8	6.0	100.0
	Total	166	97.1	100.0	
No Response	No Response	5	2.9		
Total		171	100.0		

Table (2): Educational level

Source: (Author, 2024)

According to the table, the largest study fields are Persian Language and Literature and Urdu Language and Literature, with 67% and 16%, respectively,

and the smallest group of study fields is Political Science and Computer Engineering, with 2%.

Table (3): Field of study					
		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Item's	Political Science	3	1.8	1.9	1.9
	Computer Engineering	3	1.8	1.9	3.9
	Public administration	10	5.8	6.5	10.3
	Persian language and literature	104	60.8	67.1	77.4
	History	6	3.5	3.9	81.3
	Urdu language and literature	24	14.0	15.5	96.8
	Foreign language	5	2.9	3.2	100.0
	Total	155	90.6	100.0	
No Response	No Response	16	9.4		
Total		171	100.0		

Table (3): Field of study

Source: (Author, 2024)

### 9-2- Historical-Civilizational Foundations:

The abundance of common civilizational-historical foundations

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Item's	Low	45	26.3	27.8	27.8
	Moderate	62	36.3	38.3	66.0
	High	55	32.2	34.0	100.0
	Total	162	94.7	100.0	
No Response	No Response	9	5.3		
Total		171	100.0		

Table (4): The abundance of common civilizational-historical foundations

Source: (Author, 2024)

According to the table above, 34 percent of respondents show a high, 38 percent a moderate, and 28 percent a low inclination toward the two countries' historical–civilizational foundations. The data indicate that the sample welcomes these foundations and that this capacity should be utilized, although they are embraced somewhat less than the scientific–cultural–artistic and religious–ethical foundations.

### 9-3- Abundance of common religious-moral foundations

Table religious-moral foundations					
		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Item's	Low	39	22.8	25.5	25.5
	Moderate	48	28.1	31.4	56.9
	High	66	38.6	43.1	100.0
	Total	153	89.5	100.0	
No Response	No Response	18	10.5		
Total		171	100.0		

Table and chart (5): religious-moral foundations

Source: (Author, 2024)

According to the table above, 43 percent of respondents show a high, 31 percent a moderate, and 26 percent a low inclination toward the two countries' religious-moral foundations. The data indicate that the sample welcomes these foundations and that this capacity should be utilized.

### 9-4- Abundance of common scientific, cultural, and artistic foundations

According to the table, 41 percent of respondents show a high, 39 percent a moderate, and 19 percent a low inclination toward the two countries' scientific-cultural and artistic foundations. The data indicate that the sample welcomes these foundations and that this capacity should be utilized.

Scientific-cultural and artistic foundations					
		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Item's	Low	33	19.3	19.4	19.4
	Moderate	67	39.2	39.4	58.8
	High	70	40.9	41.2	100.0
	Total	170	99.4	100.0	
No Response	No Response	1	.6		
Total		171	100.0		

Table and chart:(6): Scientific-cultural and artistic foundations

Source: (Author, 2024)

### 9-5-The abundance of cultural diplomacy

Cultural diplomacy					
		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Item's	Low	47	27.5	32.2	32.2
	Moderate	48	28.1	32.9	65.1
	High	51	29.8	34.9	100.0
	Total	146	85.4	100.0	
No Response	No Response	25	14.6		
Total		171	100.0		

Table and chart (7): Cultural diplomacy

Source: (Author, 2024)

According to the table above, 35 percent of respondents show a high, 33 percent a moderate, and 32 percent a low inclination toward the two countries' cultural diplomacy foundations. The data indicate that the sample welcomes these foundations and that this capacity should be utilized.

**10- Inferential findings of the research:****10-1- Part One: Religious-ethical foundations**

Spearman correlations				
			Age Groups	Educational Level
Spearman correlations	Religious-ethical foundations	Obtained Value	-.138	.154
		Significance Level	888.	61.
		Total Number	153	149

Table (9): Spearman correlations

Source: (Author, 2024)

According with reference to the Spearman test, the following results were obtained:

There is no relationship between age groups and the religious–ethical foundations; the correlation coefficient is  $-0.138$ , indicating a weak inverse association, and the significance level is  $0.088$ , which exceeds  $0.05$ . Thus, no statistically significant relationship exists between age groups and the religious–ethical foundations.

There is no relationship between educational level and the religious–ethical foundations; the correlation coefficient is  $0.154$ , indicating a weak direct association, and the significance level is  $0.061$ , which exceeds  $0.05$ . Therefore, no statistically significant relationship exists between level of study and the religious–ethical foundations.

It appears there is a relationship between field of study and inclination toward religious–ethical foundations.

Academic field and religious and moral foundations					
		Religious and ethical foundations			Total
		Low	Moderate	High	
Field of study	Political Science	%100,0			%100,0
	Computer Engineering			%100,0	%100,0
	Public administration			%100,0	%100,0
	Persian literature	%15,0	%43,0	%42,0	%100,0
	History			%100,0	%100,0
	Urdu language literature	%37,5		%62,5	%100,0
	Foreign language		%100,0		%100,0
Total		%19,1	%34,0	%46,8	%100,0

Table (10): Academic field and religious and moral foundations

Source: (Author, 2024)

According to the two-dimensional table above, the fields of computer engineering, public administration, and history have the highest tendency towards religious and ethical foundations, and the field of political science has the lowest tendency towards religious and ethical foundations.

Chi-square test			
	Value	df	Approximate Significance
Chi-square test	<sup>a</sup> 49.985	12	.000
Likelihood Ratio	58.758	12	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	132.	1	.716
N of Valid Cases	141		

Table (11): Chi-square test

Source: (Author, 2024)

There is a relationship between the field of study and religious and moral foundations, according to the Chi-square test, whose significance level is 0.000, which is smaller than 0.05, meaning that there is a statistical relationship between the field of study and religious and moral foundations.

**10-2- Part two: Scientific-cultural-artistic foundations**

Gamma test			
			Age groups
Gamma test	scientific-cultural-artistic foundations	Obtained Value	098.
		Significance Level	314..
		Total Number	170

Table (12): Gamma test

Source: (Author, 2024)

According to the Gamma test, the following results were obtained:

There is no relationship between age groups and scientific-cultural-artistic foundations. The intensity of the relationship is 0.098, which indicates a low and direct relationship, and the significance level is 0.314, which is greater than 0.05, meaning there is no statistical relationship between age groups and scientific-cultural-artistic foundations.

It seems that there is a relationship between educational level and inclination towards scientific, cultural and artistic foundations.

Educational level and scientific-cultural-artistic foundations					
		Abillity			Total
		Low	Moderate	High	
Education	Bachelor	19.2%	24.7%	56.2%	100.0%
	Masters	3.6%	27.8%	41.7%	100.0%
	Phd and above	14.2%	62.5%	23.2%	100.0%
Total		20.0%	38.2%	41.8%	100.0%

Table (13): Educational level and scientific-cultural-artistic foundations

Source: (Author, 2024)

According to the two-dimensional table above, respondents with a bachelor's degree have the highest tendency towards scientific-cultural and artistic

foundations, and respondents with a master's degree have the lowest tendency towards scientific-cultural and artistic foundations.

			Educational level
Gamma test	scientific-cultural and artistic foundations	Obtained Value	** .234
		Significance Level	.40
		Total Number	165

Table (14): Gamma test

Source: (Author, 2024)

The results obtained from the gamma correlation test show that the correlation coefficient between the two variables is equal to 0.234  $p=$ , the correlation intensity is moderate and direct, and the resulting validity level is equal to 0.040  $p=$ . Given that the value of the obtained validity level is smaller than 0.05, it can be concluded that there is a statistical relationship between the educational level and the scientific-cultural-artistic foundations.

It seems that there is a relationship between the field of study and the tendency towards scientific, cultural and artistic foundations.

Field of study and orientation to scientific-cultural foundations of art					
		Scientific-cultural foundations of art			Total
		Low	Modrate	High	
Field of study	Political Science			100%	100%
	Computer Engineering			100%	100%
	Public administration		100%		100%
	Persian literature	21.2%	33.7%	45.2%	100%
	History		33.3%	66.7%	100%
	Urdu language literature	37.5%	41.7%	20.8%	100%
	Foreign language	40.0%	20.0%	40.0%	100%
Total		21.3%	37.4%	41.2%	100%

Table (15): Field of study and orientation to scientific-cultural foundations of art

Source: (Author, 2024)

According to the two-dimensional table above, the fields of computer

engineering and political science have the highest tendency towards scientific-cultural-artistic foundations, and the field of foreign language has the lowest tendency towards scientific-cultural-artistic foundations.

Chi-square test			
	Value	df	Approximate Significance
Chi-square test	<sup>a</sup> 35.012	12	.000
Likelihood Ratio	41.067	12	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	6.972	1	.008
N of Valid Cases	155		

Table (16): Chi-square test

Source: (Author, 2024)

There is a relationship between the field of study and the scientific-cultural-artistic foundations, according to the Chi-square test, whose significance level is 0.000, which is smaller than 0.05, meaning that there is a statistical relationship between the field of study and the scientific-cultural-artistic foundations.

### 10-3- Part three: Common historical-civilizational foundations

Gamma test			
			Age groups
Gamma test	Historical–Civilizational Foundations	Obtained Value	-.114
		Significance Level	194.
		Total Number	162

Table (17): Common historical-civilizational foundations

Source: (Author, 2024)

According to the Gamma test, the following results were obtained:

There is no relationship between age groups and historical-civilizational foundations, the intensity of the relationship is -0.114, which indicates a low and inverse relationship intensity, and the significance level is 0.194, which is greater

than 0.05, meaning that there is no statistical relationship between age groups and historical-civilizational foundations.

It seems that there is a relationship between educational level and inclination towards historical-civilizational foundations.

Educational level and historical-civilizational foundations					
		Historical-civilizational foundations			Total
		Low	Moderate	High	
Educational level	Bachelor's degree	47.3%	19.4%	33.3%	100.0%
	Master's degree	15.2%	45.5%	39.3%	100.0%
	Doctorate and postdoctorate	11.2%	62.2%	26.6%	100.0%
Total		28.5%	39.2%	33.3%	100.0%

Table (18): Educational level and historical-civilizational foundations

Source: (Author, 2024)

According to the two-dimensional table above, respondents with a bachelor's degree have the highest tendency towards historical-civilizational foundations, and respondents with a master's degree have the lowest tendency towards historical-civilizational foundations.

Gamma test		Educational level
Gamma test	Historical-civilizational foundations	-.272
	Obtained Value	014.
	Significance Level	158
Total Number		

Table (19): Gamma test

Source: (Author, 2024)

The results obtained from the gamma correlation test show that the correlation coefficient between the two variables is equal to -0.273, the correlation intensity is moderate and inverse, and the resulting validity level is equal to 0.040  $p=$ . Given that the value of the obtained validity level is smaller than 0.05, it can be

concluded that there is a statistical relationship between the educational level and historical-civilizational foundations.

It seems that there is a relationship between the field of study and the tendency towards historical-civilizational foundations.

Field of study and historical-civilizational foundations					
		Historical-civilizational foundations			Total
		Low	Moderate	High	
Field of study	Political Science			100.0%	100.0%
	Computer Engineering	100.0%			100.0%
	Public administration	30.0%	70.0%		100.0%
	Persian literature	36.0%	36.0%	28.0%	100.0%
	History		100.0%		100.0%
	Urdu language literature	12.5%	16.7%	70.8%	100.0%
	Foreign language		100.0%		100.0%
Total		29.8%	38.4%	31.8%	100.0%

Table (20): Field of study and historical-civilizational foundations

Source: (Author, 2024)

According to the two-dimensional table above, the fields of computer engineering, public administration, and Persian literature have the least tendency towards common historical-civilizational foundations, and the fields of political science and Urdu literature have the most tendency towards historical-civilizational foundations.

Chi-square test			
	Value	df	Approximate Significance
Chi-square test	55.686 <sup>a</sup>	12	.000.
Likelihood Ratio	6.816	12	.000.
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.934	1	.047.
N of Valid Cases	151		

Table (21): Chi-square test

Source: (Author, 2024)

There is a relationship between the field of study and historical-civilizational

foundations, according to the Chi-square test, whose significance level is 0.000, which is smaller than 0.05, meaning that there is a statistical relationship between the field of study and historical-civilizational foundations.

#### 12-4- Part four: Cultural diplomacy

Gamma test			
			Age groups
Gamma test	Cultural diplomacy	Obtained Value	030.
		Significance Level	756.
		Total Number	146

Table (22): Gamma test

Source: (Author, 2024)

According to the Gamma test, the following results were obtained:

There is no relationship between age groups and cultural diplomacy, the intensity of the relationship is 0.030, which indicates the intensity of the lack of a direct relationship, and the significance level is 0.756, which is greater than 0.05, meaning that there is no statistical relationship between age groups and cultural diplomacy. It seems that there is a relationship between educational level and inclination towards cultural diplomacy.

Educational level and cultural diplomacy					
		cultural diplomacy			Total
		Low	Moderate	High	
Educational level	Bachelor's degree	28.8%	13.6%	57.6%	100.0%
	Master's degree	42.4%	27.2%	30.4%	100.0%
	Doctorate and postdoctorate	22.2%	69.8%	7.0%	100.0%
Total		30.3%	22.8%	35.9%	100.0%

Table (23): Educational level and cultural diplomacy

Source: (Author, 2024)

According to the two-dimensional table above, respondents with a bachelor's degree have the highest tendency towards cultural diplomacy, and respondents with a master's degree have the lowest tendency towards cultural diplomacy.

		Educational level	
Gamma test	Cultural diplomacy	Obtained Value	.320
		Significance Level	.006
		Total Number	142

Table (24): Gamma test

Source: (Author, 2024)

The results obtained from the gamma correlation test show that the correlation coefficient between the two variables is equal to 0.320  $p=$ , the correlation intensity is moderate and direct, and the resulting validity level is equal to 0.006  $p=$ . Given that the value of the obtained validity level is smaller than 0.05, it can be concluded that there is a statistical relationship between educational level and cultural diplomacy.

There seems to be a relationship between academic field and inclination towards cultural diplomacy.

Academic field and cultural diplomacy					
		cultural diplomac			Total
		Low	Moderate	High	
Field of study	Political Science			100.0%	100.0%
	Computer Engineering			100.0%	100.0%
	Public administration		100.0%		100.0%
	Persian literature	29.9%	30.9%	39.2%	100.0%
	History		100.0%		100.0%
	Urdu language literature	27.5%	33.3%	29.2%	100.0%
	Foreign language	100.0%			100.0%
Total		31.2%	31.9%	37.8%	100.0%

Table (25): Academic field and cultural diplomacy

Source: (Author, 2024)

According to the two-dimensional table above, the fields of computer engineering, political science, and Persian literature have the highest tendency towards cultural diplomacy, and the field of foreign languages has the lowest tendency towards cultural diplomacy.

Chi-square test			
	Value	df	Approximate Significance
Chi-square test	35.026 <sup>a</sup>	12	.000
Likelihood Ratio	38.259	12	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	13.188	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	138		

Table (26): Chi-square test

Source: (Author, 2024)

There is a relationship between academic field and cultural diplomacy, according to the Chi-square test, whose significance level is 0.000, which is smaller than 0.05, meaning that there is a statistical relationship between academic field and cultural diplomacy.

## Conclusion

This study aimed to redefine the objective foundations of the Islamic Republic of Iran's cultural diplomacy in India. During the past two decades, cultural diplomacy has undergone a fundamental transformation from a purely state-centric activity to one oriented toward the state and its audiences. With non-state actors now playing an active role, cultural diplomacy draws not only on official cultural relations but also on private-sector cultural exchanges. Fundamental changes in tools, practices, and actors—diminished state dominance, the rise of modern communication and information technologies, and the parallel growth of public awareness—have made branding a central priority for cultural-diplomacy practitioners. To obtain precise and in-depth data, this study used a mixed-methods design: an initial quantitative survey (questionnaire), followed by qualitative, in-depth interviews, and supplemented by documentary analysis.

Among respondents, 34 percent express a high tendency, 38 percent a moderate tendency, and 28 percent a low tendency toward the two countries' historical–civilizational foundations. Although welcomed, these foundations draw less support than the scientific–cultural–artistic and the religious–ethical ones. Experts on Iran's cultural diplomacy in India stress the need to exploit the cultural and social resources of the Parsi community and the broader Iranian diaspora and other migrants, to familiarize the younger generation of Indians with Iran's culture, history, and civilization, and to spotlight ancient racial and religious commonalities—including the affinities between Pahlavi and Sanskrit.

Inclination toward cultural diplomacy is reported as 35 percent high, 33 percent moderate, and 32 percent low. The data indicate that the surveyed population believes Iran—armed with clear identity and structural attributes in foreign policy, as well as significant cultural and civilizational attributes—can play an active role in cultural diplomacy.

The cultural commonalities of Iran and India, as regional powers in West and South Asia, lend themselves to analysis under the theory of soft power. Joseph Nye contends that cultural elements should be combined with other factors to develop a foreign-policy discourse. Iran and India, with their millennia-old relationship and many shared elements since antiquity, can develop relations well beyond their current level. With respect to the present hypothesis, the Islamic Republic of Iran possesses historical–civilizational, religious–ethical, and scientific–cultural–artistic foundations for engagement in India; yet the civilizational–normative components seem overshadowed by an excessive focus on religious–ethical and scientific–cultural–artistic foundations. These civilizational elements should be employed more extensively in Iran's cultural diplomacy in India. Given the full range of foundations, components, and unique instruments at its disposal, greater effort is required from Iranian practitioners to harness soft power and cultural diplomacy effectively.

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