

Original Research Article

The Historical Legacy of Iranian Clothing

A journey in the Depths of Culture

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Abstract Iranian clothing is a valuable historical legacy of the culture of people whose country per se reflects the rich Iranian culture. Even though clothing has been regarded as one of the attractions and components of tourism, it may still be viewed beyond its touristic function. Such a view considers clothing as a culture. The historical legacy of Iranian clothing is an in-depth study of culture, rather than an emphasis on cultural components. It provides a look at the culture from the inside and is a journey throughout the culture. Iranian clothing culture depicts the Iranian people's behavior, customs and rituals, style of thinking, and way of life throughout history. The culture of Iranian clothing, as well as all of its noticeable features seen by a viewer, includes emotions that can be transmitted to others and engage Iranian feelings. At the heart of Iranian clothing lie values, norms, beliefs, and convictions that shape the culture of Iran. This study adopts a qualitative research method to scrutinize the historical legacy of Iranian clothing from ancient times to the Pahlavi era using documentary analysis. The purpose of this study is to examine the cultural course of Iranian clothing. The results indicate that Iranian clothing as a lasting legacy has a transcendental nature, expressing material and spiritual values such as dignity, cleanliness, beauty, aesthetic components, chromatography, adherence, and harmony with nature, humanity, thinking, balance, flexibility, and human excellence; this is like a journey into the cultural beliefs that lie in the depths of Iranian clothing.

Keywords | *Historical legacy, Iranian clothing, Culture, Tourism.*

Introduction | Throughout history, clothing has been recognized as one of the main elements of culture, reflecting civilization, background, lifestyle, beliefs, attitudes, values, and norms as well as aesthetic elements of a region. In the depths of the colors, lies the life history of the people. Because of its diverse climate, Iran has a diverse cultural legacy. Clothing is a cultural attraction because it displays the cultural and traditional features of a country. Culture, a component in the development of tourism, has been one of the key sources of destinations, and on the other hand, humans have always been interested in learning about the past and their lifestyle throughout history. In examining Iranian clothing as a cultural heritage, the approach adopted has

been either product or aesthetic-oriented, which serves as a tourist attraction. Due to the importance of this issue, this study attempts to take a different look at this valuable historical heritage and provides a view from the inside by traveling and getting into the depths of culture. We consider Iranian clothing as the historical heritage of a country through which we can travel and gain a deep understanding of its culture. We can also search for the reasons explaining life, behavior, style, and customs, in the heart of each element of clothing.

Research methodology

This study aims to investigate the historical heritage of Iranian clothing by focusing on its culture. For this purpose, the history of Iranian clothing from ancient

times to the Pahlavi era was examined, and its cultural course was analyzed using the qualitative method and library and documentary analysis. This analysis provides an internal view of culture and depicts the cultural course of clothing in the history of Iran.

Historical legacy of Iranian clothing (From ancient to Pahlavi)

Historical legacy is primarily the physical and tangible elements of the history of the predecessors that have been inherited by today's societies (AlMasri & Ababneh, 2021). These include clothes and clothing. Shani clothing is a human affair and means wearable. To wear is to cover, to clothe, to hide, to hide, and to cover something. In Persian, the words "Pooshesh", "Tan poosh", and "Pooshak" are used for clothes. In the past, the function of a garment was limited to the protection of the body against nature, but now it has aesthetics as well, and even its symbolic and cultural functions are more prominent (Mounesisorkheh, 2017).

Since ancient times, clothing has had a significant place in Iran. In historical literature dating back to ancient times and the Islamic period, Iranians are described as a well-dressed and elegant nation. It is stated that in Iran, the material and beauty of clothing reflect the credibility of their wearers, and the better a person dresses, the more attention, and respect he or she will receive. In addition, concealing one's body is a symbol of shame and modesty. In Iran, clothing reflects characteristics such as ethnic and geographical identification, political, trade union, and religious ties, as well as the people's social and economic standing (Babaei & Akbari, 2014). According to Jalilian and Fatemi (2011), over history, Iranians have appreciated fine garments and decorations. They have done their best to make beautiful garments and different ornaments. In the period of the Achaemenid period, people across Iran used to wear their ethnic clothes. Examining the clothing of women reveals a piece of transparent and long clothing was on their heads and a long and frilly dress. Mantle is a type of clothing used in ancient times (Fig. 1). The short mantle was popular in those days and it was not worn but placed on the shoulders. Sometimes they were knee-length. The use of such mantles, gradually decreased, especially in the post-Mongol period.

Qaba is another type of clothing that the people of Iran have worn a lot in the past. Despite being worn by women, the qaba was men's clothing. Of course, there were some differences between the Iranians before and after the advent of Islam. It should be differentiated from Aba. Qaba had sleeves in which the wearer fitted their hands. In comparison, Aba had two short sleeves that the wearer could tuck into his hands. However, it



Fig. 1. Clothing of the Achaemenid period. Source: www.iranboom.ir.

was mostly over the shoulders. The assumption is that aba is not essentially an Iranian outfit. In fact, there is no evidence showing this outfit existed in the time of ancient Iran. This dress was entirely a Semitic dress that the Saudi Arabs brought to Iran after the arrival of Islam in Iran. It was less popular with some classes of society. Available maps and images show that qaba was more popular with Iranians in the Safavid period. It was not used even before the Safavids and was not even common among clergymen (Chitsaz, 2017).

The Aryan tie is a common component of the attire

among Iranians (Fig. 2). Much has been written on the Iranian origins of tying and how it was exported to the Roman Empire during the Sassanid era. There is a lot of information available about the use of the tie by Croatians of Iranian descent and their journey to England, France, and other parts of Europe. In a study on the history of the tie, it was first introduced as an Islamic symbol worn by the Croats during the Crusades. The terms “kravat” and “hravat” are recorded on a stone inscription in the Greek area of southern Russia and have no Serbian roots. Kravat means “friendly” in the Avestan language. This sign is the same as Deyhim, the sacred symbol of the Sassanids, which is interpreted as friendship with Ahuramazda and the gods of Mehr and Anahita (Avarzamani, 2013).

Historically speaking, the headdress has been one of the most important parts of men’s and women’s clothing. One of the headdresses has been a king’s crown. This is seen in many antique designs. According to some evidence, during the trial of a king or prince in the Islamic



Fig. 2. Sassanid period clothing. Source: www. lebasparsiri.

period, his or her headdress was removed first, which was considered an insult. Even before the entrance of the Aryans, several different types of headwear were popular in ancient Iran, and their images can be seen on floral decorations appearing in the shape of seals. Horned headwear is one of the most well-known and essential types of headwear in Iran, particularly worn by the top social groups, particularly kings and princes. Later, the crooked hat became popular throughout the Seljuk period, and its traces are seen in literary maps and literature (ibid). The Iranians’ clothes did not change much throughout the early Islamic period, but the Arabs exploited the elements of the day’s culture, and their attire changed dramatically. Paintings and murals in five counts (murals of temples, palaces, and dwellings surrounding Samarkand) are documents showing Iranian dress in the early Islamic ages. In the early Islamic period, Iranian clothing was the same as that of the Sassanid era (Gheibi, 2016). The cultural course of ancient Iran reflects the strength, culture, dignity, focus on ethnic and regional culture, cleanliness, and attention to beauty and popular and social status. The clothing is more than just a cover and serves as a symbol. Table 1 shows the types of clothing for men and women in the Islamic period.

During the Qajar period, Iranian clothing went through two distinct periods (Fig. 3): one in which connections with other governments were still developing, and another in which European businesses and tourists visited Iran, and Nasser al-din Shah traveled to Europe. It came into existence. This shift can be seen in men’s pants and hats, as well as women’s skirts (ibid., 514). With the formation of the constitutional movement and its success in the solar year, Iran entered a new social era. The advent of telegraphs and cameras in Iran provided an ideal opportunity for Iranians to learn about European culture, particularly in the area of clothes. During this time, knee-length or knee-length jackets and less frequently worn pants appeared. Short skirts were also popular among women, while women used to wear blue veils rather than black during the Qajar dynasty. During this period, tighter white pants were fashionable. Wearing these trousers became more popular in the first Pahlavi period, with the transformation of society, and women could go out without using a chador and only with a scarf (Chitsaz, 2017).

A journey into the depths of the culture of the historical heritage of Iranian clothing

The historical and cultural heritage of a country has unconditional global value for human societies and its value increases over time (Kashchenko & Polozhentseva, 2021). Historical legacies have attracted people to various tourist destinations over time (AlMasri & Ababneh,

Table 1. Iranian men and women in the Islamic period. Source: Gheibi, 2016.

Iranian men and women in the Islamic period	
Men's clothing	Women's clothing
- Dress (tonic)	- Shirt
- Doublet (short torso)	- Qaba
- Burnoose	- Manteau
- Aba (sleeveless cape)	- vest
- Waist scarf, belt, and gloves	- Long torso
- Scribe's dress	- Waist scarf, belt, and gloves
- Pants	- Pants
- Headdress (crown, hat)	- Headdress (Chador, mask, triangular handkerchief)
- Foot ware (wrist, socks, shoes, espadrille)	- Foot ware (socks and booties, shoes, leather boots)



Fig. 3. Examples of Qajar period clothing. Source: Institute for the Study of Contemporary Iranian History.

2021). Culture is one of the most important components of tourism development in the world (Ariffin, 2020), consisting of customs, traditions, history, and lifestyle of the people of a region. The historical and cultural heritage of any country has always been at the center of attention (Fang & Ariffin, 2021). Due to the development of culture-oriented tourism in the world, priority has been given to the protection and preservation of the cultural and historical heritage of countries. Perhaps, the development of tourism based on a deep cultural perspective can be an action to protect and maintain the cultural and historical heritage of nations. Despite the negative attitude towards this issue, tourism and the promotion of culture will be effective measures to preserve culture (Wang, Yang, HSU & Zhang, 2021).

There is an association between culture and tourism. Therefore, visiting historical and cultural sights, museums, art festivals, and being acquainted with the lifestyle,

customs, religion, language, and heritage of an area can increase the motivation to travel to these areas, improve the connection between culture and tourism, and create the concept of cultural tourism (Richards, 2018). In the 21st century, culture and tourism have become important components of societies, and the historical heritage of a country has acted as a pulling force (AlMasri & Ababneh, 2021).

Colors, patterns, and motifs all come together to form a singular style, which then becomes a language of the legacy and the trip through its home culture. Although ambient and geographical factors have impacted the choice of clothes, color, and fabric type, a closer examination of the articles of clothing reveals that a significant portion of them have been chosen with purpose. Each item of clothing can be said to symbolize an idea and intention due to the thought and reasoning that went into the selection of styles.

Due to its unique geographical and cultural diversity, Iran has a variety of traditional clothing, which is a cultural and identity resource for Iranians. In the ancient millennia of history, Iranians highly valued their clothes and used all their artistic taste and effort to create artistic clothes and ornaments. In the ancient history of Iran, Iranians wore their ethnic clothes (Jalilian & Fatemi, 2011). Since ancient times, a person's clothing in Iran has had signs indicating the relationship between him and his living environment. Clothing is a kind of communication that expresses one's gender, social status, and religious beliefs, and it never ceases to be a sign of something or a concept. As a result, clothing is a living part of a culture, and its changes, like artistic developments, have been subject to sociological conditions (Zaree & Rahbarniya, 2017). Studies on Iranian ethnic clothing in the cultural geography of Iran show that Iranian ethnic clothing had its characteristics and ornaments, which were aligned with climatic and cultural geography. They were distinguished from the clothing of another nation or ethnic group based on those features. This attitude emphasizes the display of the individual or collective identity of a particular social group, distinguishing them from others. The clothing of each person is subject to the culture, climate, religion, and other factors influencing the culture and art of nations. The clothing of each person represents his cultural identity, beliefs, and the climatic conditions of their habitat.

Regardless of the effects of income, economy, job, materials, beliefs, and ancestral arts on various articles of clothing (Paydarfard, Namvar Motlagh, & Mahjoubi, 2015), the following characteristics of traditional Iranian clothing can be summarized in Fig. 4.

In ancient Iran, the choice of color was associated with importance and diversity and was reflective of ethnicity, personality, and social status. Throughout history, Iranians

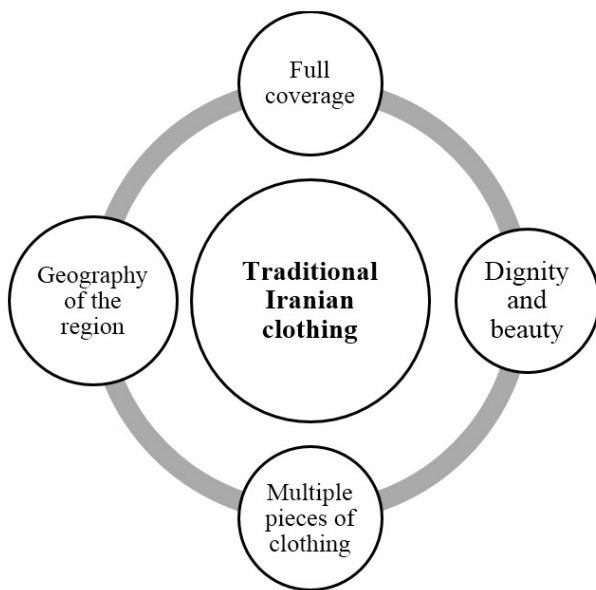


Fig. 4. Features of traditional Iranian clothing. Source: Yasini, 2017.

have always paid attention to the spiritual, mystical, and artistic aspects of color. However, some colors have been more prominent than others; the reason is that certain colors are assigned to special classes or prominent works. Purple, orange, brown, olive green and sky blue were the favorite colors of the Achaemenids. In the Islamic era, color played an important role and was even considered a symbol of a historical event or a historical period.

In terms of the textile industry, the Safavid era is regarded as a golden age. During this time, vibrantly colored clothes were woven. The Safavids chose red for their hats and for this reason, they were called Ghezelbash. That was the reason why red was of special importance during this period. Moreover, personal preferences played an important role in choosing colors. Safavid men wore white shirts, doublet, and floral qaba in red, yellow, or different colors. Women also wore colorful clothes and their chadors were white except for mourning ceremonies. Due to the visit of kings to Europe throughout the Qajar dynasty, there was a substantial shift in clothing. The men wore white shirts and blue or purple and red trousers. The working class shirt was blue. The women wore colorful clothes. The color of the pants was white. Social groups in the lower class wore black pants. Blue, brown and black chadors were common (Gheibi, 2016). The designs used in the clothes are composed of various elements, which can be explained as follows:

1. Naturalistic motifs: They include human, animal, nature, plants, flowers;
2. Abstract motifs: The elements of motifs do not directly express nature;
3. Geometric patterns: They comprise geometric shapes

such as squares, circles, triangles, etc., which are used using special rules;

4. Historical motifs: They consist of historical elements such as buildings are used;

5. Written motifs: They involve letters and writing (Babaei & Akbari, 2014).

Since clothing is considered an artistic text, the evaluation, and understanding of the work require an understanding of its historical developments, the importance of artistic thought, and the function of artistic concepts in any society. These values and indicators are the criteria for measuring the identity of clothing, the manner and amount of which vary in societies. However, in traditional thinking, art and its components tend to excel and take a transcendent approach. In this regard, traditionalist thinkers consider art to be an excellent and symbolic expression and the transcendent manifestation of esoteric truth, a representation of meaning and a kind of return to one's originality, the sacred and sublime truth of art. Therefore, Iranian clothing based on this conceptualization, in addition to considering material values, has a spiritual definition (Mounesisorkkeh, 2017). In general, the factors affecting the style and context of clothing in Iran can be expressed as Table 2.

Factors that have influenced clothing: political characteristics, governments, communications with mobile communities, economic status, immigration, war, marriage, and displacement could have changed the course of culture. Different colors and patterns, which are influenced by climate and geography, raise awareness, cognizance of deeper, and more connection with nature. From ancient times, man has considered himself a part of nature. He may have had high respect and value for nature and has been inspired by it. The geography of the desert, with its mountainous climate, plains, sea, and coast have all had different effects on the types of natural cloth that are common in that area.

Table 2. Factors affecting clothing style in Iran: Source: Babaei & Akbari, 2014.

No	Factors affecting clothing style in Iran
1	Geographical and environmental conditions
2	Lifestyle and accommodation and social conditions
3	Wars and the political situation and the type of government
4	Economic conditions and technological progress
5	Religious beliefs and customs
6	The ruling class system of society
7	Cultural, economic and political relations with neighboring lands
8	Aesthetic factors

Findings and discussion

Clothing festivals and events in Iran have been held to develop tourism in the region. The reason is that clothing is one of the most significant cultural components. Although the importance of this issue has been realized by everyone, there is a necessity to look beyond the touristic function of Iranian clothing. We need to take an in-depth look at the culture of individuals who value their clothing and are proud of it. The historical legacy of Iranian clothing is an in-depth study of culture, rather than an emphasis on cultural components. It provides a look at the culture from the inside and is a journey throughout the culture. Iranian clothing culture depicts the Iranian people's behavior, customs and rituals, style of thinking, and way of life throughout history. The colors, the designs, the motifs all become a single look and then a language of the heritage and the journey that takes place in its native culture. Although environmental and geographical conditions have influenced the choice of clothing as well as its color, and material, a little reflection on the pieces of clothing indicates that a large part of clothing has been chosen on purpose. There has been thinking and reasoning in the choice of styles so that it can be argued that each piece of clothing represents thought and intention (Fig. 5).

The main purpose of covering oneself can be the realization of excellence. Interaction, human connections, and the introduction of values are all the paths to excellence that Iranians have paid attention to in the past. It can be argued that by looking at clothes, one can understand Iranian values, human values, and the excellence that Iranians value for themselves. Clothing has been a symbol for expressing identity and introducing the values of society. When we move into the depths of culture, popular behaviors, manners, temperaments, types of worldviews, and movements towards excellence become more apparent.

Due to the cultural richness of each period of Iranian history and each of the ethnicities and cities of Iran, they can be further studied. For instance, by focusing on the climate and the city, deeper studies can be done in this field. Iranian clothing is like a valuable historical legacy that is itself an example of culture and needs deeper analysis and study. Clothing is not just clothes, but the nature of the clothing that matters, and clothing means the identity that is manifested in appearance. The nature of the clothing stands for introducing oneself, thinking, nationality, identity, geographical area, reliance on beliefs and convictions, all of which lie at the heart of the cover. Hence, despite the common approaches that consider clothing and attire as a tourist attraction or product, Iranian clothing can be viewed as a culture by itself, and one may travel in its depth to find the origins of this country's habits, values, conventions, beliefs, and

convictions. Members of society construct a system of cultural communication amongst themselves through the symbolic indicators of the garments they wear, and clothing is a language of communication. Clothing has a dual purpose: it conceals the human body while also revealing human characteristics, sentiments, and ideas. In other words, the artist's activity is only a prerequisite for demonstrating the nature of the artwork and his concept, and any work or embodiment outcome is merely a preliminary manifestation of the artist's overall conclusion.

Therefore, it can be said that a component of any nation's or country's art may be discovered in its clothing. Clothing has become a means (visual) to understand the climatic, historical, cultural, artistic, and economic aspects of human life and the level of civilization and development of societies. Iranian clothing is rich and derived from the beliefs, values, norms, thoughts, worldview, lifestyle, character, behavior, and everything that lies in the civilization and life history of a land. Iran inherits the life history of people who have kept and preserved clothing not only as coverage but also as culture in the hearts of their families. The legacy of the history of Iranian clothing owes to the thoughts, values, and opinions that have shaped life and customs. Their lifestyle includes clothing, protection, health, skincare, as well as body care, and coloring. Such a legacy can be found within the colors, designs, patterns, designs, and aesthetics that result from these complex and mysterious thoughts.

The journey within colors, designs, patterns, beauty, wraps, and woofs is the result of these complex and mysterious thoughts. Material values include the quality of fibers, designs, and patterns while spiritual values refer to a sense of modesty, dignity, coverage, excellence, growth, and individual and social status. The cultural heart of clothing, in addition to the material nature of clothing, reflects most of the spiritual nature of clothing, through which the movement towards excellence, inner, connection with nature, modesty and shame, social status, and communication can be seen. Clothing may have been a means to communicate with nature, which is reflected by colors and patterns, and natural cloth. Through his clothing, man gets closer to nature and ultimately to the creator, as a result of which he feels a sense of beauty within himself like nature, which is beautiful and diverse. However, Iranian clothing can be considered a colorful book or canvas on which the people's lives can be read. In other words, the meaning of life lies inside Iranian clothing. Apart from neatness, tidiness, both beauty, the meaning of clothing patterns are also important. Moreover, different occasions and diverse clothes reflect honor and respect for clothes, as well as the person who is wearing the clothes. Clothing

echoes the wisdom, understanding, and attention of Iranians throughout history. The historical heritage of Iranian clothing is derived from the beliefs and convictions in which the components of the Iranian civilization can be understood, and it shows the dignity, cleanliness, beauty, and cultural values of a society. All cultural beliefs, including beauty, attention to the components of aesthetics, color, dignity, reliance on nature, harmony with nature, humanity, thinking, equilibrium, flexibility, and human excellence, lie at the heart of Iranian clothing. This in itself can confirm the fact that the historical heritage of Iranian clothing is owed to the culture of the land, which speaks of civilization, values social relations, and sets humanity at the center

of its cultural values. This brings Iranian society closer to spiritual excellence through clothing. The historical legacy of people has always been a tourist attraction. Material components such as Iranian clothing are derived from the historical heritage of Iranians, which has been presented differently in different periods. Among these, the clothing of the Iranian people is influenced by the climate, geography, climate, lifestyle, and Iranian beliefs over time. The historical legacy of Iranian clothing owes to a culture through which beliefs, lifestyle, customs, entertainment, and leisure are expressed. The historical legacy of Iranian clothing is a journey within deep and inner layers of Iranian culture as if we have traveled to a region of Iran.

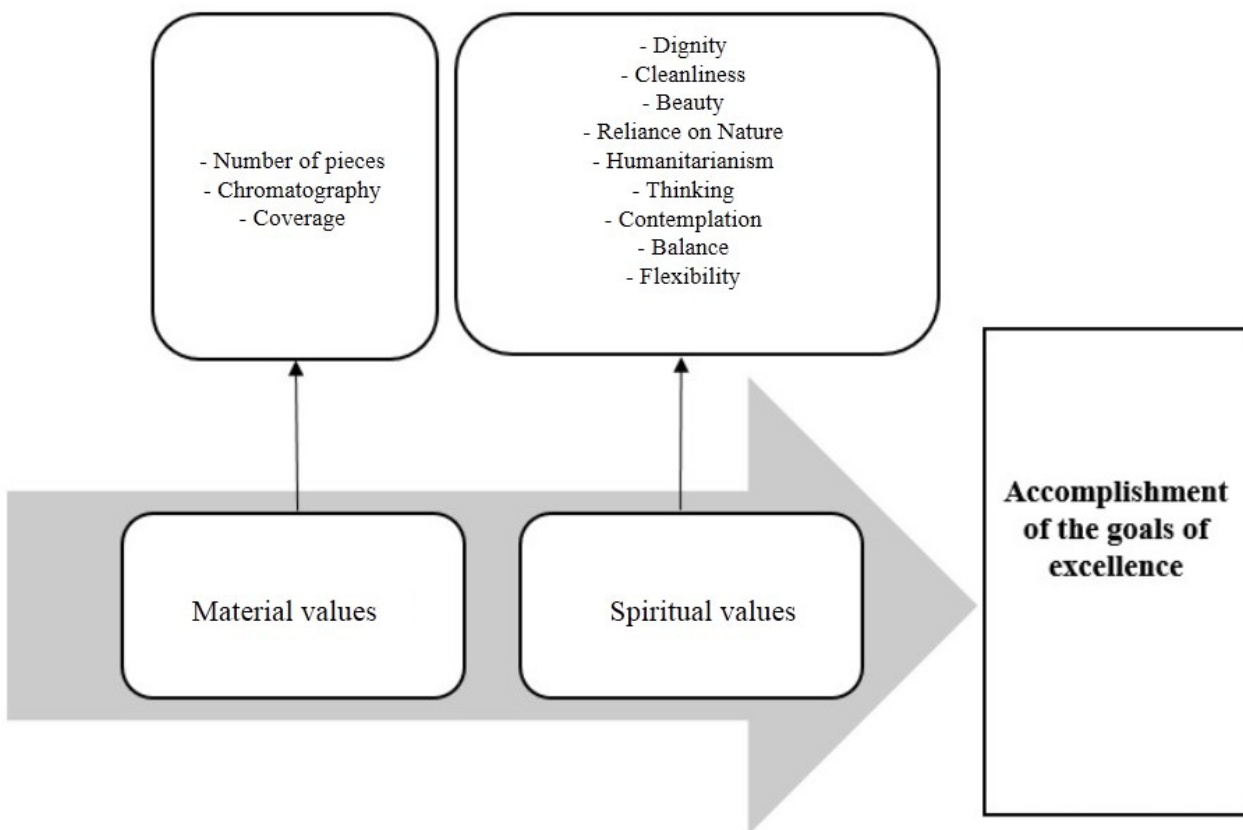


Fig. 5. A journey into the depths of Iranian clothing. Source: Author.

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