

Promoting Culture and Heritage Tourism Through Souq Al Awaleen: A Qualitative Study

Muhammad Awais BHATTI*

Department of Management, College of Business, King Faisal University, Al-Ahsa,
31982, Saudi Arabia.
mbhatti@kfu.edu.sa

Wael Sh. Basri

College of Business Administration, Management Information System, Northern
Border University, Arar. Saudi Arabia.
wael.basri@nbu.edu.sa

Abstract: This study attempts to investigate the role of Souq Al Awaleen as an essential component of cultural heritage tourism in Saudi Arabia, to discern the reflection of regional identity in the traditional markets, enhance visitor experience, and promote heritage tourism. Using a qualitative approach, 14 semi-structured interviews were conducted with key stakeholders like tourist guides, hotel management, and senior officials. The interview data were further subjected to coding analysis with three steps to yield meaningful insights. The study outcomes revealed that Souq Al Awaleen is a vibrancy of different cultural representations, significantly boosting visitor satisfaction through actual experiences. In addition to that, the strategic integration of traditional markets with the bigger cultural events, for instance, Riyadh Season, will further enforce economic benefits and community involvement on heritage tourism. This study contributes to the literature stream of cultural heritage tourism by emphasizing that the aspect of authenticity and identity holds paramount importance in the local setting of traditional markets. The implications for stakeholders are in the context of promoting a collective approach reflecting community participation and sustainability. This work further highlights the functional importance of traditional markets in preserving and sustaining elements of cultural heritage in shifting tourism dynamics.

Keywords: Culture, Heritage, Identity, Tourism, Souq Al Awaleen

1. INTRODUCTION

Heritage tourism is a growing sector of global tourism, which helps locations preserve their cultures and economies. It ranges from cultural heritage sites, old customs, to past stories that allow tourists to live the local culture (Adie, 2024). Ancient monuments, historical cities, and traditional markets stand out as essential pieces of a nation's identity and tourism (Novita et al., 2024). Heritage tourism also helps preserve and promote cultural value while providing sufficient cash to communities that depend on cultural resources for economic growth and development (Wang et al., 2024). The UNWTO has long been pleading that the cultural heritage of

tourism fosters 'inclusiveness' and 'sustainable development' (Zhang et al., 2024). 'Traditional markets as living cultural and historical imprints have been an increasingly important aspect in heritage tourism. These markets represent the aspect of the cultural and social heritage of a destination in its ability to give tourists unforgettable experiences (Qiu et al., 2024). They facilitate cross-cultural exchange and also preserve indigenous arts. Marrakech's souks, Istanbul's Grand Bazaar, and Mexico City's Mercado de La Merced are not only economic centers but also cultural displays of the locals' lifestyles, arts, and ways of life (Chaigasem & Kumboon, 2024). The markets of such regions depict regional cultures and throw tourists into local histories and customs (Gai et al., 2024). Events and festivals enhance cultural heritage through the usual traditional markets. Mass cultural events promote local arts and crafts, history, and allow tourists to engage with a destination's culture (Suryani, 2024). This will be successful if tourism and cultural preservation happen through the inclusion of traditional markets in these events (Quang et al., 2024). Traditional markets attract tourists, therefore passing on cultural knowledge and traditions, promote tourism and heritage preservation. Empirical researches on heritage tourism had named the influencing factors behind tourist perceptions and motivations as cultural experiences (Xie, 2024). There has been much study on the purpose of tourists concerning the authentication of heritage sites and how this in turn affects their experience and likelihood of revisiting. According to Jiawei and Mustapha (2024) cultural authenticity acts as the determining factor in the satisfaction generated due to heritage tourism. The researchers went on to note that tourists have a preference for locations and activities that reflect the culture and heritage of the destination (Wenjing et al., 2024). de Oliveira et al. (2024) also reported the fact that tourists are searching for authentic, immersive experiences in those destinations where they can feel the lifestyle and culture. It has recently been proven that old markets are not mere commercial places; instead, they have become cultural spaces where travelers can experience a destination's living traditions (Jv et al., 2024). Yan et al. (2024) believe that traditional markets play the role of a very important element of the process of urban cultural requalification as they form the cultural heritage of a region and therefore are a good reason for coming there as a tourist. Cultural tourists visit them because they view them as symbols of a region's local identity and authenticity (Ma & Mohame, 2023). Yu (2023) proved that traditional markets provide tourists with the possibility of getting in touch more personally and interactively with local culture than they would in museums or other heritage destinations. According to Arumugam et al. (2023) tourists like markets for their lively atmosphere and the possibility

of encountering local vendors and artisans. Empirical research has considered the integration of traditional trade into large cultural events. Wasela (2023) concluded that traditional markets attract tourists as they offer a unique and authentic experience of local culture at important festivals and events. The research established that old markets enhance cultural experience for the tourist attending the music festivals and cultural showcases (Tan et al., 2023). The tourists spend time getting to interact with the culture in the old markets through food, craftsmanship, and performances. The study shows that incorporating them into big events encourages the use and appreciation of them. Though there is a growing literature on heritage tourism, little attention has been paid to where traditional markets lie within cultural heritage tourism initiatives (Deng et al., 2023). Though studies such as Thao et al. (2023) looked at the ways in which traditional marketplaces contribute to tourism, it is still unclear precisely how that occurs. Few research have studied how traditional market experiences affect heritage destination tourists' satisfaction (Perry, 2023). Heritage tourism relies on authenticity, yet traditional marketplaces' subtle effects on authenticity are understudied (Perry, 2023). There is very little strategic tourist management study on integrating traditional marketplaces into large-scale events. Iversen et al. (2023) noted that traditional markets enhance festivals and events' cultural atmosphere, but there is little empirical information on how to integrate them into heritage tourism initiatives. Traditional markets' role in reinforcing cultural narratives at huge events like music festivals and national festivities is unknown (Wang et al., 2023). There is no empirical study on how traditional markets in these events affect local craftsmen' exposure and sustainability (Bramantyo et al., 2023). The visitor experience at traditional marketplaces during huge events is similarly understudied. Many studies have examined tourist satisfaction in heritage areas, but few have examined how tourists engage with local marketplaces during important cultural events (Zou et al., 2023). The literature lacks qualitative study on tourist experiences in these contexts. Some studies have shown the role of traditional markets in urban regeneration (Suci et al., 2023), but there is little evidence on how they affect rural tourism and heritage preservation, especially in regions where large-scale cultural events attract tourists. Cultural heritage tourism, which promotes economic growth and local customs, underpins this research. According to cultural heritage tourism theory, sites with strong cultural narratives and authentic experiences attract tourists seeking meaningful involvement with the past (Liu et al., 2022). This study examines traditional marketplaces as living historical sites with economic and cultural functions. This study uses experience tourism and cultural commodification theories to examine how

traditional markets might be integrated into heritage tourism initiatives through large-scale cultural events like Riyadh Season. According to experiential tourism theory, tourists want real, immersive encounters that let them actively participate in a destination's culture (Qiu et al., 2022). This theory supports this research's goal of exploring how traditional markets like Souq Al Awaleen allow tourists to interact with local artisans, see traditional crafts, and learn about the goods' historical significance. According to cultural commodification theory, presenting cultural products like those seen in traditional markets can boost tourism and promote cultural preservation (Yang et al., 2022). Such theoretical approaches underpin this research's goals. Following the premise that traditional markets are cultural symbols, the first goal is to study how regional markets reflect cultural identity. The second goal is to examine how traditional markets promote heritage tourism by providing real, immersive experiences for cultural visitors. Third, use experiential tourism theory to analyse visitor perceptions and experiences. Using cultural commodification and tourist development theory, the fourth goal is to improve heritage tourism methods by integrating traditional marketplaces into large-scale events.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

An increasing interest in how travel can protect and promote cultural heritage has led tourism research to focus on cultural and heritage tourism (Butler et al., 2022). Cultural tourism promotes economic growth and cultural identity, according to scholars. Cultural and history assets attract tourists, which boost local hospitality, retail, and transportation economies (Katelieva & Muhar, 2022). However, commodifying culture for tourism raises worries about authenticity and degrading cultural heritage. Researchers have investigated ways to reduce these issues by including communities in cultural asset management and interpretation (Kastenholz & Gronau, 2022). This method balances economic goals with cultural integrity by letting locals determine their culture. Cultural heritage tourism also promotes intercultural understanding, according to the literature (Parlato et al., 2022). Tourism experiences that immerse travellers in a destination's history, culture, and customs foster cross-cultural understanding and appreciation. Well-curated cultural events generally increase tourists' appreciation for the destination's legacy and inhabitants, according to research (Nadalipour et al., 2022). This promotes worldwide cultural variety. Researchers also recommend using virtual and augmented reality to improve cultural tourism. These technologies give travellers rich,

interactive experiences that bring history to life without straining delicate cultural sites (Cerquetti et al., 2022). Cultural and heritage tourism promotes economic sustainability and cultural preservation, despite challenges, according to the literature.

2.1 Traditional Markets as Reflections of Cultural Identity: Empirical Findings and Relationship Development

Traditional markets have long been seen as important symbols of a society's culture, connecting the past and present. Traditional markets conserve and promote regional cultures as living museums of local customs, arts, and values, according to several studies. Traditional markets in Southeast Asia are important for economic transactions, social solidarity, and cultural continuity (Panzera, 2022). Middle Eastern markets like Souq Al Awaleen are rich in culture and showcase handmade items, traditional delicacies, and local customs that reflect a nation's variety. Markets are cultural hubs where residents and tourists perform and experience culture (Shelley-Anne, 2022). These locations conserve traditions while meeting modern visitor needs through their architecture, merchandise, and activities. This adaptation keeps traditional markets crucial to cultural tourism and national identity (Yang & Wall, 2022). The relationship between market characteristics and cultural representation goes a long way in explaining why traditional markets are present manifestations of cultural identity. Studies on the matter suggest that marketplaces are where tourists get to immerse themselves in the local culture through different sights, sounds, and even smells that cannot be experienced anywhere else (Noaime et al., 2022). An example of this is the arrangement of market lay; the goods; and interaction between vendors and their customers. Interviews and the case study also show that, like other flea markets, Souq Al Awaleen hones local craftsmanship and food history for tourism to connect regional heritage. Handmade articles such as the ceramics and woven fabrics, contribute to the local economy and help preserve cultural practices that would otherwise be lost (Wang et al., 2024). These encounters confer a sense of belonging and cultural identity for locals while providing the tourist with a true taste of Arabia. Traditional markets, such as Souq Al Awaleen may serve as a way of linking local identities to national identity but in a manner that respects and upholds culture.

2.2 Promoting Heritage Tourism with Souq Al Awaleen: Evidence and Relationships

Souq Al Awaleen evidences how in Saudi Arabia, traditional markets manifest aspects of regionalism and employ elements of cultural diversity

of that nation. The market studies of the Arab market reveal that these markets are important for interchange and meetings between the rural and urban areas while providing regional products and practices with national and international exposure (Quang et al., 2024). This is very essential in Saudi Arabia, for regions have varying cultures. Souq Al Awaleen unifies those disparate cultural expressions with a national identity while preserving their diversity. The integration of the traditional markets into modern events like Riyadh Season redefines these places and makes them stay in tune with the times in the tourism sector (Jiawei & Mustapha, 2024). Traditional markets such as Souq Al Awaleen have managed to retain their culture and enhance heritage tourism and identity conservation as local and international acts unite the world further. Souq Al Awaleen is one of the Saudi Arabian attractions where locals and visitors can feel the cultural past of the country through traditional art, craft, and cooking. Similar research studies in Turkey and Morocco have termed such places as living heritage sites that sustain the past (Wasela, 2023). Indeed, this is Souq Al Awaleen since it conforms to the global trends of experiential tourism in terms of its ancient architecture, traditional crafts, and cultural performances. For heritage tourism during Riyadh Season, which draws millions of visitors, Souq Al Awaleen presents chosen experiences that reflect Saudi culture, from traditional artisans to folk music and dances. The function the Souq Al Awaleen plays as a cultural center in major events like Riyadh Season supports its association with heritage tourism. According to Iversen et al. (2023), heritage tourism benefits from markets if these are integrated into cultural events.

2.3 Cultural Authenticity and Heritage Experience at Souq Al Awaleen as Perceived by Visitors

Heritage tourism happiness and experience depend on cultural authenticity. Tourists value authenticity, especially in destinations that emphasise cultural and historical narratives, according to empirical research from traditional markets worldwide (Bramantyo et al., 2023). Traditional crafts, architecture, and local customs provide visitors a sense of authenticity in North African and Middle Eastern markets like Egypt and Morocco (Suci et al., 2023). According to Asian heritage market surveys, travellers enjoy immersive cultural experiences like craft creation and local food preparation (Qiu et al., 2022). Souq Al Awaleen visitors view the market as an accurate depiction of Saudi Arabia's cultural heritage, according to previous studies. The souq's architecture, traditional items, and local performances provide authenticity to the heritage experience. Heritage tourists flock to Souq Al Awaleen because it offers an uncensored

view of Saudi Arabia's culture. 'Tourists' involvement with the local environment strengthens the link between visitor impressions and Souq Al Awaleen's cultural authenticity (Kastenholz & Gronau, 2022). Research shows that traditional markets, especially those integrated with cultural events like Riyadh Season, help modern tourists connect with historical traditions (Nadalipour et al., 2022). Visitors get an authentic spatial experience from the market's design and layout, which frequently mirror centuries-old traditions. Souq Al Awaleen's handcrafted pottery and traditional clothes are cultural artefacts that allow visitors to experience Saudi Arabia's history and heritage. This engagement helps guests feel more connected to the destination, boosting authenticity. Local artists and entertainers demonstrate cultural skills and performances that have been passed down through generations, giving visitors a sense of authenticity (Zuo et al., 2022) (Zuo, Li, Lin, Chen, & Kong, 2022) (Zuo et al., 2022). These aspects and the market's immersive atmosphere create a genuine and culturally enriching heritage experience for visitors. Both tangible and intangible market factors affect visitors' impressions of Souq Al Awaleen's cultural authenticity and heritage experience. Traditional buildings and cultural artefacts including textiles, pottery, and calligraphy illustrate Saudi Arabia's rich cultural history. Intangibles like merchants and tourists, traditional music, and local culinary scents create an intense sensory experience that boosts authenticity (Noaime et al., 2022). Visitors see Souq Al Awaleen as a cultural experience that lets them experience local customs as well as shop. Cultural performances and traditional storytelling on the market throughout Riyadh Season enhance this heritage tourism experience. According to research, multi-sensory and participative experiences make visitors more likely to see the market as an authentic depiction of Saudi Arabia's cultural heritage (Shelley-Anne, 2022). This authenticity boosts Souq Al Awaleen's heritage tourist appeal by matching visitor expectations with the market's cultural and historical relevance.

3. METHODOLOGY

The qualitative approach of the research relied on conducting semi-structured interviews with guided tourists, hotel managers, and senior cultural and tourism initiators for the extraction of in-depth insights into the perceptions of relevant stakeholders on heritage tourism in Saudi Arabia. Fifteen interviews were conducted. These were strategic selections among the respondents for their robust stands on advocating heritage tourism and as connected persons of traditional markets, such as Souq Al Awaleen. This was conducted at different locations in Saudi Arabia to

ensure a wider and broader coverage of regional views through interviews (Table 1).

Table 1: Respondents Profile Table

Resp ID	Gender	Age Group	Occupation	Years of Experience	Role in Heritage Tourism
1	Male	30-39	Tourist Guide	8	Direct interaction with tourists
2	Male	40-49	Hotel Manager	15	Management and operational oversight
3	Male	20-29	Artisan	5	Cultural representation through crafts
4	Male	50-59	Senior Official	20	Policy making and tourism strategy
5	Male	30-39	Cultural Event Organizer	10	Event management and coordination
6	Male	40-49	Market Vendor	12	Direct sales and customer interaction
7	Male	30-39	Tour Operator	7	Organizing tours for visitors
8	Male	50-59	Heritage Consultant	25	Advising on heritage preservation
9	Male	40-49	Local Business Owner	15	Supporting local economy
10	Male	20-29	Student	2	Aspiring cultural ambassador
11	Male	30-39	Hospitality Trainer	10	Training staff in cultural awareness
12	Male	50-59	Community Leader	30	Advocacy for local heritage
13	Male	40-49	Cultural Researcher	18	Researching cultural tourism trends
14	Male	30-39	Government Official	12	Implementing tourism policies

A semi-structured interview guideline was adopted to provide the participant with opportunity to discuss their unique experiences in detail, but most importantly it ensured consistency. All interviews were conducted face-to-face and lasted for 45-60 minutes, which allowed the depth and richness of detail in information to be captured. Each of the interviews taped, was then transcribed and coded based on the open coding approach, following a three-step sequence: first, open coding enabled key themes and patterns to be identified to emerge. Axial coding then connected these initial codes to broader categories. Finally, selective coding was used for further refinement of themes and relationships between themes that could give even deeper insights into the role of Souq Al Awaleen in reflecting

cultural identity and improving heritage tourism. Thematic analysis brings out visitor perceptions, stakeholder experiences, and recommendations for ways of improving heritage tourism strategies (Table 2).

Table 2: Interview Guideline for Research Objectives

Objective	Interview Questions
Objective 1: To Explore how Souq Al Awaleen Reflects the Cultural Identity of Different Regions in Saudi Arabia.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How does Souq Al Awaleen represent the cultural diversity of Saudi Arabia? 2. Can you provide examples of regional traditions or crafts displayed at the market? 3. In what ways does Souq Al Awaleen foster a connection to the heritage of different regions?
Objective 2: To Examine the Role of Traditional Markets in Promoting Heritage Tourism.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What role do traditional markets like Souq Al Awaleen play in attracting tourists? 2. How do you perceive the impact of Souq Al Awaleen on promoting local culture and traditions to visitors? 3. Are there any initiatives in place to promote these markets as key heritage tourism sites?
Objective 3: To Analyze Visitor Perceptions and Experiences Related to the Cultural and Historical Elements of Souq Al Awaleen.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What kind of feedback have you received from visitors regarding their experience at Souq Al Awaleen? 2. How do visitors respond to the historical and cultural elements presented at the market? 3. Can you describe any specific aspects of Souq Al Awaleen that resonate particularly well with tourists?
Objective 4: To Provide Insights for Improving Heritage Tourism Strategies through the Integration of Traditional Markets in Large-Scale Events like Riyadh Season.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How could traditional markets be better integrated into large-scale tourism events like Riyadh Season? 2. What strategies could improve the visibility and appeal of markets like Souq Al Awaleen during such events? 3. Are there specific challenges or opportunities you foresee in incorporating traditional markets into these larger tourism initiatives?

4. RESULTS

4.1 Results for Objective 1: To explore how Souq Al Awaleen reflects the cultural identity of different regions in Saudi Arabia

From the interview with the Souq Al Awaleen participants, it was established that Souq Al Awaleen primarily serves to preserve and highlight the regional identities of different parts of Saudi Arabia. As a traditional market, Souq Al Awaleen happens to act as a repository of living regional crafts, cuisine, and customs, consequently bringing out the diversity of heritage in the Kingdom. Stakeholders emphasized that the Souq Al Awaleen is more than a commercial hub; it is a cultural one, offering the different traditions of various regions of Saudi Arabia in a single place. Artifact production, traditional wear, and regional food offerings at the market really give visitors a feel of Saudi culture but also provide space for local artisans to sustain their crafts. In addition, the stakeholders argue that both the architecture and the layout of Souq Al Awaleen resemble the historic pattern of traditional markets in Saudi Arabia, thus making it even more authentic. The structure of the stands and their merchandise is arranged according to the cultures of the areas; instead, the experience will empower people to associate with Saudi's past. Such an environment teaches tourists and evokes pride in local communities. The market is the location where intangible culture, like oral traditions, folk art and storytelling are renewed especially in special events and festivals.

4.1.1 Quotes from Interview

- "Souq Al Awaleen is like a mirror of Saudi Arabia's diversity. You can see the history and traditions of every region just by walking through the market." Interviewee 3

This assertion goes on to indicate that the market depicts the cultural capital in different regions. When this respondent asserts that the market is a metaphor, this simplifies what really represents Saudi Arabia's multi-dimensional identity.

- "We attempt to show the various characteristics of every region, from hand-made pottery from Najd to traditional clothing from the Asir region. This helps to sustain some of the crafts that make us different." Interviewee 7

This quotation heeds to the motive that the market is interested in keeping alive region-specific traditions. The interviewee also highlights the importance of such markets in sustaining specific local crafts that otherwise

would be dominated in a very modernized world society. This insight further suggests the role of the market in protecting endangered cultural practices.

- "It's a journey through Saudi Arabia without leaving the market." People like visiting the market because they can experience all the culture of the Kingdom at one point. Interviewee 11

Interviewee 11 perspective highlights the convenience and richness of the market in terms of culture. This perspective strengthens the significance of the market as a consolidated hub where visitors have the experience of Saudi Arabian diversity in heritage.

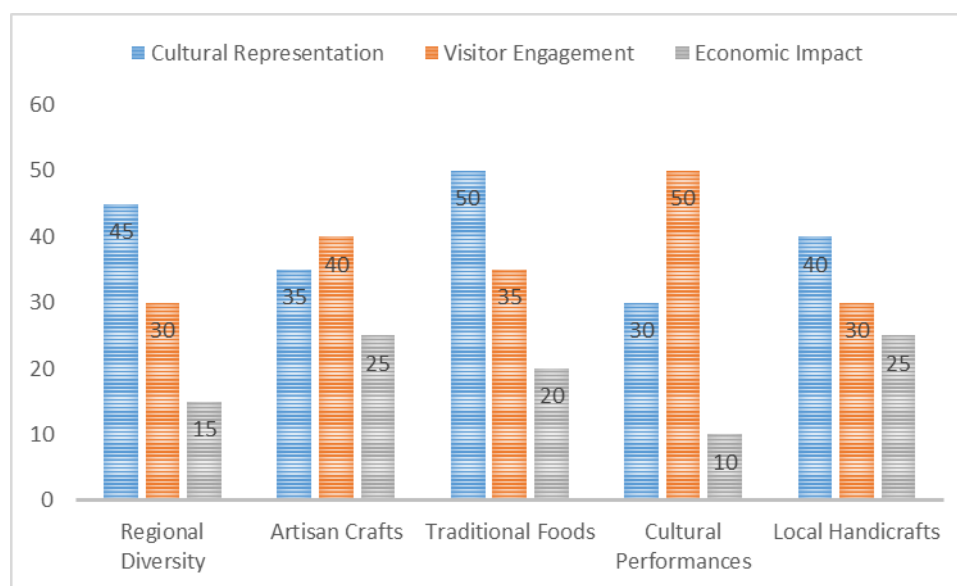


Figure 1: Clustered Column Analysis for Objective 1: Exploring How Souq Al Awaleen Reflects the Cultural Identity of Different Regions.

The quotations above illustrate a recurring theme that involves the market performing as both a cultural repository and a living hub where regional identities are vigorously put to the public. Statements together indicate that Souq Al Awaleen acts as an arena linking the past to the present, bringing traditionalism into the modern world to be appreciated by both locals and international tourists (Figure 1). The findings confirm previous studies focused on the role of traditional markets in cultural heritage conservation. For example, it has been argued that traditional markets in the Middle East act as cultural spaces where intangible heritage is both created and performed, as well as preserved and presented, a most unusual conjunction of commercial activity and cultural expression. This fits the description of Souq Al Awaleen since it integrates historical traditions of Saudi Arabia within its everyday operations. Moreover, studies from (Panzeria, 2022) were in support of the notion that traditional markets

contribute greatly to the preservation of regional crafts and practices that might otherwise become extinct due to globalization. The arrangement of regional artisans in Souq Al Awaleen ensures that the continuation of their existence is sustained, while at the same time keeping alive their customs to be passed down to the next generations. From interviews held among stakeholders, a keen interest is unveiled concerning the upholding of cultural authenticity through the conducting of the market. Cerquetti et al. (2022) report final yet still telling findings when, besides the above-mentioned favorable factors, studies indicate that traditional markets represent 'crossroads' of inter-cultural contact, where visitors become aware of the cultural tapestry in the region they hail from. In this respect, interviewees testified to the fact that Souq Al Awaleen can become a platform from which locals and tourists connect more meaningfully with the cultural diversity of Saudi Arabia. In this sense, the present study findings are strongly supported by previous literature; in fact, traditional markets like Souq Al Awaleen play an important role in representing and promoting various regions' cultural identity in Saudi Arabia (Table 3).

Table 3: Thematic Analysis for Objective 1: To Explore How Souq Al Awaleen Reflects the Cultural Identity of Different Regions in Saudi Arabia

Theme	Sub-theme	Supporting Quotes	Codes
Cultural Representation	Regional Diversity	"Each stall tells a story of its region—it's like walking through Saudi Arabia in one market." (Interviewee 1)	Cultural Narratives
	Artisan Crafts	"The handicrafts here are unique to their regions; they showcase local traditions." (Interviewee 3)	Local Artisans
	Traditional Foods	"You can taste the heritage in the dishes offered at the souq." (Interviewee 5)	Culinary Heritage
Visitor Engagement	Interaction with Locals	"Visitors often engage with artisans, learning about their crafts and backgrounds." (Interviewee 2)	Community Interaction
	Cultural Performances	"Events like traditional dance performances bring our heritage to life." (Interviewee 4)	Live Cultural Experiences
Economic Impact	Support for Local Economies	"The souq helps sustain local craftspeople and farmers." (Interviewee 6)	Economic Sustainability
	Promotion of Tourism	"We see many tourists coming here specifically for the cultural experience." (Interviewee 7)	Tourism Promotion

4.2 Results for Objective 2: To Examine the Role of Traditional Markets in Promoting Heritage Tourism

Traditional markets like Souq Al Awaleen drive historical tourism in Saudi Arabia, according to the research. Stakeholders stressed the market's ability to draw local and international travellers with a cultural experience beyond commerce. Traditional markets offer a unique and authentic way for tourists to experience the history, customs, and daily life of their countries.

The market's concentration on traditional crafts, meals, and performances enhances its cultural tourism appeal. Souq Al Awaleen helps preserve and promote Saudi Arabia's oral traditions, music, and local craftsmanship, according to several stakeholders. Heritage tourism requires these features to stand out and provide visitors a deeper connection to the destination. The market's proximity to cultural events like the Riyadh Season boosts its prominence and visitor attractiveness. These events allow tourists to mingle with local artists and performers, increasing their connection to Saudi culture. This enhances the tourism experience by making travellers feel like active participants in the country's culture.

4.2.1 Quotations from Interviews

- Souq Al Awaleen attracts tourists seeking authentic experiences. They want to see how products are manufactured and hear their tales, not just buy them. Interviewee 5

This statement emphasises historic tourism authenticity. Visitors want to see how traditional crafts are made, according to the interviewee. In historical tourism, this stronger connection between tourists and local culture strengthens the business.

- Tourists can experience our culture through traditional music and crafts. It's not available in modern malls or shops.” Interviewee 9

Interviewee 9 describes heritage tourism as interactive like Souq Al Awaleen. Traditional markets differ from modern shopping areas because travellers can see traditional performances or artisanal goods in real time, enriching their cultural experience.

- During events like Riyadh Season, we ensure tourists completely experience the culture. Not just marketing items, but communicating our heritage story.” Interviewee 12

Riyadh Season strategically promotes traditional markets as heritage tourism sites. The interviewee notes that the market educates and

experiences tourists about Saudi culture beyond selling things.

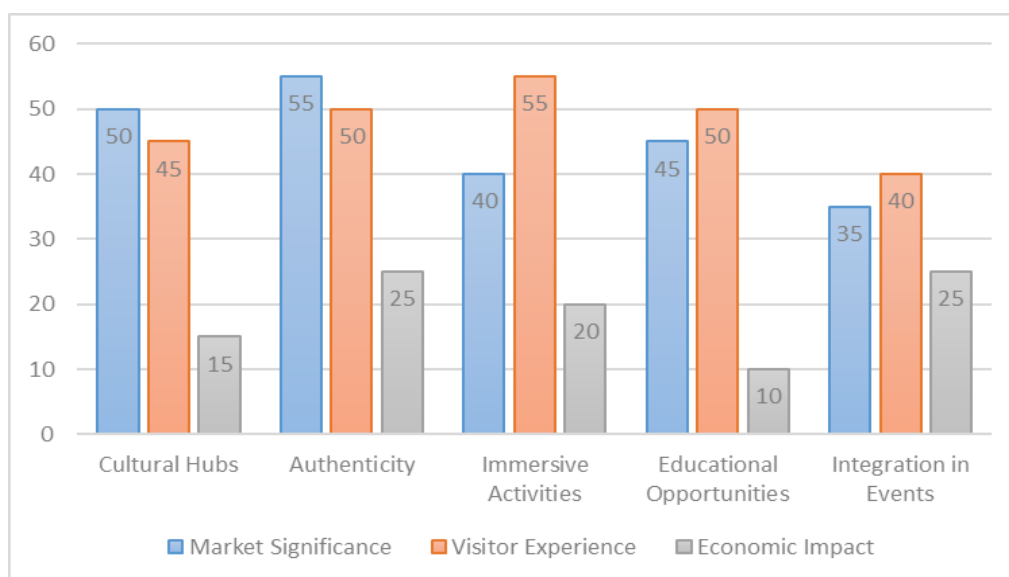


Figure 2: Clustered Column Analysis for Objective 2: Examining the Role of Traditional Markets in Promoting Heritage Tourism.

The quotes show that traditional markets like Souq Al Awaleen are experienced cultural sites. By letting travellers interact with craftsmen, entertainment, and storytelling, these marketplaces encourage cultural immersion (Figure 2). Tourists depart with a deeper understanding of Saudi Arabia's unique cultures after this immersive encounter. Literature describes how traditional marketplaces promote historic tourism. Parlato et al. (2022) note that traditional marketplaces allow travellers to experience a region's culture rather than just shop. This research found that Souq Al Awaleen is an important place for tourist-local cultural interaction. Katelieva and Muhar (2022) argues that cultural tourism relies on authenticity, and traditional markets are great for promoting local goods, cuisine, and performances. In interviews, stakeholders stressed the market's ability to give travellers an immersive and authentic cultural experience, which drives heritage tourism.

The stakeholders interviewed in Wang's study also noted that tourists are increasingly seeking cultural experiences that allow them to engage rather than observe. Yang et al. (2022) also recommend incorporating traditional markets into huge cultural events to boost heritage tourism. Interviewee 12 cited Riyadh Season, which showcases traditional marketplaces and blends tourism with cultural education to benefit visitors and local people. This study shows how Souq Al Awaleen uses big cultural events to attract tourists (Table 4).

Table 4: Thematic Analysis for Objective 2: To Examine the Role of Traditional Markets in Promoting Heritage Tourism.

Theme	Sub-theme	Supporting Quotes	Codes
Market Significance	Cultural Hubs	"Souq Al Awaleen is the heartbeat of heritage tourism here." (Interviewee 8)	Central Role
	Authenticity	"Visitors seek genuine experiences, and traditional markets offer that." (Interviewee 9)	Authentic Experiences
Visitor Experience	Immersive Activities	"Shopping here isn't just about buying; it's an experience." (Interviewee 10)	Experiential Learning
	Educational Opportunities	"Many tourists leave with a deeper understanding of our culture." (Interviewee 11)	Cultural Education
Collaborative Initiatives	Events Integration	"Integrating the souq with events like Riyadh Season brings more attention." (Interviewee 12)	Event Synergy
	Partnerships with Stakeholders	"Collaboration between local businesses and tourism offices is essential." (Interviewee 13)	Stakeholder Engagement

4.3 Results for Objective 3: To analyze visitor perceptions and experiences related to the cultural and historical elements of Souq Al Awaleen

The interviews revealed how visitors regard Souq Al Awaleen's culture and history. Stakeholders said that the market provides a unique, authentic peek into Saudi Arabia's rich cultural legacy, impressing local and foreign visitors. Many visitors say Souq Al Awaleen feels like a portal to the past due to its ancient aura. The market's layout, stall design, and traditional crafts create a cultural immersion. Many guests enjoyed Souq Al Awaleen's interactive experiences, such as seeing craftspeople demonstrate or making traditional dishes. These activities enrich the market's history and let visitors experience culture. Tourists also praised local vendors for being welcoming and cultural ambassadors by explaining their crafts and products' stories. Visitors feel more connected to the market's culture and history through this participation. Most tourists enjoy the market, although others propose adding guided tours and historical information to improve its cultural story. This response shows that tourists want to understand the history of the artefacts and practices on display. To make tourists' experience more informative, especially those unfamiliar with Saudi Arabian culture, stakeholders were eager to make such modifications.

4.3.1 Quotations from Interviews

- Visitors report feeling transported to another era when entering the market. “Not just the things, but the atmosphere that brings Saudi Arabia's past to life.” Interviewee 2

Visitors see Souq Al Awaleen as more than a market. The market's design and atmosphere immerse visitors in the past, enhancing its heritage status.

- “Tourists love seeing how things are made. They feel like they're participating in our past when they see artists or learn to create traditional cuisine. Interviewee 6

Interviewee 6 said Souq Al Awaleen's interactive experiences attract travellers. Visitors can connect more personally with Saudi heritage, making the cultural experience more unforgettable.

- Visitors have requested more information about the market's history and merchandise. Their curiosity may require us to explain the relevance of what they're seeing.” Interviewee 10

This quote suggests improvement. Tourists appreciate the market, but they want more historical context, which educational programs or guided tours may provide.

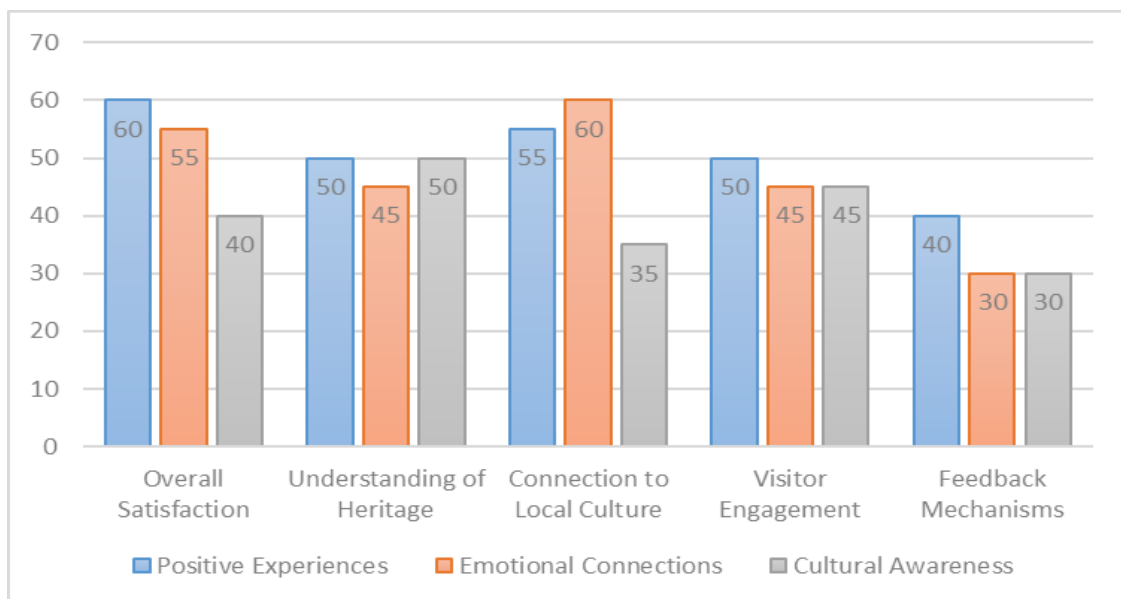


Figure 3: Clustered Column Analysis for Objective 3: Analyzing Visitor Perceptions and Experiences Related to Cultural and Historical Elements.

These quotes show how visitors interact with Souq Al Awaleen's culture and history. Some find the market's visual and sensory experience enough to connect to Saudi history, while others want a more structured education (Figure 3). Visitors say the market provides cultural immersion but could improve historical interpretation. Previous cultural heritage tourism

research supports this study's conclusions. According to Liu et al. (2022), heritage sites like traditional markets allow visitors to connect with the past through sensory and emotional experiences. According to respondents, Souq Al Awaleen's immersive nature supports Timothy and Boyd's claim that atmosphere and authenticity shape visitor views. Historical atmosphere and tactile interactions with craftspeople help visitors comprehend the market's cultural history. Zou et al. (2023) found that heritage site visitors seek out opportunities to actively participate in a destination's culture. This matches Souq Al Awaleen tourist interest in interactive activities like craft demonstrations and traditional culinary classes. These hands-on experiences improve the cultural value of the visit and satisfy tourists' need to interact with local traditions. Wang et al. (2023) argue that heritage tourism must mix enjoyment and education. Visitors may like a site's visuals and interactive components, but many want to know its history. Some stakeholders in this study agreed that structured information would improve visitor experience. Guided tours or better signage might fill this gap, making Souq Al Awaleen a more educational cultural tourism attraction (Table 5).

Table 5: Thematic Analysis for Objective 3: To Analyze Visitor Perceptions and Experiences Related to the Cultural and Historical Elements of Souq Al Awaleen.

Theme	Sub-theme	Supporting Quotes	Codes
Visitor Impressions	Positive Experiences	"It's an unforgettable experience—so rich in culture." (Interviewee 14)	Visitor Satisfaction
	Emotional Connections	"I felt a strong connection to the history of the place." (Interviewee 15)	Emotional Engagement
Cultural Awareness	Learning about Heritage	"I learned so much about the local customs and traditions." (Interviewee 16)	Heritage Education
	Awareness of Cultural Identity	"The market beautifully reflects Saudi identity." (Interviewee 17)	Cultural Identity
Feedback Mechanisms	Visitor Surveys	"Many tourists expressed a desire for more information about the crafts." (Interviewee 18)	Visitor Feedback
	Engagement Opportunities	"We'd love more workshops to engage with local artisans." (Interviewee 19)	Interactive Learning

4.4 Results for Objective 4: To Provide Insights for Improving Heritage Tourism Strategies Through the Integration of Traditional Markets in Large-scale Events Like Riyadh Season

The findings show that incorporating traditional markets like Souq Al Awaleen into huge cultural events like Riyadh Season can boost heritage tourism. Stakeholders stressed the need of using such markets as cultural hubs for key events to attract local and international tourists. Traditional markets at major festivals increase visitor numbers and allow tourists to mingle with Saudi Arabia's culture. In Riyadh Season, Souq Al Awaleen becomes a lively cultural exposition where tourists may experience and participate in Kingdom traditions and history. Participants also noted that combining traditional markets into large-scale events helps local craftsmen sustain and promote their crafts nationally and internationally. Craftsmen can earn money and promote Saudi culture by sharing their stories and abilities with huge groups. Stakeholders also underlined the necessity of designing events to enhance market education. To engage visitors with the market's history, cultural performances, workshops, and guided tours may be organised. Event organisers, tourism officials, and local merchants must work together to incorporate historic marketplaces like Souq Al Awaleen into Riyadh Season. According to the interviews, successful cooperation between various groups can assist position the market as a vital feature of the event's cultural story rather than in the background.

4.4.1 Quotations from Interviews

- “Using Souq Al Awaleen in large events like Riyadh Season attracts tourists. It lets students study Saudi heritage in a pleasant and engaging way.” Interviewee 4

When integrated into huge events, established markets alter. The interviewee says that the market's cultural and participatory components draw a wider audience, making heritage tourism vital to the event.

- “By featuring local artisans and traditional crafts at events like Riyadh Season, we promote tourism and preserve our cultural heritage for future generations.” Interviewee 8

The interviewee emphasises that including local markets into large events boosts tourism and preserves culture. Large events help spread and respect ancient customs. Tourists like the market since it's different from other event attractions. It's genuine, so people can connect with the culture.” Interviewee 13

This quote shows the increased demand for authentic cultural experiences among travellers. Souq Al Awaleen offers a unique contrast to commercial or modern attractions at huge events, helping guests engage with Saudi culture.

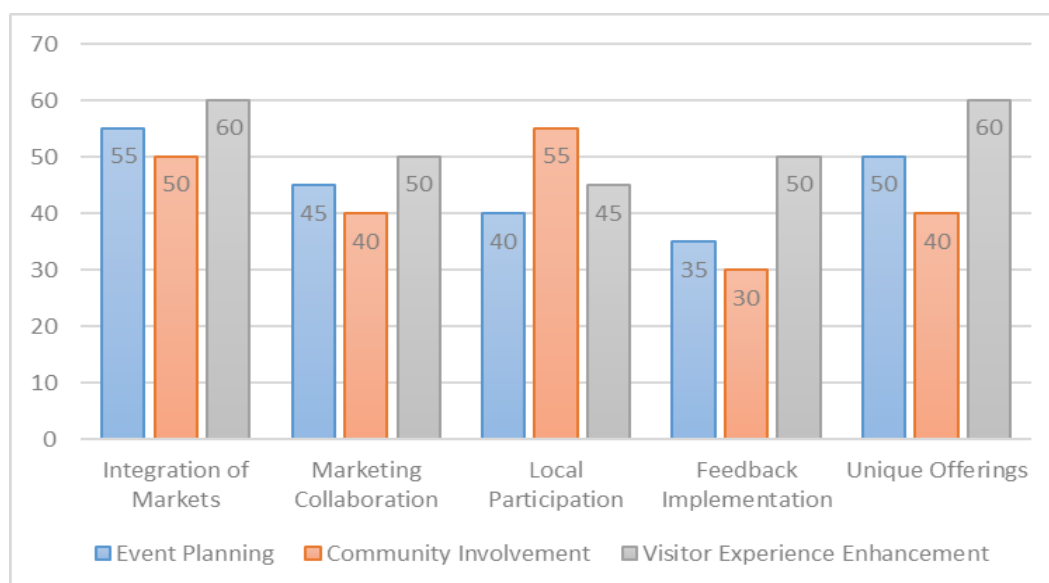


Figure 4: Clustered Column Analysis for Objective 4: Providing Insights for Improving Heritage Tourism Strategies Through Integration of Traditional Markets.

Riyadh Season should include traditional markets, as the quotes show. These markets attract tourists and preserve culture. Tourists love the market's immersive and realistic experiences, making them a key draw. Literature is full with examples of heritage tourism promoted by incorporating culture into huge events (Figure 4). Perry (2023) says huge cultural events help showcase local traditions and heritage worldwide. Riyadh Season and traditional markets like Souq Al Awaleen let tourists to immerse themselves in Saudi Arabia's culture. Richards' research suggests that such activities attract tourists and promote local culture. Thao et al. (2023) also emphasise the need of incorporating traditional and modern culture into important events to attract various tourists. This analysis agrees with stakeholders' assessment that Souq Al Awaleen offers a unique and authentic experience that distinguishes it from other event attractions. Traditional markets may give tourists a balanced cultural experience by providing entertainment and education at huge events. Traditional marketplaces can help preserve cultural heritage, according to past studies. Tan et al. (2023) state that displaying ancient crafts and activities in public, especially at huge cultural events, helps preserve these endangered traditions. Exposure helps local craftspeople survive and keeps traditional processes relevant. This supports the present study's stakeholders' claims

that Riyadh Season promotes local artists and preserves cultural heritage (Table 6).

Table 6: Thematic Analysis for Objective 4: To Provide Insights for Improving Heritage Tourism Strategies Through the Integration of Traditional Markets in Large-Scale Events Like Riyadh Season.

Theme	Sub-theme	Supporting Quotes	Codes
Strategic Integration	Event Planning	"Incorporating the souq into events brings more foot traffic." (Interviewee 20)	Strategic Alignment
	Marketing Collaboration	"Joint marketing efforts can elevate both the event and the souq." (Interviewee 21)	Joint Marketing
Community Involvement	Local Participation	"Engaging local communities in event planning is crucial." (Interviewee 22)	Community Engagement
	Volunteer Opportunities	"More volunteer roles for locals would enhance participation." (Interviewee 23)	Volunteer Programs
Enhancing Visitor Experience	Unique Offerings	"Special products or experiences during events could attract more visitors." (Interviewee 24)	Special Events
	Feedback Implementation	"Listening to visitor feedback can help improve future events." (Interviewee 25)	Adaptive Strategies

5. DISCUSSION

This research culminates in the discussion chapter, where it presents findings and closely observes their implications for cultural heritage tourism. Al Awaleen is the traditional market that shines in the color tapestry of diverse identities of Saudi Arabia as the study is seen to depict. The offers and experiential aspects of this market show how historic tourism can flourish both at levels of commerce and culture. This chapter presents the key findings of the research focusing on authenticity, visitor engagement, and strategic incorporation of traditional markets into larger scale cultural events. Presenting here I will be able to show how Souq Al Awaleen transforms the tourist experience and heritage tourism in a rapid global transformation by condensing stakeholder perceptions and drawing on current research work. This research highlights how Souq Al Awaleen mirrors regional cultures and how traditional markets foster heritage tourism. The first aim of the interview was that Souq Al Awaleen is not only a commercial region but also a symbol of the cultural wealth of various

regions of Saudi Arabia. Its structure, products, and craftsmen all reflect the cultural past and personality of the Kingdom. Traditional clothes, spices, and handicrafts represent different regions' culture. Arumugam et al. (2023) argue that the traditional market is one form of cultural variety for a country since it represents the tangible and intangible heritage. From the interviews, it was noted that the authentic cultural experiences offered by Souq Al Awaleen attract visitors; hence, authenticity appears relevant to the previous study on cultural heritage tourism (Ma & Mohame, 2023). It means that the regional variance should guarantee the preservation and promotion of cultural identity through traditional markets such as Souq Al Awaleen. Souq Al Awaleen is a main entrance point for tourists into Saudi Arabia's rich cultural heritage as part of the second objective, whereby it investigates how traditional markets promote heritage tourism. In the market, tourists can interact with the local sellers and artisans, which will add richness to their cultural experience. The results of the study show that traditional markets are not only shopping centers but also conductors of various traditional ways of life and artisans. Jv et al. (2024) found that a visit to a traditional market is more interactive and personalized than a visit to a museum for tourists to engage with a local way of life. Several interviewees also commented that the Souq Al Awaleen welcomes international cultural tourists, upholding its value in the tourism ecology. This thus proves Wenjing et al. (2024) assertion that heritage tourism's traditional marketplaces protect cultural traditions and contribute to the regional economic benefit. The results stress the strategic necessity of local markets in heritage tourism. Interviewees mentioned that participation in Riyadh Season only brings its cultural appeal and historical tourism promotion. The appeal of drawing big people through such an event shows its utility as a cultural hub since it attracts tourists who would not otherwise experience Saudi's old way of markets. Xie (2024) postulated that the traditional markets of megaevents are intended to augment the cultural experience of visitors by connecting them with the heritage of the local community. In terms of Souq Al Awaleen's effectiveness as a tourist attraction for Riyadh Season, traditional markets can, therefore be adapted for popularizing cultural tourism locally and internationally. Based on strategic integration, there is potential for economic empowerment and scope for cultural legacy and expression. Both the first and second objectives emphasised the role of Souq Al Awaleen and similar ancient markets as an agent of cultural heritage, a means of cultural tourism and therefore signifying that such markets are important to the sector of heritage tourism. The third objective-to understand the perceptions and

experiences of visitors of Souq Al Awaleen-considering cultural and historical elements-is one which shows how both the elements pertaining to culture and history reveal the impact of these aspects on the tourism. It is through the souq's historical significance and authentic representation of Saudi Arabia's diverse regions that visitors were constantly referring to it as the most attractive feature. Interviews indicated that the visitors do not come for the wares, but for the intense cultural environment in which history and culture are presented through tangible and experiential interactions. According to (Suryani, 2024), heritage tourists require authentic destinations that reflect the past. Customers who came to Souq Al Awaleen enjoyed exploring with local sellers, viewed traditional handicrafts, and learned about the origin of items. This shows that even the older markets could also allow guests to become immersed in the culture of the destination. Interactions between visitors and local artists give a real, living historical experience that grows authenticity and attachment towards the place. Furthermore, the cultural and historical features of Souq Al Awaleen significantly improve the views that the visitors have. Authenticity and the preservation of the traditional crafts in the market made the visits of tourists enjoyable. Wang suggests that traditional markets provide tourists with a more experiential and inclusive manner of engagement as opposed to museums and tours. Tourists who visited Souq Al Awaleen said the market provided an atmosphere filled with sensory feelings of seeing, smelling, hearing, and feeling the cultural heritage. An experience placing the visitor in another unforgettable world of consumption augurs well with positive views and return visits. Souq Al Awaleen has turned into a point of visitation or a tool for cultural education to an understanding of regional diversity within Saudi Arabia as well as historical continuities. Such findings suggest heritage markets could indeed influence the views and engagement that a tourist has of the destination's cultural story. Concerning the fourth goal, the identification of insights to improve heritage tourism strategies by incorporating traditional markets in big events, like Riyadh Season, showed that Souq Al Awaleen can cater tourist engagement and cultural heritage. The stakeholders' interviews revealed that it is a perfect opportunity to expose Riyadh Season for prominent markets to be experienced by a broader and more diversified audience. For example, inclusion of Souq Al Awaleen in such cultural events of high magnitude will enable organizers to feature historical and cultural significance of such markets on the horizon, hence attracting those tourists keen to discover authentic Saudi culture. This study concurs with Chaigasem and Kumboon (2024), who posited that major cultural events

display local cultures and handicrafts, thus attracting those interested in tourist experiential cultural trips. Souq Al Awaleen can leverage the increased exposure and people flow created by such events to attract tourist interest both domestically and from other countries as a destination of significance in Saudi heritage tourism. In sustainable economic and cultural terms, integration of traditional markets into bigger events is strategic. As stated by the several interviewees, Riyadh Season brings visitors to Souq Al Awaleen and therefore presents an opportunity for local artisans and vendors to present their craft in front of a global audience, thereby providing for a rise in demand for traditional products and keeping cultural practice alive. This finds resonance with Zhang et al. (2024) view that this lifts the cultural narrative of large-scale events and offers positive impacts on local economies. Heritage tourism plans may focus and preserve the cultural values of places by adding traditional markets to such events. Souq Al Awaleen during Riyadh Season has enhanced heritage tourism by including culture values within large events. This incorporation of culture values promotes cultural sensibility and conservation and results in a sustainable tourism strategy for tourist revenue in favor of the local economy and ecosystem of tourism. The researcher shows that Souq Al Awaleen has contributed some aspects to cultural heritage tourism, especially on the representation of regional identities and experience enhancement toward sustainable tourism. We have found the following: 'The souq will be a show platform for the representation of cultural interaction and a strategic asset for incorporating historical tourism within the general architecture of Riyadh Season national projects. Introducing traditional markets to more modern ways of tourism will also increase the appreciation of culture along with the economic growth of the stakeholders. The findings demonstrate that legacy tourism relies on visitor perceptions, cultural authenticity, and event integration. Thus, this study is very well sought to provide a holistic approach based on the protection and promotion of cultural assets to keep alive heritage markets as vibrant centres of history and community involvement for generations yet to come.

5.1 Implications

This research has significant theoretical implications for cultural heritage tourism, particularly in understanding the complex relationship between traditional markets and visitor experiences. The study contributes to historical tourism authenticity by illustrating how Souq Al Awaleen reflects cultural identity dynamically. The findings support MacCannell's (1973) and Cohen's (1988) arguments regarding the fact that authenticity enhances

tourist satisfaction and involvement. Appreciation of cultural authenticity by visitors requires that heritage tourism frameworks incorporate local identity and handicraft. This becomes relevant in today's globalised society where culture has been commodified and real experiences diluted. Traditional markets properly integrated within tourism programmes can thus be helpful to enhance proper cultural engagement between locals and international tourists. This theoretical understanding encourages future study to look into how different cultural market systems might generate the same or similar benefits, thereby expanding the legacy of tourism theory beyond what exists in monuments and sites. Socio-economic considerations are, therefore, inevitable in heritage tourism theories. An example of Souq Al Awaleen is integrated into large-scale events like Riyadh Season, in which a historic market might be integrated into a tourism strategy to gain more visibility and economic sustainability. Timothy and Boyd (2015) called for a more integrated heritage tourism approach that accounts for local economic impacts and community engagement. According to a study, traditional markets enhance visitor experiences and support local economies. This creates a symbiotic relationship between the factors of cultural preservation and economic development in the real world. The study recommends using theoretical frameworks that take into account the multifaceted roles of traditional markets in cultural heritage tourism while encouraging scholars to explore aspects related to cultural identity, visitor engagement, and economic outcomes. All these issues will be addressed in the study to ensure developing sustainable heritage tourism practice that can be helpful for local communities as well as tourists while preserving cultural heritage in a fast-changing world. This study has practical implications for stakeholders in the cultural heritage tourism market, such as in the operators of traditional markets, like Souq Al Awaleen. According to the report, market operators have the mandate to curate real products and experiences of cultures that reflect Saudi Arabia's countless identities to enhance visitor experiences. Market managers can engage visitors in local craftsmanship, historical traditions, and historic narratives. This method increases visitor delight and cultural awareness. Training local artists and vendors to narrate their stories of culture and origin and craft to the tourists can be uplifting for tourism. The tourist experience can be taken to heights in this manner because it will enable a real experience of the market, therefore encouraging foot traffic and earning more for the local vendors. It would connect strategically with such marketplaces with the traditional events of Riyadh Season, for instance, to attract importance as this connection allows the stakeholders to ride on

the coattails of increased visibility and visitor interaction. Tourism planners can promote the market and Saudi cultural heritage to display Souq Al Awaleen better during such events. Some applied measures may include coordination of marketing efforts in ways that highlight what the souq uniquely offers for such events, business-to-business alliances with local hotels and tour operators to put together packages that would take tourists to places they prefer, and community-driven initiatives that galvanize their grassroots leadership in planning and executing local events. Local stakeholders will be able to stake a claim and ownership over the market, which adds cultural value and enhances sustainable tourism growth. The report therefore proposes collaboration as an approach among government agencies, local enterprises, and community people to unlock the best benefits in traditional markets as players in cultural heritage tourism.

5.2 Limitations and Future Research Direction

This study sheds light on Souq Al Awaleen's significance in cultural heritage tourism, although it has limits. The small sample size of 14 interviews may not adequately capture the different opinions of all players in the tourism ecosystem surrounding the market. Tourist guides, hotel management, and senior authorities were interviewed, although the conclusions may not apply to all traditional Saudi Arabian markets or similar circumstances. This study might be expanded by including more local craftsmen, frequent visitors, and community leaders in a bigger and more varied sample size. This broader approach could improve cultural heritage tourism insights in conventional markets by revealing the factors that affect visitor experiences and attitudes. The concentration on a single traditional market may neglect the complexities and dynamics of other markets across cultures, although providing in-depth insights into Souq Al Awaleen. Visitor experiences vary per market according to its characteristics, cultural narratives, and operational dynamics. Future study could compare several Saudi Arabian or international conventional markets. This would improve analysis of how cultural, economic, and social aspects affect legacy tourism's conventional markets. Comparative studies can also help identify successful techniques and best practices in different situations, developing a more holistic view of the topic. The research used mostly qualitative approaches, which provided rich descriptive insights but may limit its capacity to quantify visitor demographics or the economic impact of traditional markets on local communities. To better understand tourist characteristics, spending habits, and traditional markets' economic impact on local economies, future studies should use a mixed-methods approach that

blends qualitative interviews with quantitative surveys. This thorough methodology could help academics understand the relationship between visitor experiences and economic outcomes, resulting in more sustainable heritage tourism plans. Finally, cultural heritage tourism is rapidly changing, especially in light of global issues like the COVID-19 epidemic, highlighting the necessity for ongoing research. The findings emphasise the significance of adaptability in historical tourism plans, but they also raise problems about how established markets can handle changing tourist preferences and external influences. Research could examine how recent global events affect conventional market visitor behaviour and perceptions over time. For cultural tourism to remain relevant and successful, marketplaces like Souq Al Awaleen must innovate and adapt to shifting customer expectations, technology advances, and sustainability concerns. Future research can help traditional marketplaces survive in cultural heritage tourism by addressing these issues.

6. CONCLUSION

This research has shown that Souq Al Awaleen is one of the key players in cultural heritage tourism in Saudi Arabia; it reflects diversified cultural identities in regions and enhances tourist experiences. During the study, the traditional markets were some of the bustling cultural hubs, reflecting authentic, immersive experiences within them through analyzing the views and experiences of exploring travelers. The inculcation of such markets into large-scale cultural events like Riyadh Season can provide strategic value as it becomes a site both for driving cultural heritage and stimulating the local economy. Traditional markets should strive to prioritize authentic cultural expressions in order to enhance tourist satisfaction and spur heritage tourism through effective engagements between visitors and local artists. Thus, traditional markets are of great importance to the tourism ecology, and this research advances action that promotes cultural heritage and its preservation but satisfies visitors' evolving demands. This study extends beyond Souq Al Awaleen. It offers viewpoints relevant to traditional markets everywhere. Perspectives from visitors, authenticity, and business integration into tourist events explain complex dynamics of cultural heritage tourism. However, the sample size and focus on a particular sector imply that more research is needed to extrapolate the findings and check the applicability. There is scope to conduct comparative studies of several traditional markets using mixed-methods in assessing economic impact and visitor behavior and analyzing how these sectors adapt to cultural tourism, which are possible future lines of

research. This study helps in understanding how traditional markets can successfully be nourished within cultural heritage tourism for economic sustainability and preservation of cultural identity.

7. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This work was supported by the Deanship of Scientific Research, Vice Presidency for Graduate Studies and Scientific Research, King Faisal University, Saudi Arabia [KFU242792].

References

- Adie, B. A. (2024). Cultural Heritage Tourism: A Future for Sustainable Development? In C. M. Hall (Ed.), *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Tourism* (pp. 417-427). Wiley Online Library. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119753797.ch28>
- Arumugam, A., Nakkeeran, S., & Subramaniam, R. (2023). Exploring the Factors Influencing Heritage Tourism Development: A Model Development. *Sustainability*, 15(15), 11986. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su151511986>
- Bramantyo, A. P., Maria, A. D., & Aulia, W. M. (2023). Traditional Food Of Solo Strait As Immaterial Cultural Heritage: Protection, Preservation, And Promotion. *International Conference On Digital Advanced Tourism Management And Technology*, 1(2), 91-101. <https://doi.org/10.56910/ictmt.v1i2.25>
- Butler, G., Szili, G., & Huang, H. (2022). Cultural Heritage Tourism Development in Panyu District, Guangzhou: Community Perspectives on Pride and Preservation, and Concerns for the Future. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 17(1), 56-73. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1743873X.2021.1881524>
- Cerquetti, M., Ferrara, C., Romagnoli, A., & Vagnarelli, G. (2022). Enhancing Intangible Cultural Heritage for Sustainable Tourism Development in Rural Areas: The Case of the “Marche Food and Wine Memories” Project (Italy). *Sustainability*, 14(24), 16893. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su142416893>
- Chaigasem, T., & Kumboon, A. (2024). The Influence of Cultural Heritage Values and Gastronomy Tourism on Cultural Identity in Phuket Old Town, Thailand. *GeoJournal of Tourism and Geosites*, 52(1), 41-48. <https://doi.org/10.30892/gtg.52104-1181>
- de Oliveira, R. A., Baracho, R. M. A., & Cantoni, L. (2024). The perception of UNESCO World Heritage Sites' managers about concepts and elements of cultural sustainability in tourism. *Journal of Cultural Heritage Management and Sustainable Development*, 14(3), 297-311. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JCHMSD-03-2021-0058>
- Deng, F., Ruan, W.-Q., & Zhang, S.-N. (2023). National Traditional Festival Tourism and Visitors' National Identity: a Dual Collaborative Framework of Cultural Inheritance and Inherited Innovation. *Tourism Review*, 78(3), 1019-1035. <https://doi.org/10.1108/TR-04-2022-0197>
- Gai, A. M., Mahmudin, T., Violin, V., Utama, A. N. B., & Apramilda, R. (2024). Analysis of The Effect of Cultural Tourism Development, Accessibility and

- Economic Policy on Tourism Competitiveness in Indonesia. *International Journal of Engineering, Science and Information Technology*, 4(2), 16-20.
<https://doi.org/10.52088/ijesty.v4i2.485>
- Iversen, N. M., Foley, C., & Hem, L. E. (2023). The Role of Immersive Festival Experiences, Identity, and Memory in Cultural Heritage Tourism. *Event Management*, 27(1), 33-50.
<https://doi.org/10.3727/152599522X16419948694847>
- Jiawei, A. Z., & Mustapha, B. A. (2024). Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection From the Perspective of Cultural Tourism: a Case Study of Shaanxi Province, China. *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science*, 1366(1), 012051.
<https://doi.org/10.1088/1755-1315/1366/1/012051>
- Jv, X., Liu, X., & Wang, F. (2024). Authentic Perception Experience of Tourists in Traditional Agricultural Cultural Heritage Village: Scale Development and Validation. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 14673584241285174.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/14673584241285174>
- Kastenholz, E., & Gronau, W. (2022). Enhancing Competences For Co-Creating Appealing and Meaningful Cultural Heritage Experiences in Tourism. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 46(8), 1519-1544.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1096348020951637>
- Kateliava, M., & Muhar, A. (2022). Heritage tourism products based on traditional nature-related knowledge: Assessment of cultural, social, and environmental factors in cases from rural Austria. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 17(6), 631-647.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1743873X.2022.2098040>
- Liu, Y., Wang, Y., Dupre, K., & McIlwaine, C. (2022). The Impacts of World Cultural Heritage Site Designation and Heritage Tourism on Community Livelihoods: a Chinese Case Study. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 43, 100994.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2022.100994>
- Ma, S. N. Z., & Mohame, B. B. (2023). Heritage Tourism and Cultural Identity in China: Challenges and Opportunities for Development. *International Journal of Professional Business Review*, 8(7), e02393.
<https://doi.org/10.26668/businessreview/2023.v8i7.2393>
- Nadalipour, Z., Hassan Rathore, A., & Fazeli Tabar, S. (2022). Promoting Traditional Cuisine as a Cultural Tourism Product: A Local Community's Involvement Approach. *International journal of Tourism, Culture & Spirituality*, 5(2), 167-185.
<https://doi.org/10.22133/ijtc.2022.158187>
- Noaime, E., Alnaim, M. M., Bay, M. A., Albaqawy, G. A., Abdelhafez, M. H. H., & Elkhayat, K. (2022). The Rehabilitation of the Historic Barzan Traditional Market and Its Impact on Cultural Tourism in Hail City. *Land*, 11(11), 2058.
<https://doi.org/10.3390/land11112058>
- Novita, A. A., Ngindana, R., & Putra, E. (2024). Preserving Cultural Heritage: Integrating Traditional Values and Local Arts for Sustainable Tourism. *Jurnal Inovasi Ilmu Sosial dan Politik (JISoP)*, 6(1), 68-77.
<https://doi.org/10.33474/jisop.v6i1.21925>
- Panzer, E. (2022). *Cultural Heritage and Territorial Identity*. Springer.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-94468-1>

- Parlato, M. C. M., Valenti, F., & Porto, S. M. C. (2022). Sustainable Promotion of Traditional Rural Buildings as Built Heritage Attractions: A Heritage Interpretation Methodology Applied in South Italy. *Sustainability*, 14(23), 16206. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su142316206>
- Perry, M. (2023). Role of Cultural Heritage Preservation in Destination Branding and Tourist Experience Enhancement. *Hospitality and Tourism Journal*, 1(1), 36-47. <https://forthworthjournals.org/journals/index.php/HTJ/article/view/69>
- Qiu, L., Rahman, A. R. A., & bin Dolah, M. S. (2024). Innovative Design of Agricultural Tourism Souvenirs to Promote the Inheritance and Promotion of Intangible Cultural Heritage. *Pakistan Journal of Agricultural Sciences*, 61(1), 359-368. <https://api.pakjas.com.pk/downloadPaper/Paper-2394564982-2024-03-21.pdf>
- Qiu, Q., Zuo, Y., & Zhang, M. (2022). Intangible Cultural Heritage in Tourism: Research Review and Investigation of Future Agenda. *Land*, 11(1), 139. <https://doi.org/10.3390/land11010139>
- Quang, T. D., Dang, V. Q., Alang, T., & Nguyen, H. V. (2024). Can tourism enhance inclusivity for indigenous peoples? Cham perspectives on tourism benefit sharing at living heritage sites in Vietnam. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, 43(6), 959-984. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EDI-08-2022-0243>
- Shelley-Anne, P. (2022). Is "Authentic Tourism" a means of preserving living cultural heritage? A case study in Old Akko, Israel. *Technical Annals*, 1(1), 252-270. <https://doi.org/10.12681/ta.32104>
- Suci, A., Wang, H.-C., & Doong, H.-S. (2023). Promoting a heritage product to domestic youth markets: should it be localized? *International Journal of Emerging Markets*, 18(12), 6015-6036. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJOEM-07-2021-1033>
- Suryani, W. (2024). Cultural and Heritage Tourism Trends for Sustainable Tourism. In K. Jermstiparsert & P. Suanpang (Eds.), *Special Interest Trends for Sustainable Tourism* (pp. 1-15). IGI Global. <https://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3693-5903-7.ch001>
- Tan, N., Anwar, S., & Jiang, W. (2023). Intangible Cultural Heritage Listing and Tourism Growth in China. *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, 21(2), 188-206. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14766825.2022.2068373>
- Thao, N. T. P., Loan, N. T. T., & Ha, T. T. (2023). Preserving and Promoting Ethnic Cultural Values Associated with Sustainable Tourism Development: A Case Study of an Ethnic Minority in North Vietnam. *Przestrzeń Społeczna (Social Space)*, 23(3), 377-398. <https://socialspacejournal.eu/menu-script/index.php/ssj/article/view/271>
- Wang, M.-Y., Li, Y.-Q., Ruan, W.-Q., Zhang, S.-N., & Li, R. (2023). Cultural Inheritance-based Innovation at Heritage Tourism Destinations: Conceptualization, Structural Dimensions and Scale Development. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 55, 118-130. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2023.03.009>
- Wang, M.-Y., Li, Y.-Q., Ruan, W.-Q., Zhang, S.-N., & Li, R. (2024). Influencing Factors and Formation Process of Cultural Inheritance-based Innovation at

- Heritage Tourism Destinations. *Tourism Management*, 100, 104799. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2023.104799>
- Wasela, K. (2023). The Role of Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Development of Cultural Tourism. *International Journal of Eco-Cultural Tourism, Hospitality Planning and Development*, 6(2), 15-28. <https://doi.org/10.21608/ijecth.2024.297283.1004>
- Wenjing, F. A. N., Xiaoyu, S., Xiabing, L., & Bixian, L. (2024). Dilemma Analysis and Path Exploration of the Integrated Development of Intangible Cultural Heritage and Tourism in Beijing From the Perspective of Rural Revitalization. *Journal of Resources and Ecology*, 15(3), 565-575. <https://doi.org/10.5814/j.issn.1674-764x.2024.03.005>
- Xie, H. (2024). Research on the Innovation and Development of Chinese Intangible Cultural Heritage Branding. *Journal of Sociology and Ethnology*, 6(2), 112-119. <https://doi.org/10.23977/jsoce.2024.060217>
- Yan, Q., James, H. S., Xin, W., & Ben, H. Y. (2024). Examining the Ritualized Experiences of Intangible Cultural Heritage Tourism. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, 31, 100843. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2023.100843>
- Yang, L., & Wall, G. (2022). Heritage Tourism in a Historic Town in China: Opportunities and Challenges. *Journal of China Tourism Research*, 18(5), 1073-1098. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19388160.2021.1976340>
- Yang, W., Chen, Q., Huang, X., Xie, M., & Guo, Q. (2022). How Do Aesthetics and Tourist Involvement Influence Cultural Identity in Heritage Tourism? The Mediating Role of Mental Experience. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, 990030. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.990030>
- Yu, Q. (2023). Innovation and Promotion of Hainan Li Ethnic Intangible Cultural Heritage Tourism Products. *Tourism Management and Technology Economy*, 6(7), 69-77. <https://doi.org/10.23977/tmte.2023.060709>
- Zhang, Y., Zheng, Q., Tang, C., Liu, H., & Cui, M. (2024). Spatial Characteristics and Restructuring Model of the Agro-Cultural Heritage Site in the Context of Culture and Tourism Integration. *Heliyon*, 10(9), e30227. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.e30227>
- Zou, Y., Yang, Y., Li, Y., Liao, J., & Xiao, H. (2023). How Do Tourists' Heritage Spatial Perceptions Affect Place Identity? A Case Study of Quanzhou, China. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 55, 460-470. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2023.05.018>
- Zuo, D., Li, C., Lin, M., Chen, P., & Kong, X. (2022). Tourism, Residents Agent Practice and Traditional Residential Landscapes at a Cultural Heritage Site: The Case Study of Hongcun Village, China. *Sustainability*, 14(8), 4423. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14084423>