

Navigating the Copyright Landscape: Iran's Journey towards Global Integration

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the issues, factors, and outcomes of Iran's accession to international copyright treaties, offering practical recommendations. The research uses a qualitative approach with grounded theory methodology. Participants included experts and activists from various industries such as publishing, music, art, software, law, and cultural managers. Initially, three experts were selected, with more participants recruited through snowball sampling until saturation was achieved at 15 participants. Data was gathered through interviews, transcribed, and analyzed using MAXQDA software with coding techniques. A total of 234 codes relating to copyright treaties were identified, resulting in 123 concepts and 24 categories. Key aspects of Iran's accession include the risks of non-participation, obstacles to accession, infrastructure preparation, benefits of participation, and global cultural image enhancement. While initial costs may rise, long-term gains include increased investment, technology transfer, professionalization, WTO accession, global market presence, cultural industry growth, international relations influence, and enhanced cultural image. To mitigate short-term challenges, recommendations include infrastructure readiness, learning from others' experiences, and meeting accession prerequisites. Iran's accession to international copyright treaties is pivotal for the growth of its cultural and artistic sectors. However, given the prevailing sanctions, immediate participation could adversely impact this industry and curtail access to creative works. Consequently, a fundamental precondition for Iran's joining such treaties is granting an exemption from relevant international sanctions.

Keywords: International Copyright Treaties, Developing Countries, Berne Convention, Cultural Industry, Publishing Industry, Copyright, Iran.

Introduction

With the invention of the printing press in the 15th century and the subsequent increase in scientific publications, access to informational resources moved beyond the exclusive domain of intellectuals and the wealthy, becoming available to the general public. Over time, as the production and distribution of books and other cultural products grew, trade in these industries became highly profitable. Consequently, merchants and unscrupulous individuals entered the field, and the unauthorized duplication of intellectual property became a significant problem.

This issue compelled creators and owners of intellectual property, as well as lawmakers, to seek solutions. The unauthorized reproduction of intellectual works led to the creation of the first law protecting intellectual property. The Statute of Anne, as the most basic legal framework for supporting and encouraging learning and education, was enacted by the English Parliament in 1710. Since then, numerous laws and agreements have been established in various countries worldwide, both at national and international levels, that have successfully addressed copyright-related issues (Matlabi, 2007).

Copyright is a legal tool that grants the creator of an artistic, literary, or any work containing information or ideas the authority to control how their work is used. These rights include the right to reproduce or publish, the right to distribute, the right to adapt, and the right to perform and display the work (Fishman, 2020). In general, copyright laws pursue four main objectives: 1) Encouraging creators' creative endeavors; 2) Providing financial rewards for creation and publication; 3) Developing an ecosystem for learning, education, and research; and 4) Enacting protective laws in case of unlawful acts (Harington, 2017). Copyright protects creative literary and artistic works such as books, music, paintings, sculptures, films, and technology-based works (such as computer programs and databases).

The Statute of Anne and subsequent national laws aimed to protect authors' rights and foster creativity. The debate over copyright expansion centers on balancing creators' interests, public access, and technological advances. International copyright law was established in 1886 with the Bern Convention, ensuring equal rights for authors across member countries. Over 140 nations have ratified the convention, providing authors from different countries with the same rights. Thus, today, at the international level, the copyright protection system is a complex mechanism that is primarily based on the "Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works" with its various versions and the "Universal Copyright Convention" adopted in 1952 and amended in 1971 (Fishman, 2020).

Copyright protection has always been a sensitive and controversial issue, accompanied by numerous challenges. This issue becomes more serious when, in a country like Iran, copyright-related laws are limited only to works published in Iran. This issue makes joining or not joining one of the severe issues among creative industry activists on the one hand and lawyers and policymakers on the other. In recent decades, with the relative improvement of the publishing situation in Iran, the tendency of publishers to adhere to international copyright treaties has increased, and some of them have voluntarily taken to interact with international publishers to purchase or obtain the consent of international publishers for the translation and publication of works. Proponents and opponents of accession cite numerous reasons for accession or non-accession. Jafarzadeh and Ashena (2023), by reviewing published scientific and research texts, identify the reasons of the opponents as:

- Reduced access to scientific and cultural consumption
- Limiting independence and self-sufficiency
- Protection of national interests and benefits
- Contradiction with religious principles

And the reasons of the proponents include:

- Securing the national and public interests of the country
- Benefiting from international legal protections
- Protecting the country's cultural and artistic heritage, works, and ideas

- Supporting and promoting the country's cultural and creative class
- Playing a role and making an impact on the global level
- Scientific, cultural, and ethical growth of society
- Promoting Iranian culture worldwide
- Strengthening and growing the country's cultural and artistic economy
- Improving and growing the quality and quantity of national cultural production
- Enhancing the discipline of structures, intellectual property, and moral property laws and regulations
 - Alignment with religious principles

The issue of Iran joining or not joining international copyright treaties is significant from two perspectives: on the one hand, Iran is required to join the Berne Convention as a condition for membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO); on the other hand, joining international markets, benefiting from long-term economic, political, scientific, and cultural advantages of these markets, aligning with global publishing processes, and staying updated in the field of translating scientific and artistic works are among the benefits of joining international treaties that cannot be ignored. However, joining these treaties will incur individual and national costs for the culture and creative industries, especially in the short term. Therefore, the issue of Iran joining international copyright conventions and its implications has been debated among government officials, policymakers, and cultural authorities for the past two decades. Although the government has submitted bills to the parliament, no serious action has been taken. A review of the literature in this field reveals that despite numerous studies, no research has comprehensively examined the factors influencing, strategies for, and consequences of accession. Therefore, this study seeks to answer the following question: Under what considerations and conditions is accession to international treaties possible and beneficial to the country's cultural industry?

Literature Review

A comprehensive review of the scholarly literature reveals a breadth of research examining various aspects of copyright law and its implications, both globally and within Iran's specific context. These studies can be broadly categorized into two main streams: those addressing general copyright issues and those focused on the dynamics surrounding Iran's potential accession to international copyright treaties.

In the first category, several studies have explored the status of copyright compliance (Sharif Moghadam, Roohollahi & Sharif Moghadam 2016; Adeyemi, 2019), comparative analyses of Iranian copyright law or proposed legislation against international frameworks (Zamani, 2015; Karimi-Isfahani & Rassam, 2022; RezvanpanahPoshteh & Ansari, 2022), as well as the legal challenges and factors shaping intellectual property rights systems (Moein-al-Islam, 2018). The impact of accession to international copyright treaties for Iran's accession to WTO (Fasih-Ramani, 2017; Rezaei Liasi, 2020), the role of intellectual property rights in economic growth (SolhMirzaei, Kianpur & ShaterKhabazi, 2021), and the potential of new technologies to safeguard creators' rights (Varaprasada Rao & Panda, 2022; Adetunji & Okuonghae, 2022). Additionally, some researchers have called for updates to the Berne Convention to address better the needs of the digital age (Schow, 2023). While these studies are highly valuable in developing the literature on copyright, due to their descriptive nature and

the specific societies they examine, they have had limited impact on the development of the copyright industry in Iran and decision-making regarding accession to international treaties.

Extensive research has been conducted on joining international treaties, delving into the benefits, drawbacks, and outcomes of such agreements. Sarkissian (2008) emphasized the importance of tailored IP frameworks, focusing on overcoming barriers rather than superficial changes. Musai (2011) found that Iran's potential WTO accession and subsequent IP obligations could increase book prices and reduce demand due to subsidy cuts and copyright payments; however, long-term supply growth is anticipated. Matlabi and Hosseini (2014) found that Iran's adherence to international copyright standards could raise the prices of translated books but also yield economic, social, and cultural benefits like boosting the translation sector, strengthening domestic copyright laws, supporting local authors and producers, and fostering long-term growth in publishing. Fankhanel (2014) showed that complying with international copyright laws can improve translation quality. Seyf-Asgari Barkusaraii (2017) found that accession could increase domestic music production, quality, and employment in the sector, but may also lead to short-term price increases and consumption declines. Ani (2019) highlighted accession's economic, political, cultural, and social benefits, including access to compulsory translation and reproduction licenses and the prevention of international isolation. Gupta (2019) highlighted the Berne Convention's success in setting global copyright standards, while Deepanshi and Marwah (2021) emphasized its role in protecting creators. Kurt (2021) examined Turkey's delayed accession to the Berne Convention, highlighting cultural, economic, and legal factors influencing the decision. Hekmatnia et al (2021) contended that concerns over increased technology costs due to copyright are unfounded. That accession would require revisions to Iran's domestic copyright laws without imposing obligations regarding publication freedom or censorship. Zareei, Masoudi, and Ravanshad (2021) revealed that joining the international intellectual property rights framework could yield positive economic, social, and cultural outcomes for Iran, including stimulating the publishing industry and safeguarding creators' rights. Jafarzadeh and Ashena (2022) examined the perspectives of proponents and opponents, finding that ratifying the Berne Convention could enhance Iran's cultural security. In contrast, Mohseni (2023) analyzed arguments against Iran's accession, suggesting that opponents often misrepresent the complexities of IP law and that respecting intellectual property rights can be reconciled with ensuring public access to information. Karimi (2023) identified several barriers to Iran's adherence to the Berne Convention, including the absence of a formalized cultural industry, public resistance, and legal inconsistencies.

This literature review highlights the multifaceted nature of the debate surrounding Iran's potential accession to international copyright treaties, with scholars offering diverse perspectives on the possible positive and negative implications for Iran's cultural, economic, and legal landscapes. Research suggests that while joining international IP regimes can pose challenges for the book industry, potential long-term benefits exist. Careful consideration of national contexts and practical implementation strategies is crucial for successful integration. The current study aims to build upon this existing knowledge by comprehensively analyzing the key considerations and practical recommendations for facilitating Iran's integration into the global copyright system. Studies conducted on joining international treaties and related issues in Iran have generally been based on descriptive methods and literature reviews to understand accession's advantages, disadvantages, and consequences. The results of these studies, which are often focused on a limited subset of stakeholders, have been presented. None of these studies

has taken a comprehensive and integrated approach to examine all actors, agents, and stakeholders in copyright law. Therefore, there is a need for an extensive study based on a qualitative and in-depth approach, utilizing the opinions of all copyright stakeholders.

Materials and Methods

This research employed a qualitative, grounded theory approach. Grounded theory involves developing a theory inductively from data collected within a specific context (Bazargan Harandi, 2008). Unlike probability sampling, which aims to generalize findings to a larger population, qualitative research focuses on an in-depth description and explanation of a phenomenon. Data collection continues until theoretical saturation is reached, meaning no new information emerges from subsequent data (Ranjbar, Haqparast, Salsali, Khoshdel, Soleymani & Bahrami, 2012). The research population comprised experts and practitioners from the publishing, music, art, software, legal industries, and cultural managers in Iran. Three experts in the field of copyright (simultaneously publishers and producers of cultural products or researchers in the field of culture and art) were purposefully identified. Through a snowball sampling method, additional individuals were identified. Data collection continued until saturation was achieved, which was determined by the repetition of information (Mansourian, 2007). A total of 15 interviews were conducted. Before starting the interview, the research objective was explained to the interviewees, and their consent to be interviewed was obtained. The data collected from the interviews was analyzed without revealing the names of the participants. Table 1 provides the demographic characteristics of the participants.

Table 1

Expertise in the studied community and interviewee codes

Community	Interviewee Code
PhD in Law and University Faculty Member	1
PhD in Law and University Faculty Member	2
PhD in Law, Specialized Publisher of Legal Books	3
PhD in Cultural Policy and Activism of Social and Cultural Affairs and Cyberspace	4
PhD in Law and Member of the Research Institute Faculty	5
Researcher and Activist of Music Affairs	6
Music Researcher and Referee of Music Festivals	7
Artificial Intelligence and Software Researcher	8
Social and Cultural Manager of the National Cyberspace Center	9
Music Researcher and Composer	11
Music Researcher and Composer	12
PhD of Law and University Faculty Member	13
Associate Professor of Law and Cultural and Artistic Research	14
Copyright specialist and publishing manager (with over 20 years of experience)	15

The primary objective of the interviews was to obtain in-depth insights from participants regarding copyright in Iran, the factors influencing it, and the potential consequences of accession to international copyright treaties. For data collection, semi-structured face-to-face interviews were conducted. Before the interviews, participants were provided with general research questions. All interviews were audio-recorded. The interview commenced based on

the primary research objective. However, as the interview progressed, additional questions were posed by the researcher to delve deeper into the subject matter, based on the information provided by the participants. The interviews ranged from 45 to 120 minutes, contingent on the participants' willingness to engage. Following the interviews, the audio recordings and the researcher's field notes were transcribed into separate text files using Microsoft Word.

Subsequently, data analysis was conducted. MAXQDA software was employed to analyze the interview data. This involved an initial stage of open coding, followed by axial and selective coding. Coding refers to the process of categorizing segments of data or assigning concise labels that capture the essence of the information. For open coding, a line-by-line analysis was adopted. This method entailed meticulously examining the data, phrase by phrase, and sometimes word by word. During this phase, the researcher engaged in conceptualization by deeply reading the interview transcripts and assigning labels to concepts with an open mind, imposing no limitations (Mansourian, 2007). The researcher then places some of these concepts under a more abstract concept known as a category. As the number of concepts increases, the researcher must categorize them, placing each category under more abstract terms or categories. The process of linking categories to subcategories is called axial coding. The main category is identified in axial coding, and then its causal conditions, context, intervening conditions, strategies, and consequences are determined (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Ultimately, the researcher was able to identify these elements by creating a paradigm of conditions, causal conditions, core strategies, intervening variables, and consequences of accession to international copyright treaties. Therefore, in this study, at the end of the qualitative research section, the resulting pattern is considered a qualitative model. The tables derived from the interviews display the separation of sentences, conceptualization, and the creation of categories, characteristics, and codes. Two experts in copyright and research methods participated in part of the data coding process to enhance reliability.

Results

Data coding involves three principal axes: open, axial, and selective. Strauss and Corbin (1998) propose the following steps for data analysis in grounded theory:

1. **Data collection and open coding** (categorization and formation of concepts);
2. **Axial coding** (selecting a core category and linking other categories to it);
3. **Identifying strategies** (actions or interactions resulting from the core phenomenon);
4. **Determining context and setting** (specific conditions affecting strategies);
5. **Identifying intervening conditions** (general environmental conditions affecting strategies);
6. **Consequences** (outcomes resulting from strategy).

Open coding

This phase commences immediately after the first interview. The researcher begins to identify concepts and assign appropriate labels, grouping related concepts after each interview. This study conducted open coding first, followed by axial and selective coding. Coding refers to the process of categorizing segments of data or assigning concise labels that capture the essence of the information.

There are various approaches to open coding. One standard method is line-by-line analysis, which involves meticulously examining the data, phrase by phrase, and sometimes word by word. During this stage, the researcher engages in conceptualization by deeply reading the interview transcripts and assigning labels to concepts with an open mind, imposing no limitations (Mansourian, 2007). 234 codes related to accession to international copyright treaties were identified in this phase. After identifying these initial codes and considering similar codes, 123 concepts and 24 categories were extracted, as shown in Tables 2 and 3. To avoid lengthening this article, Table 2 presents only a sample of the initial codes, associated concepts, and corresponding respondent codes.

Table 2
Sample of initial codes extracted from interview transcripts

Categories	Concepts	Initial Extracted Codes	Respondent Code
Increased investment in the publishing industry as a result of accession	Increased investment in the publishing industry as a consequence of accession	Increased investment in the cultural sector upon accession	15
		Profitability for investors who allocate financial and human resources in this area	13
	Lack of motivation for foreign music investors to invest	Absence of motivation for domestic and foreign investors to invest in the music sector due to non-accession	7
		Lack of motivation for foreign investors to invest in artistic and cultural works due to non-adherence to the convention	2
The harms of non-accession (economic, cultural, and professional-managerial)	Increased intermediaries and access costs as a result of non-accession	Foreign works are offered at higher prices by middlemen due to non-accessibility	3
		Formation of non-economic brokerage and intermediation of foreign books as a result of non-accession	3
		Disregard for regional pricing in the supply of original works by middlemen and offset works	3
	Vulnerability of the cultural industry due to non-access	Significant losses in the handicrafts industry due to non-access	7
		Lack of proper pricing for film production factors in Iran due to the lack of connection with international treaties	11
		Vulnerability of domestic cultural industries due to non-accession	4
		Incurring more losses due to non-compliance with international copyright	7

Axial coding

The purpose of axial coding is to start the process anew and assemble the fragmented data during open coding. In axial coding, categories are connected to subcategories to form more detailed and complete explanations of phenomena (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In axial coding,

the researcher identifies the central or core phenomenon, describes causal conditions, specifies actions and interactions, identifies intervening conditions and context, and determines the consequences and outcomes of strategies for this phenomenon (Kendall, 1999, cited in Farhangi Sharifi, Ghorbanizadeh & Safaeinejad, 2019). Based on the findings of 125 saturated concepts created in the open coding stage for Iran's accession to international copyright treaties and data integration, these concepts were classified into 24 categories (Table 3).

Table 3

Conceptual framework of iran's accession to international copyright treaties

Core Phenomenon	Categorical Cluster	Categories
Accession to international copyright treaties and sustainable development of the publishing industry	Causal Conditions	Benefits of accession (cultural, economic, and legal)
		The harms of non-accession (economic, cultural, and professional-managerial)
		High capacity of cultural and artistic industries
		Necessity of accession to international copyright treaties
	Contextual Conditions	Enforcement issues of the Berne Convention
		Obstacles to accession (cultural, economic, political, and legal)
		Lack of adequate enforcement mechanisms in the country
	Intervening Conditions	Neglect of the cultural and artistic industry and economy
		Support for developing countries in international treaties
		Awareness of cultural and artistic communities
		Global acceptance of international treaties
		Need for minor changes in domestic laws for accession.
	Strategies	Utilizing the experiences of other countries for accession
		Utilizing scientific and research backing for accession
		Creating preconditions for accession
		Preparing infrastructures (technical, informational, financial, commercial, legal, and supportive)
	Consequences	Increased investment in the publishing industry as a result of accession
		Transfer of creative industries technologies
		Creation of prerequisites for joining the WTO
		Rebuilding Iran's cultural image globally
		Strengthening Iran's role in international relations
		Development of the creative industries sector and economy
		Presence in global markets
		Contributing to the professionalization of cultural industries

Selective Coding

Selective coding is the final stage in the grounded theory process that leads to a theoretical model. As mentioned in the methodology section, grounded theory aims to generate a theory rather than merely describing a phenomenon. During the selective coding process, a core category is selected, and all other categories are linked back to this core category. Based on this

core category, a unified storyline organizes all the information around it (Baeidi-Mofardnia et al., 2019, cited in Farhangi et al., 2019). Figure 1 depicts the hierarchical relationship between the core category, causal factors, contextual and intervening variables, strategic categories, and the resulting consequences of accession.

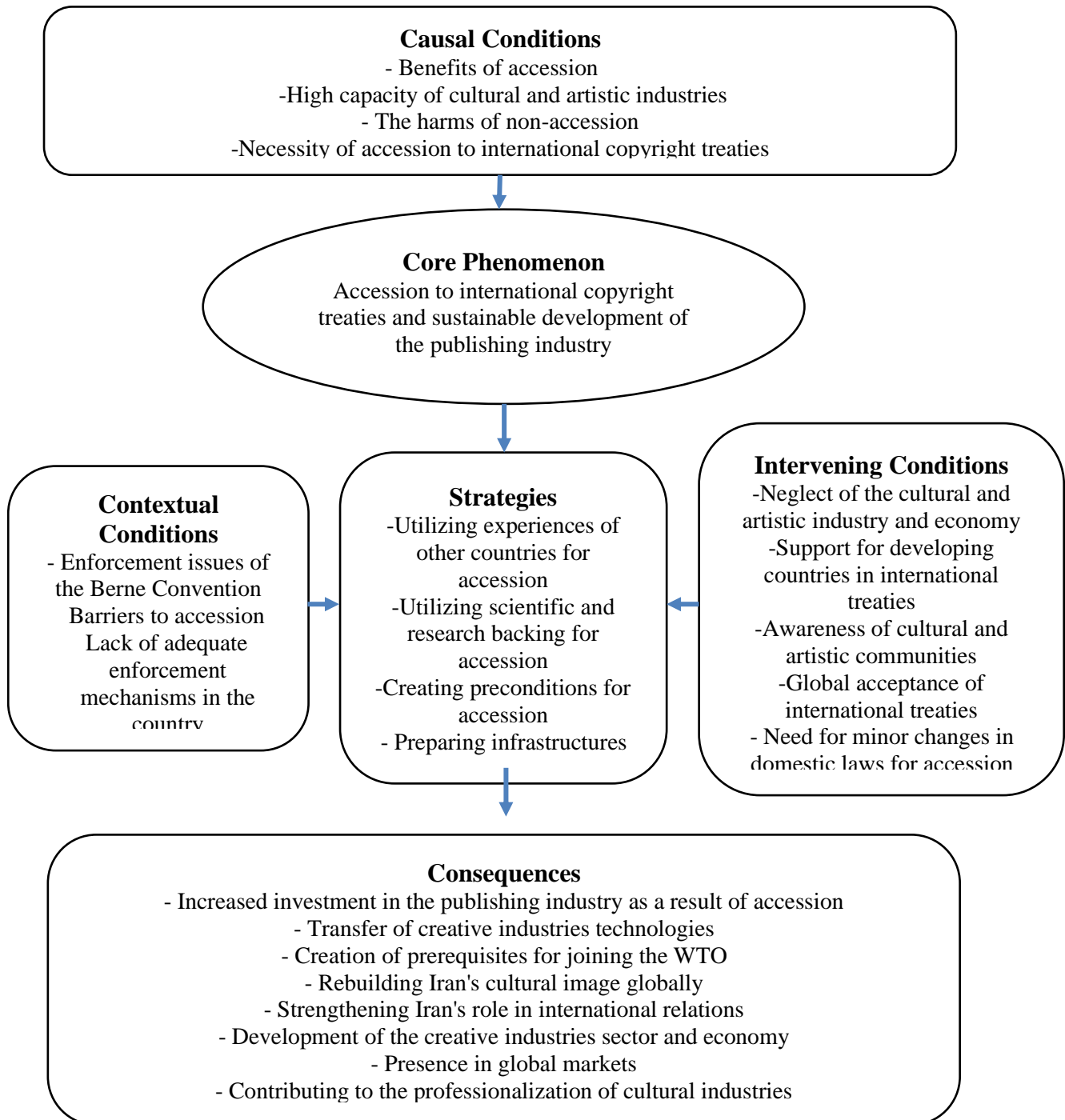


Figure 1: A paradigm model illustrating Iran's accession to international copyright treaties

Discussion

The results indicate that the most significant components influencing accession to international copyright treaties include the harms of non-accession (economic, cultural, and

professional-managerial), barriers to accession (cultural, economic, political, and legal), infrastructure preparation (technical-informational, financial-commercial, legal, and supportive), benefits of accession (cultural, economic, and legal), rebuilding Iran's cultural image globally, developing the industry and economy of creative industries, and supporting developing countries in international copyright treaties. Factors such as the lack of appropriate enforcement mechanisms in the country, awareness among cultural and artistic professionals, increased investment in the publishing industry as a result of accession, the need for minor changes in domestic laws, creating the preconditions for joining WTO, strengthening Iran's role in international relations, presence in global markets, contributing to the professionalization of cultural industries, transferring technology for creative industries, utilizing the existing research background for accession, problems with the enforcement of the Berne Convention, global acceptance of international copyright treaties, the high capacity of cultural and artistic industries, using the experiences of other countries, the necessity of accession to international copyright treaties, and neglect of the culture and art industry and economy were ranked as lower priorities. Neglecting these mentioned components in the accession process will increase the costs of joining international treaties.

As depicted in Figure 1, the elements constituting the model of accession to international copyright treaties include antecedent conditions, the central phenomenon, contextual conditions, intervening conditions, strategies, and consequences.

Causal conditions

Based on the results, the Causal conditions include: the harms of non-accession (economic, cultural, and professional managerial), the benefits of accession (cultural, economic, and legal), the high capacity of the cultural and artistic industries, and the necessity of joining international treaties. These conditions have also been raised in previous research. Seyf-Asgari Barkusaraii (2017) demonstrated that accession to the Berne Convention leads to increased domestic music production, improved quality of music production, and increased employment in the music sector. Zareei et al. (2021) argue that joining the international intellectual property rights system has positive economic, social, and cultural impacts on a country. A study of publishing contracts by Karimi Isfahani and Rassam (2022) reveals that creators and publishers are not adequately familiar with their rights and obligations, highlighting the need for greater awareness among publishers and authors regarding publishing contracts and their regulations. This would enable them to enter into contracts knowingly, safeguarding the interests and rights of both parties and preventing future disputes.

Core phenomenon

Based on the results, "accession to international treaties and sustainable growth in the publishing industry" is considered the central phenomenon of the present study, with all elements surrounding this phenomenon taking shape. Zareei et al. (2021) believe that joining the copyright system will stimulate the publishing industry and protect the rights of published works. Mohseni (2023) also argues that promoting science and knowledge primarily requires the support of content producers, science and technology, and knowledge institutions at all levels; and believes that without them, science and knowledge will not be produced or even consumed in sufficient quantities.

Contextual conditions

Barriers to accession (cultural, economic, political, and legal), enforcement issues of the Berne Convention, and the lack of adequate enforcement mechanisms in the country are the Contextual conditions in this study. Given Iran's rich cultural and historical background, Zamani (2015) emphasized the necessity of adhering to an international system that safeguards a country's rights. Nemati (2018) argues that Iran's domestic laws, despite their shortcomings, provide the necessary foundation for implementing measures outlined in the Berne and TRIPS conventions, requiring only legislative updates. Ani (2019), highlighting the international community's support for developing countries, states that compulsory, non-exclusive, and non-transferable licenses for translation and reproduction, as stipulated in the Berne Convention's appendix, are granted to them at fair prices commensurate with the markets of developing countries. Gupta (2019), observing the global acceptance of the Berne Convention, believes that the convention has successfully addressed intellectual property issues. Almost all signatory countries have reaped their benefits. Adeyemi (2019), emphasizing the need for increased awareness, argues that to overcome copyright infringement challenges, the Nigerian Commission should raise public awareness of its activities. RezvanpanahPoshteh and Ansari (2022) say that, despite the Islamic Republic of Iran not being a signatory to any international copyright conventions and lacking an international track record, its domestic laws align with or do not contradict international regulations in several instances. However, in some cases, these laws are incomplete, ambiguous, and insufficient, necessitating alignment with international standards. Mohseni (2023) asserts that intellectual property protection is crucial for fostering innovation and knowledge dissemination.

Intervening conditions

Neglecting the culture and arts industry and economy, support for developing countries, global acceptance of international treaties, the need for minor changes to domestic laws, and awareness among cultural and artistic figures are the Intervening conditions in the present model. Based on Seyf-Asgari Barkusarai's (2017) study, accession to the convention would lead to a short-term increase in the price of consumer music, consequently decreasing consumption. Musai (2011) argues that removing subsidies and paying royalties would increase book prices and reduce demand. Kurt (2021) cites factors such as the role of translation as a tool for cultural development in the Republic of Turkey, the potential impact on domestic industries, and barriers to accessing foreign works as reasons for Turkey's delay in joining the convention. Hekmatnia et al (2021) argue that accession does not impose any obligation on countries to have a free publication of works or to prevent censorship issues, and that the publication of works and their methods are subject to the domestic regulations of each country.

Strategies

Based on the results, the accession strategies include preparing the infrastructure (technical-informational, financial-commercial, legal, and supportive), providing the preconditions for accession, utilizing the experiences of other countries, and leveraging existing research to facilitate accession. The appropriate use of these strategies can significantly reduce the costs of accession. According to Fasih-Ramandi's (2017) study, Iran's membership in global copyright conventions, including the Berne Convention, necessitates preliminary preparations in the theoretical realm (lawmaking). He argues that without preparing the necessary conditions

at the national level, membership in these treaties will undoubtedly lead to many problems and issues. He also emphasizes the importance of learning from the experiences of successful countries like India for accession. Sarkissian (2008) believes that arguments for changing institutional frameworks and accepting international copyright treaties should focus on removing obstacles and building capacity within the country, rather than making superficial changes merely to change or yield to stakeholders' interests.

Consequences

Suppose other influential factors and the mentioned strategies are considered. In that case, accession can lead to several consequences such as increased investment in the publishing industry, transfer of related technologies, and professionalization of the publishing industry, facilitating accession to the World Trade Organization, rebuilding Iran's cultural image in the world, strengthening Iran's role in international relations, developing the creative industries and economy, and gaining access to global markets. One of the most critical concerns of planners and cultural industry activists has always been the consequences of accession, which have been addressed in various ways in previous research. Ani (2019) considers one of the significant advantages of accession to be facilitating the process of joining the WTO and preventing countries' political and international isolation. According to a study by Zareei et al. (2021), joining the copyright system will improve the quality of works; facilitate contract signing with foreign publishers, and increase investment in the publishing industry. Jafarzadeh and Ashena (2023) have also shown that, under the current circumstances of the country, accepting the Berne Convention can play a significant role in achieving the cultural security of the Islamic Republic of Iran by strengthening national identity, preventing cultural invasion, securing national interests, and strengthening cultural governance and economy. Musai (2011) believes that by adhering to international copyright treaties, the volume of book printing will increase in the long term for various reasons, such as entering international markets and improving quality. Matlabi and Hosseini (2014) demonstrated that accession can yield significant benefits by safeguarding Iran's interests, including introducing valuable Iranian concepts and creations to international markets. Fankhanel (2014) argues that the cost of royalties resulting from adherence to international conventions leads to the selection of superior works by authors for translation, increasing the quality of translated books. Deepanshi and Marwah (2021) believe that India's membership in this convention has benefited Indian creators and the country's creative industries and helped strengthen India's position in global intellectual property.

Conclusion

The primary drivers of Iran's accession to international copyright treaties and the sustainable development of the publishing industry are the detriments of non-accession, the benefits of accession, the high capacity of cultural and artistic industries, and the necessity of joining international copyright treaties. To facilitate accession, policymakers and the government should prioritize strategic approaches such as infrastructure preparation, creating preconditions for accession, leveraging experiences from other countries, and utilizing existing research. Additionally, policies that align with the industry's needs, such as supporting developing countries, promoting global acceptance of international copyright treaties, raising awareness among cultural and artistic professionals, and making necessary adjustments to domestic laws, should be adopted. Barriers to accession, including cultural, economic, political,

and legal obstacles, along with enforcement issues related to the Berne Convention and the lack of adequate domestic enforcement mechanisms, pose significant challenges that must be addressed before accession. These actions and considerations can collectively lead to long-term positive outcomes, including increased investment in the publishing industry, technology transfer, the professionalization of cultural industries, facilitating membership in the WTO, enhancing Iran's international reputation, fostering the growth of the creative industries, and expanding market access. In conclusion, establishing robust technical, informational, financial, legal, and supportive infrastructures and fulfilling all accession requirements is indispensable for Iran to join the treaty amidst the prevailing sanctions. The potential removal of international sanctions could significantly enhance the efficacy of Iran's accession, providing a substantial boost to the nation's cultural and artistic sector.

Given the necessity of acceding to international copyright treaties as a prerequisite for joining the WTO and as a foundation for strengthening and developing creative industries, it is essential to consider the following points to mitigate potential challenges and drawbacks of accession:

- Under the prevailing sanctions imposed on Iran by several Western nations, Iran's immediate accession to international copyright treaties without the requisite technical, financial, and legal frameworks could have a detrimental impact on the cultural and artistic sector. Therefore, the conditions precedent to accession must be thoroughly assessed and fulfilled.

- Leveraging the experiences of developing countries like India, which have joined the Berne Convention in recent decades, can help reduce the potential costs of accession.

- Accession without preparing the necessary technical, informational, financial, commercial, legal, and supportive infrastructures will not only benefit the culture and arts industry. Still, it may also incur costs that exceed its resources, especially in the short term.

- Neglecting the long-term benefits of acceding to international copyright treaties and focusing on short-term costs will significantly harm the development and strengthening of creative industries. To reduce short-term accession costs, the government should allocate a portion of cultural and artistic subsidies to this sector.

- The provisions provided to support developing countries mean that the costs of acceding to the convention are not burdensome for these countries. To reduce delays in accession, creative industry stakeholders, policymakers, and planners should consider the predicted supports.

- Before accession, domestic laws must be amended and updated to be compatible with international copyright treaties. However, attention to national interests and the principle of territoriality is essential.

- The Berne Convention, like any other copyright law, merely outlines the subjects and rights protected and does not impose any obligation for the free publication of content or disregard for a country's domestic publishing guidelines. The publication of works is subject to domestic regulations. Therefore, the concerns of the government and cultural policymakers are justified.

- Ultimately, accession to international copyright treaties has many positive consequences. Still, without preparing the necessary infrastructure, providing prerequisites, neglecting creative industries by the government and private sector, creating a cultural awareness among relevant stakeholders, and addressing cultural, economic, political, and legal

obstacles, accession costs will increase.

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