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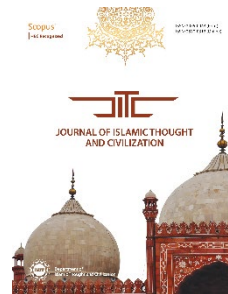
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Title: **Intangible Heritage: An Analysis of Jordanian Customs Signifying Societal Interdependence and Social Solidarity**

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Intangible Heritage: An Analysis of Jordanian Customs Signifying Societal Interdependence and Social Solidarity

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Abstract

This study discusses a set of Jordanian customs and habits that characterize the Jordanian Arabic society. These custom and habits have played a key role in establishing interdependence and solidarity among Jordanian people in the past before the advent of modernity and civility. These include *dakhalah*, *tu'mah*, *al'oneh*, and *inzalah*. However, due to societal changes and the transition towards modernity, some of these customs have diminished and gradually disappeared from many parts of Jordan. To gather comprehensive data, interviews were conducted with 48 individuals who experienced and practiced these customs in different time periods. The results revealed that older participants still adhere to these authentic customs, contributing to increased intimacy and helping to navigate life's challenges. Some young and middle-aged participants recognized the significant impact of these customs on fostering love and intimacy, but chose to discontinue their practice when it conflicted with their time and financial constraints. On the other hand, some young participants perceived these customs as outdated and hindering their activities and progress. It is essential to signify these traditions importance and encourage their ongoing practice to protect Jordan's cultural heritage and retain the positive effects of these practices. By appreciating the importance of good habits in Jordanian culture, people may use them as a springboard to foster camaraderie, collaboration, and a sense of shared responsibility for the sake of a better future.

Keywords: customs and traditions, interdependence, Jordanian heritage, modernity, social solidarity

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Introduction

Every civilization has distinctive social, psychological, cultural, and historical traits influencing its members' shared sense of self. The combination of these traits and attributes defines a society's cultural identity. A community's social history comprises various factors, including the arts, sciences, knowledge, philosophy, beliefs, customs, and traditions.¹ Customs and traditions are vital to culture; cultural legacy covers both tangible and intangible elements. Intangibility is vital in heritage studies, particularly when examining intangible practices and authenticity discussions.² The concepts of tangible and intangible heritage are closely interconnected. In recent years, there has been an increased focus on intangible heritage, following the establishment of UNESCO's Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Heritage in 2003.³ Customs and traditions are enduring, yet mostly flexible characteristics representing a society's rich cultural past. Societies have ingrained behavioral patterns, customs, and traditions passed down through the years. The values, beliefs, norms, and ideals that influence a society's way of life are reflected in its customs and traditions, which tremendously impact that society. They allow people to express their identities and beliefs, strengthening their sense of community and ties to their cultural origins.⁴

Many aspects of the world's cultural legacy, including its Jordanian heritage, risk being lost, deteriorate, or altered in the modern, fast-changing world. This is mainly linked to the modernization of material culture and the alteration of traditional lifestyles. Some traditions and customs may be overlooked, lost, or replaced by new ones as communities change and adapt to new situations. The issues encountered by cultural heritage worldwide, especially in Jordan, have resulted from urbanization, globalization, technological improvements, and cultural assimilation.⁵

In the case of Jordanian heritage, it includes many admirable practices and traditions woven firmly into the society's fabric. Jordanians are recognized for their sincere qualities, which include charity, justice for the oppressed, and solidarity for the downtrodden. These customs and traditions have developed due to the issues faced by the majority of Jordan's population, historically comprising

¹N. A. Alatoom, A. K. Al-Afef, K.S. Aljedayah, T. M. Al Azzam, M. H. Abumelhim, M. A. Rababah, "The Future of Refuge in the Middle East: Social and Political Impacts," *Res Militaris* 12, no. 2 (2022): 3410-3418. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Tarik-Al-Azzam-2/publication/367479889_The_Future_of_Refugees_in_the_Middle_East_Social_and_Political_Impacts/links/65488ced3fa26f66f4db13a7/The-Future-of-Refugees-in-the-Middle-East-Social-and-Political-Impacts.pdf

²N. Churchill, "Dignifying Carnival: The Politics of Heritage Recognition in Puebla, Mexico," *International Journal of Cultural Property* 13, no. 1 (2006): 1-24. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0940739106060012>.

³H. Silverman, "Contested Cultural Heritage: A Selective Historiography," In *Contested Cultural Heritage: Religion, Nationalism, Erasure, and Exclusion in a Global World*, edited by H. Silverman (New York, NY: Springer New York, 2010), 1-49.

⁴Hafidz Taqiyuddin, and Hikmatul Luthfi, "Instruments of Property Ownership in Islam: The Study of Inheritance Law," *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* 13, no. 1 (2023): 157-171, <https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.131.11>

⁵Mohamad Firdaus Mansor Majdin, Rahmah Bt Ahmad H. Osman, Fauziah Fathil, Md Salleh Yaapar, and Saleh Al Zuheimi, "Revisiting Omani Legacy in Malaya through the Royal Kedah Dress: Reassessment," *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* 12, no. 1 (2022): 34-52, <https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.121.03>; Basmah A. S. Al-Rawashdeh, Ahmad H. M. Bani Issa, and Mahmoud A. I. Rababah, "Substitution in Arabic: Lisān Al-Arab Dictionary as a Model," *Theory and Practice in Language Studies* 14, no. 1 (2024): 116-124, <https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1401.13>.

Bedouins and farmers.⁶ Due to their difficult living conditions, which included moving frequently and living outside of cities, these people had to develop a set of customs and habits that promoted cooperation, self-sufficiency, and social solidarity.⁷

Traditions and practices in Jordan are meant to sustain cultural values, honour the human spirit, and enhance life's social and human dimensions. They represent the Jordanian people's resilience, adaptability, and ingenuity in adversity. It is because of these traditions and activities that Jordanians experience continuity, belonging, and a shared identity. Additionally, they are a source of pride.⁸ While many studies provide a broad overview of the Jordanian society, few explore in depth particular practices and activities. For example, Al-Ozaizi (1965) examined proverbs, tales, nicknames, and folklore, among other elements of the Jordanian culture.⁹

It also examined specific customs related to the Badia region, including marriages, poetry, and languages. Although Al-Ozaizi's study offers insightful information, a more thorough investigation is required to fully understand the existing variety of Jordanian customs among various communities. A society's values, norms, and historical context are shaped in large part by its customs and traditions, which also help to define its cultural identity. Due to changing socioeconomic dynamics, the Jordanian cultural legacy, like other cultural heritages worldwide, confronts difficulties in its transmission and preservation. Understanding the value of traditions is essential to maintain cultural variety, develop an individual's identity, and advance societal cohesiveness.¹⁰

The Jordanian Bedouin legal system is explicated by Abu Hani's (2000) study on the *dakhalah* tradition, emphasizing its function in maintaining security and fostering peace. The research strengthens our comprehension of the complex inner workings of the legal system and emphasizes the role customs play in preserving justice, settling conflicts, and preserving order.¹¹ Similarly, Jaradat's (2002) investigation of rural Jordanian social life offers insights into *naqoot* customs and

⁶N. M. Harara, B. M. Al Najdawi, M. A. Rababah, A. A. Haniyi, "Jordanian Tour Guides' Communication Competency," *Journal of Language Teaching and Research* 15, no. 3 (2024): 873-883, <https://doi.org/10.17507/jltr.1503.20>

⁷E. M. Al-Saidat, A. I. Tawalbeh, N. A. Malkawi, T. M. Shehadeh, K. A. Rabab'ah, M. A. Rababah, "The Linguistic Implications of Facebook Nicknames for Jordanian Males and Females," *Theory and Practice in Language Studies* 13, no. 10 (2023): 2457-2467, <https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1310.04>; S. M. Ghazanfar, "Civilizational Connections: Early Islam and Latin-European Renaissance," *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* 1, no. 2 (2011): 01-34, <https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.12.01>.

⁸Farid Bin Masood, and Muhammad Rasheed Arshad, "Exploring Civilization: Analyzing Siraj Munir's Conception of Islamic Civilization," *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* 13. 1 (2023): 215-227. <https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.131.15>

⁹R. B. Al-Ozaizi, "Jordanian Traditions," *Ministry of Culture and Information* 2, no. 1 (1965): 33-52.

¹⁰A. Al-Nuaimat, O. F. Alrababah, M. Rababah, "Believers without Borders: Origin and Impact in the Light of the Noble Qur'an and the Sunnah," *Islamic Quarterly* 66, no. 3-317, https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Amal-Neimat/publication/375097880_Believers_without_Borders_Origin_and_Impact_in_the_Light_of_the_Noble_Qur'an_and_the_Sunnah/links/654101deff8d8f507cdc4f61/Believers-without-Borders-Origin-and-Impact-in-the-Light-of-the-Noble-Quran-and-the-Sunnah.pdf

¹¹Mohamad Firdaus Mansor, et.al, "Revisiting Omani Legacy in Malaya through the Royal Kedah Dress: Reassessment, 34-52; M. Abu Hani, *The Bedouin Judicial Heritage: Theory and Practice* (Jordan: Department of Culture and Arts, 2000).

marriage ceremonies, providing an overview of the Jordanian legal systems and culture. It also looks at clothing and housing norms, highlighting the material culture that results from these traditions.¹²

Furthermore, Al-Abu Hani's (2000) analysis of the historical foundations of Jordanian society illuminates the country's contemporary social structure and system and offers insightful information about the cultural and sociological effects of traditional tribal organizations and family structures.¹³ Al-Sekhaneh (2005) investigated the interaction between the Bedouins and the Jordanian state's surroundings. The research shows how traditional Bedouin tents gave way to stone buildings, highlighting the importance of the tent as a social and architectural space. It also highlights the intangible components of the traditional tent and their influence on the tangible parts of Bedouin life, acknowledging the multifaceted nature of the tent in the context of the Bedouins' evolving social and cultural landscape.¹⁴

Al-Abadi (2006) covered table settings, greetings, hospitality, and the *dakhalah* ritual, among other varied Jordanian Bedouin customs. The study offers thorough insights into the customs and cultural practices of Jordanian Bedouin groups.¹⁵

The *Ammarin* tribe in Petra, a settled Bedouin group, is the focus of Bille's (2009) study, which examines the issue of protection against hazards from both material and social viewpoints.¹⁶ The study emphasizes how cultural, religious, and national identities interact with protective mechanisms. It investigates how to defend against certain threats and looks at the function of light, architecture, preventive things, Qur'anic items, and heritage creation using anthropological approaches. The study delves into the recognition and safeguarding of Bedouin culture through UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage programme. It demonstrates that negotiating adequate protection against perceived risks involves actively addressing the feelings of exposure, vulnerability, and uncertainty towards cherished people, places, and things. These protective strategies simultaneously serve as powerful public displays of social, religious, and national moral identities, which can empower, exclude, or marginalize individuals.

Khawaldeh's (2013) comprehensive analysis of the Jordanian society focuses on social evolution and the kinship system, unveiling the dynamics that shape social interactions and group affiliations.¹⁷ The study explores the relationship between modern state institutions and tribal customs, such as the *dakhalah* tradition, revealing the enduring influence of tribal practices on Jordan's evolving political system.

These studies contribute to comprehending Jordanian traditions and customs. By investigating various cultural aspects, including historical underpinnings, familial networks, and tribal traditions of Jordan, these studies provide a more comprehensive understanding of the country's cultural

¹²A. Jaradat, *A Study in the Customs and Traditions of Jordanian Society* (Jordan: Foundation for Distribution, 2002).

¹³M. Abu Hani, *The Bedouin Judicial Heritage: Theory and Practice* (Jordan: Department of Culture and Arts, 2000).

¹⁴W. Al-Sekhaneh, *The Bedouin of Northern Jordan: Kinship, Cosmology, and Ritual Exchange* (Wvb, Wissenschaftlicher Verlag, 2005).

¹⁵A. O. Al-Abadi, *Bedouin Customs and Traditions* (Jordan: Al-Mohtaseb Library for Publishing and Distribution, 2006).

¹⁶M. Bille, *Negotiating Protection: Bedouin Material Culture and Heritage in Jordan* (London: University College London, 2009).

¹⁷A. Khawaldeh, *Introduction to the Study of Jordanian Society* (Jordan: Ramtha Press, 2013).

heritage. They shed light on the dynamism of Jordanian customs and emphasize the significance of rites in keeping community peace and resolving conflicts.

Even though these studies offer insightful understandings of certain Jordanian cultural practices, little attention has been paid to the broader variety of beneficial practices that were part of the Jordanian culture before the modern age. The various traditions that have created Jordanian culture throughout history must be adequately investigated. Such research would contribute to preserving Jordan's cultural heritage and offer its thorough understanding. To fully comprehend the richness of Jordanian customs, conducting more research to examine the various facets of the Jordanian society, including but not limited to religious practices, folklore, culinary traditions, traditional crafts, and community celebrations is essential. Researchers may better understand Jordan's cultural legacy and historical development by examining the standard practices in various geographic areas and socioeconomic groupings. This information may encourage cultural preservation for future generations and build a broader understanding of Jordan's society.¹⁸

1.1. Statement of the Problem

The problem addressed by this study is the need for more comprehensive research documenting Jordanian customs due to their integral role in Jordan's cultural heritage. Few studies have explored these customs and their social and psychological impact on Jordanian society. Several positive Jordanian customs have gradually faded due to the shift towards modernity and urban lifestyle.

The current study aims to address the following research questions:

1. What are the critical positive customs prevalent in the Jordanian society?
2. What is the importance and impact of practicing these customs on the lives of Jordanian people?
3. To what extent these customs are still practiced in the Jordanian society and what are the perspectives of Jordanian people towards them?

1.2. Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its exploration of customs within the Jordanian cultural heritage. Through documentation and emphasis on the role of these customs in fostering solidarity and cooperation within the Jordanian society, this study contributes to their preservation. These customs play a crucial role in alleviating life's challenges. However, as the Jordanian society transitions to urban life, akin to trends observed in other contemporary societies, these customs are gradually diminishing. Recognizing their significance, it becomes imperative to strive towards their continued appreciation and practice.

1.3. Definition of Terms

- *Dakhalah* /aldʒa:la/: A criminal's or sometimes a right-seeker's request for protection for themselves and their property from specific clan elders or dignitaries. The request for intervention in criminal cases typically occurs immediately after the crime's occurrence to prevent the so-called "blood outburst."¹⁹

¹⁸Bilal M Salah et al. "Optimism Predictive Ability and Psychological Flexibility among Students during COVID-19 Pandemic," *Journal of Educational and Social Research* 12, no. 5, (2022), 0134. <https://doi.org/10.36941/jesr-2022-0134>

¹⁹R. B. Al-Ozaizi, "Jordanian Traditions," *Ministry of Culture and Information* 2, no. 1 (1965): 33–52.

- *Tu'mah* /atʕaʕma/: Tu'mah involves sending newly prepared or bought food to a close neighbor.²⁰
- *Al'oneh* /alʕu.nah/: It involves providing aid and support to relatives, friends, or neighbours in various life matters such as harvesting crops, picking olives, building and repairing houses, spinning wool, hosting wedding feasts, and more.²¹
- *Inzalah* /inzalah/: It is a feast held in honour of a new neighbour when they move into their new home, and their neighbours offer this feast.²²

2. Methods

This research used the exploratory methodology to examine Jordan's most common cultural behaviours. This approach is typically used to develop new insights when more research is needed on a particular issue. The researchers used historical, descriptive, and case study approaches to accomplish their research goals. These methods helped to describe the numerous customs ingrained in Jordanian culture. The historical approach requires looking at ancient books and documents to determine how these behaviours have changed. The descriptive approach provides in-depth descriptions of the practices, whereas the case study methodology investigates specific instances of these traditions.

2.1. Study Sample

The study intends to offer valuable insights into the richness of the rituals in Jordanian culture by collecting data from various participants and using various research approaches. For this purpose, face-to-face interviews were conducted with 48 participants to collect the data. To provide a variety of viewpoints and experiences, men and women from different villages in Irbid, Jordan were chosen. The participants' age range was 20-95 years, contributing to the data's richness and breadth. Including participants from various age groups enabled the researchers to record more contemporary traditions and practices, as well as the ones passed down through the centuries.

Face-to-face interviews help to gather data by allowing the sharing of personal stories²³. Interview participants offered insights based on their personal experiences and values concerning the studied practices. The researchers also consulted written heritage texts that cover the Jordanian society and customs in addition to interviews. The background knowledge and historical context provided by these textual sources were used to supplement the findings from the interviews. The researchers boosted their data analysis and improved the reliability and validity of their conclusions by combining oral testimony with written records. The participants' demographic information is presented below in Table 1.

Table 1. Profiles of the Participants

No.	Education level	Age	Gender	Place of living	No.	Education level	Age	Gender	Place of living
P1	Illiterate	64	Male	City	P25	Illiterate	64	Female	City
P2	Basic stage	74	Male	Desert	P26	Bachelor	74	Female	Desert
P3	Basic stage	67	Male	Village	P27	Bachelor	67	Male	Desert
P4	Basic stage	68	Female	City	P28	Masters	68	Male	Village

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid.

²³T. H. Khan, and E. MacEachen, "An alternative method of interviewing: Critical Reflections on Videoconference Interviews for Qualitative Data Collection," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 21 (2022): 16094069221090063.

No.	Education level	Age	Gender	Place of living	No.	Education level	Age	Gender	Place of living
P5	Basic stage	69	Female	Village	P29	Masters	69	Male	City
P6	Illiterate	66	Female	City	P30	PhD	66	Female	City
P7	Bachelor	49	Male	Desert	P31	PhD	49	Female	Village
P8	Bachelor	45	Male	Desert	P32	Masters	45	Female	City
P9	Masters	46	Male	Village	P33	Masters	46	Male	City
P10	Masters	33	Female	City	P34	PhD	33	Male	City
P11	PhD	49	Female	City	P35	PhD	49	Male	Village
P12	PhD	48	Female	Village	P36	PhD	48	Female	Village
P13	Illiterate	64	Male	City	P37	Illiterate	64	Male	City
P14	Basic stage	73	Male	Desert	P38	Basic stage	73	Male	Desert
P15	Basic stage	66	Male	Village	P39	Basic stage	66	Male	Village
P16	Basic stage	69	Female	City	P40	Basic stage	69	Female	City
P17	Basic stage	66	Female	Village	P41	Basic stage	66	Male	Village
P18	Illiterate	67	Female	City	P42	Illiterate	67	Male	City
P19	Bachelor	46	Male	Desert	P43	Bachelor	46	Male	Desert
P20	Bachelor	49	Male	Desert	P44	Bachelor	49	Female	Desert
P21	Masters	49	Male	Village	P45	Illiterate	49	Male	Village
P22	PhD	44	Female	City	P46	Basic stage	44	Female	Desert
P23	PhD	49	Female	Village	P47	Basic stage	49	Female	Village
P24	PhD	77	Female	Village	P48	Basic stage	77	Female	City

3. Theoretical Framework

The UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) is a global initiative that encourages member states to identify and describe traditional and modern knowledge, practices, and skills present in their territories.²⁴ This concept emphasizes the connection between intergenerational learning, transferable learning, and the territory to which it belongs. Cultural heritage encompasses both material and intangible aspects, representing a match between identity references or the heritage associated with that territory. The authenticity of the heritage is expressed through three concepts of space: a living space linked to practices; a living space (in terms of representations) associated with the performance of these practices; and a social space linked to the places of birth and social relationships.²⁵

Authenticity is regarded as uniqueness or distinction as compared to others, providing a useful cultural identity for communities. It encompasses traditions, techniques, spirit, sentiments, and the historical and social dimensions of cultural heritage, representing a sense of historical and cultural continuity. There are two types of heritage authenticity: “cold authenticity” and “hot authenticity.” Cold authenticity describes the authenticity of heritage based on scientific knowledge from institutions or recognized experts, while hot authenticity refers to cultural heritage acknowledged by the local community based on its existential authenticity, utilizing a performance process that allows for community participation.²⁶

²⁴S. Lazaro Ortiz, C. Jimenez de Madariaga, “The UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage: a Critical Analysis,” *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 28, no. 3 (2022): 327-341, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10286632.2021.1941914>

²⁵B. Wood, “A Review of the Concept of Authenticity in Heritage, with Particular Reference to Historic Houses,” *Collections* 16, no. 1 (2020): 8-33, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1550190620904798>

²⁶R. Jones, “Authenticity, the Media and Heritage Tourism: Robin Hood and Brother Cadfael as Midlands’s Tourist Magnets,” In *Culture, Heritage and Representation-Perspectives on Visuality and the Past* (Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2010), 145-154. https://espace.curtin.edu.au/bitstream/handle/20.500.11937/40588/153597_29731_CultureHeritage_Rep_JonesR.pdf?sequence=2

United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has significantly changed the definition of cultural heritage, encompassing not only historical landmarks and artistic artifacts but also traditions and living expressions passed down through generations. These include oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge related to nature and the universe, and skills involved in creating traditional crafts. As the only specialized United Nations agency with a clear mandate in culture, UNESCO assists member states in developing and implementing effective measures to safeguard their cultural heritage, including the adoption of the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage.²⁷

Intangible cultural heritage is crucial in preserving cultural diversity amid increasing globalization. It fosters dialogue between cultures and promotes mutual respect for each other's way of life. The importance of intangible cultural heritage lies not only in its cultural manifestations but also in the rich knowledge and skills passed down from one generation to the next. This knowledge transfer is relevant to minorities, larger social groups, and both developing and developed countries.

Jordan, due to its deep-rooted civilization, is among the world's richest and most diverse nations in terms of intangible cultural heritage components. In 1989, several countries submitted recommendations to UNESCO to protect traditional cultures. In 2001, a list of cultural assets submitted by various countries to UNESCO was announced, leading to the signing of the "Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage" in Paris on October 17, 2003. By June 20, 2007, 78 countries, including Jordan, had ratified the convention, which defines intangible cultural heritage as a set of practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, and skills that communities, groups, and individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage.²⁸

The UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage serves as a framework that defines various forms of intangible cultural heritage. It is intended to be inclusive but not necessarily "complete". Some countries may employ different systems of domains, leading to variations in specific cultural elements. When introduced in 2003, the Convention raised questions about its differences from the World Heritage Convention announced in 1972 and the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. UNESCO clarified the fundamental distinctions between the three conventions: the 1972 Convention aims to protect tangible heritage, such as monuments, cultural sites, and natural landscapes; the 2005 Convention seeks to empower artists, cultural professionals, practitioners, and global citizens to create, produce, promote, and enjoy a broad range of cultural goods, services, and activities; while the 2003 Convention intersects with these agreements by focusing on protecting a specific form of heritage—intangible heritage. This includes practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, and skills that communities consider part of their cultural heritage.²⁹

The UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage categorizes intangible cultural heritage and its related living traditions and cultural expressions according to the heritage sources that reflect the uniqueness of communities and societies. These categories include

²⁷Lazaro Ortiz, C. Jimenez de Madariaga, "The UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage," 327-341.

²⁸A. Jagielska-Burduk, M. Pszczyński, P. Stec, "Cultural Heritage Education in UNESCO Cultural Conventions," *Sustainability* 13, no. 6 (2021): 3548, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13063548>

²⁹R. C. Smith, "The UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions: Building a New World Information and Communication Order?" In *Cultural Heritage Rights* (Routledge, 2017), 471-502. <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781315258737-20/unesco-convention-protection-promotion-diversity-cultural-expressions-building-new-world-information-communication-order-rachael-craufurd-smith>

oral traditions and expressions, performing arts and traditional music, social practices, and knowledge related to nature and the universe. Oral traditions and expressions convey cultural knowledge, social values, and collective memory, while performing arts and traditional music may carry political or economic dimensions. Social practices shape the nature of daily life and cultural elements are familiar to all the members of a society. Knowledge related to nature and the universe encompasses all the skills, practices, and representations that communities have developed through interaction with their natural environment.³⁰ However, experts believe that this knowledge is “seriously threatened by globalization,” as rapid urbanization and expansion of agricultural land significantly impact the natural environment of communities.

To conclude, the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage is a comprehensive framework that aims to protect the uniqueness of intangible cultural heritage and its related living traditions and expressions. By addressing the challenges posed by globalization and preserving the intangible cultural heritage of diverse local communities, UNESCO hopes to ensure that knowledge and skills are passed on to future generations, contributing to the preservation of cultural diversity and social cohesion. The Convention also emphasizes the importance of collective pride in heritage, which is only considered representative when communities that produce it confer, maintain, and transmit it. This heritage serves as the genetic code of people, encompassing practices, perceptions, forms of expression, knowledge, skills, and associated tools, artifacts, and cultural places that groups and communities consider part of their heritage.

Representative heritage is not viewed solely as a cultural commodity with distinctive characteristics or exceptional value as compared to others. Rather, it is also manifested through its connection to the social roots of the cultural dimensions. These are linked to the inheritance and transmission of knowledge in specific areas represented by the systems of values, traditions, customs, and skills that give each community its uniqueness and define its identity.³¹

To protect intangible cultural heritage, different measures are required as compared to those used for preserving historical sites and natural locations. For intangible heritage to remain vital, it must be an integral, continuously practiced part of a given culture within local communities and across generations. Initiatives to safeguard intangible cultural heritage include identifying, documenting, researching, maintaining, promoting, and transmitting this heritage, particularly through formal and informal education and revitalizing its various aspects. Intangible heritage can be collected and documented just like historical monuments and artworks, with local communities participating in identifying and defining practices that form part of their cultural heritage.

4. Findings

4.1. Prevailing Customs in Jordanian Heritage

Customs and traditions significantly shape Jordan's social structure and national identity. Even though covering all the customs in one study is challenging, the ones covered so far offer a window into Jordan's extensive cultural history³². The Jordanian people have a strong sense of community, solidarity, and togetherness thanks to the widespread observance of these traditions. Due to rapid

³⁰R. Finnegan, *Oral Traditions and the Verbal Arts: A Guide to Research Practices* (Routledge, 2003), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203393215>

³¹X. Su, X. Li, Y. Wu, L. Yao, “How is Intangible Cultural Heritage Valued in the Eyes of Inheritors? Scale Development and Validation,” *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research* 44, no. 5 (2020): 806-834, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1096348020914691>

³²Muhammad Husni Abu Melhim, “ISIS’ Miscontextualization of Ḥadīth through the Strategic Linguistic Propaganda: A Socio-Political Analysis,” *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* 13.1 (2023): 89-102.

urbanization and globalization, the Jordanian society has changed significantly. These changes have unavoidably affected traditions, causing some to change or gradually vanish.³³

Nevertheless, it is crucial to remember that many traditions have survived in modern-day Jordanian culture. It is important to emphasize that traditions in any community are fluid and vulnerable to modification. New customs might replace those that are fading away. Some traditions have endured and continued because of their worth and importance to Jordanians. The traditions discussed below protect cultural identity and legacy by bridging the past and the present.

4.1.1. Al-Dakhalah /aldʒa:la/

An important Jordanian tradition, *al-dakhalah*, includes requesting protection and assistance from powerful clan elders or dignitaries in legal proceedings or interpersonal conflicts. Participant 1 said, "It is started by the criminal or the person seeking justice as soon as possible after the crime is committed to halt future conflict escalation and guarantee the protection of lives and rights. It is the first step towards rapprochement and conflict settlement in Jordanian society." Participant 3 added, "When someone asks for *dakhalah* (requesting protection), they usually go to a revered person like a tribal *sheikh* or a wise dignitary." The perpetrator or the person seeking justice, their clan, and their possessions are placed in the *sheikh's* and his clan's care. Participant 6 explained, "As a mediator, the *sheikh* encourages dialogue between the parties until a deal is struck or the problem is handled, ensuring everyone's legitimate complaints are handled." As such, the *sheikh* must punish the criminal according to tribal norms in Jordan and offer protection in any way that may be required. Participant 6 added, "If the aggressor's party neglects to protect the intruder's safety, they are also responsible for any damages or penalties that may result."

Dakhalah in Jordanian heritage carries profound meanings and considerations. Participant 8 stated, "Even if the offender or the right-seeker (known as the "*dakheel*") enters the house of their adversary, they are entitled to the protection they requested." This act of intrusion can transform the offender from an enemy into a staunch defender of the person they sought assistance from. Participant 10 reported, "Intrusion is a sacred act that cannot be delayed. It is optional for the *dakhalah* to be directly requested from the *sheikh*; if the *dakheel* cannot find someone to seek protection from, the intervention can be requested in absentia by mentioning the names of the *sheikh* and their lineage." In such cases, according to clan customs, the *sheikh* has the right to take legal action against the opponent if he assaults the *dakheel*. Participant 12 added, "If the *dakheel* fails to find anyone to protect their honour, they can seek shelter at the nearest grave of a *sheikh* or a well-known individual, with their family able to claim the rights of the intruder over the deceased."

Despite suspending the tribal judiciary law in 1976 as part of Jordan's transition to a civil state, the practice of *dakhalah* has persisted, particularly in cases involving serious offences, such as murder and indecent assault. Participant 11 reported, "The state still recognizes *dakhalah*, with the police occasionally summoning the leader of the offender's clan to identify the *dakheel* if the criminal has not done so. In some instances, coordination takes place between regional administrative rulers and the *sheikh* responsible for protecting the *dakheel*." Participant 9 reported, "Mediation between the two parties continues until the issue is narrowed, lives are safeguarded, and reconciliation is achieved." Even in everyday matters, *dakhalah* remains present among Jordanians. It is often enough for someone to say, "I am your *dakheel*." The person addressed would be obliged to provide help,

³³Feras Ali Al-Habies, Suzie Yaseen Rababa'h, and Mahmoud Ali Rababah, "Obstacles to Marriage for Jordanian Persons with Visual or Hearing Disabilities from Their Perspectives," *FWU Journal of Social Sciences* 18.2 (2024): 91-104.

assistance, and protection in resolving minor problems and issues through mediation without resorting to legal measures.

4.1.2. *Al'oneh*: /alʕu:naħ/

Al'oneh is a Jordanian tradition in which people help and support friends, family members, or neighbours in all facets of daily life. This voluntary activity includes a variety of chores, such as assisting with agricultural work including crop harvesting and olive picking, helping with home repairs and building, spinning wool, and hosting wedding feasts, among others.³⁴ Participant 3 reported, "In the past, people were thought to have a moral duty to assist their friends, neighbours, or family members when needed." The act of *al'oneh* has social and community importance and is a practical act of assistance. Participant 5 explained, "The *"me'awen"* (assistant) would provide their aid while participating in rituals and customs. They frequently exchanged stories and worries and even sang and chanted traditional tunes." Participant 6 added, "Meals were frequently shared by the workers and those they supported, giving the event a unique character. *Al'oneh* would continue, with the helpers passing from one person to the next, until all those in need had gotten assistance."

Al'oneh, however, has steadily vanished from Jordanian society over time. This may be attributed to several factors, such as modifications to living arrangements and the transition from nuclear to extended families. Participant 12 reported, "Urbanisation and contemporary lifestyles have increased individualism and reduced the sense of shared duty in society." Additionally, greater dependence on paid employees rather than soliciting assistance from others has resulted from the availability of government positions and the shift to a society that places a higher value on civility.

The abolition of the *al'oneh* tradition has impacted gender roles in Jordanian society. According to Participant 1, the shifting social dynamics have made it difficult for sons to help their dads, which has resulted in a change in which land is either transferred to others for cultivation or paid labourers are employed in their place. Even the once-common tradition of women helping to prepare wedding and marriage feasts has decreased. Participant 4 stated, "Families these days frequently choose to pay for catering services or rely on easily accessible food from restaurants. Few families still adhere to this tradition since it helps build familiarity and strong family ties."

As a result of extensive changes in social structure and values, the collapse of *al'oneh* constitutes a fundamental transition in Jordanian society. It is crucial to understand and appreciate the historical significance of this tradition, even though its demise may be linked to pragmatic factors and changing social standards. The participant reported, "*Al'oneh* represented the shared obligations of Jordanian families and neighbours and the community's solidarity, support, and solidarity." Despite its demise, the remembrance of *al'oneh* still has cultural and social significance for Jordanians, reminding them of the virtues of solidarity, collaboration, and helping those in need.

4.1.3. *Tu'mah*: /aʔʕaʕma/

Tu'mah is a derivative of "feed," emphasizing eating and providing food for others. It is a cherished Jordanian tradition that involves sending newly prepared or bought food to a close neighbour as a gesture of familiarity and consideration. It is common for Jordanians to give their neighbours some or a "taste" of the food they make.³⁵ In Jordanian culture, the *tu'mah* ritual has symbolic importance. The participant explained, "It is common to hear the phrase, "the food of the neighbour does not satiate the house," which alludes to the possibility that the household may not receive enough food to meet its needs." This highlights the symbolic significance of food sharing

³⁴R. B. Al-Ozaizi, "Jordanian Traditions," 33–52.

³⁵Ibid.

and the idea that even if the kids at the neighbour's house have only seen or smelled the food, bringing them a tiny amount is still vital as a sign of friendliness and consideration.

One of the Jordanian society's most honourable traditions, *tu'mah*, stands for intimacy, love, unity, and care for others. Participant 11 explained, "*Tu'mah* embodies the idea that eating should never be done alone; it should always be done with a neighbour." Participant 12 added, "People demonstrate concern and connection to their neighbours by giving *tu'mah*, building a sense of community, and fortifying social ties."

The practice of *tu'mah*, however, has been dwindling recently. The deterioration of neighbourly ties has been attributed to factors including population increase and the movement of many Jordanians to metropolitan regions. According to Participant 3, "Individuals today are less likely to know their neighbours since everyone is more preoccupied with their problems and obligations." Even though the number of households maintaining the *tu'mah* ritual is decreasing, some still exist. The creation of these meals has become less prevalent than the modern cuisines that Jordanians consume today. Participant 7 emphasized that the food shared through *tu'mah* has become increasingly restricted to traditional recipes. Some people crave traditional foods and give them away to their neighbours, especially older people, to appreciate and preserve Jordan's culinary legacy.

The participants reported that the steady decline of the *tu'mah* tradition reflects the Jordanian society's shifting dynamics, including lifestyle changes, urbanization, and changing social connections. However, *Tu'mah's* significance as a cultural representation of friendly ties with one's neighbours, kindness, and connectedness is still vital. It serves as a reminder of the value of interpersonal peace, care for others, and the common customs that support a feeling of togetherness and solidarity throughout Jordanian communities.

4.1.4. Inzalah: /inza:la/

A beloved Jordanian tradition known as *inzalah*, or the "residence feast," involves neighbours organizing a welcome supper for a new neighbour when they move into the area. Traditionally, the neighbours would alternate hosting the feast to give each neighbour a chance to show the newcomer their hospitality. Following this cycle of feasts, the new neighbour would then extend a reciprocal invitation to all the neighbours to their house. Due to its many benefits, the practice of *inzalah* is highly valued in Jordanian culture.

Participant 12 reported, "The primary goal of the *inzalah* ritual is to respect and formally welcome a new neighbour into the neighbourhood." The neighbours show their warmth, acceptance, and desire to establish a peaceful relationship with the newcomer by throwing a feast in their honour. The gesture conveys friendliness, community, and a desire to foster a sense of inclusion and welcome within the neighbourhood." Additionally, *inzalah* promotes a strong feeling of camaraderie among neighbours. Participant 10 added, "Bonds of friendship, camaraderie, and mutual support are created when people come together and share a meal." The tradition fosters a feeling of goodwill, compassion, and connectivity, supporting the notion that neighbours are not just people who happen to live close by. Instead, they comprise a close-knit group of people who watch out for one another. The feast catalyzes fostering wholesome connections and creating a peaceful neighbourhood.

In addition, *inzalah* gives the new neighbour a feeling of security and certainty. Participant 4 explained, "The practice of *inzalah* reassures newcomers that they are welcomed, cherished, and surrounded by loving neighbours despite the overwhelming and intimidating nature of moving to a new location. It facilitates the development of a caring community where the new neighbour may turn for support, advice, and companionship at any time."

It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of the neighbourhood in Jordanian culture. A well-known proverb in Jordan stresses the value of neighbours and says, "Your near neighbour is closer

to you than your faraway brother.” This proverb embodies a deeply held conviction regarding the importance of solid neighbourly ties and the need to look out for and assist one another. The majority religion in Jordan is Islam which emphasizes showing compassion and respect to neighbours. The Prophet Muhammad’s teachings urge Muslims to be thoughtful of their neighbours, extend hospitality to visitors, and uphold good behaviour and open communication in their communities.

Inzalah is still practiced in many Jordanian households, despite certain adjustments brought on by modernization and cultural developments. Participant 1 remarked: “Nowadays, the feast is frequently scaled back and restricted to the new neighbour and their close family, which usually consists of their husband and kids. Furthermore, instead of a system where each neighbour hosts the feast in turn, it is typical for the nearest neighbour to accept the obligation.”

The fundamental goals of respecting and welcoming the new neighbour, encouraging friendship and community, and creating a helpful atmosphere remain unaffected by these modifications. Participant 5 said, “The *inzalah* custom must be upheld and preserved to preserve Jordanian society. It is a reminder of the importance of interpersonal connections, neighbourhood cohesiveness, and the demonstration of hospitality and generosity.”³⁶ Jordanians may improve the lives of both new and long-time inhabitants by upholding *inzalah*, which fosters a strong sense of community, social peace, and connection among neighbourhoods.

5. Discussion

The conflicting views and behaviours towards observing inherited traditions in Jordanian culture reflect the intricate dynamics of a rapidly changing society. In light of the impacts of modernity, the old practices that formerly provided the basis for social structure and interpersonal connections are now being questioned and reevaluated. Some Jordanians strongly prefer traditional practices, including those who have personally experienced their beneficial effects.³⁷ They cherish authenticity and legacy because they know that these traditions build closeness and resilience in adversity. Following these traditions is how they retain their cultural identity and remain connected with the past in their eyes.³⁸

The second group adopts a more nuanced approach, recognizing the value of these traditions while not considering them as always required. They are aware of the difficulties that may be caused by practical considerations, such as financial or psychological requirements, and they consider the applicability of customs as bound to particular circumstances. This group embodies a laxer philosophy where traditions are respected but may not be rigorously followed.³⁹

³⁶C. H. Wiradendi Wolor, D. R. Datu Eranza, M. A. Rababah, and A. Nurkhin, “Relationship of Work-Family Conflict, Work-Life Imbalance, and Work-Related Stress with Employee Performance of Married Women in Indonesia: A Cross-Sectional Study (Persian),” *Iranian Journal of Psychiatry and Clinical Psychology* 29, 3 (2023): 350-369, <https://www.sid.ir/filesserver/jf/39-280765-fa-1145551.pdf>

³⁷M. Melhim, Y. Al-Shurman, F. Zainelabdin, Y. Rabab’a, R. Bani Saeed, M. A. Rababah, “ISIS’ Miscontextualization of Hadith through the Strategic Linguistic Propaganda: A Socio-Political Analysis,” *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* 13, no. 1 (2023): 89-102, <https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.131.07>

³⁸B. M. Yassien, M. Albadarneh, A. Alazzam, M. A. Rababah, “Relationship between Organisational Trust and Decision-Making Participation,” *Journal of Higher Education Theory and Practice* 23, 7 (2023): 169-177. <https://articlearchives.co/index.php/JHETP/article/view/5582>

³⁹F. A. Al-Habies, S. Y. Rababa’h, M. A. Rababah, “Obstacles to Marriage for Jordanian Persons with Visual or Hearing Disabilities from Their Perspectives,” *FWU Journal of Social Sciences* 18, no. 2 (2024): 91-104, <http://doi.org/10.51709/19951272/Summer2024/9>

Young people make up the majority of the third group, which vehemently rejects old traditions in favour of modernity and decorum. They consider these traditions archaic and unsuitable for the needs of the modern world. They are concerned with advancement and see folk practices as obstacles limiting their ability. This group's repudiation of oral customs reflects globalization's growing impact and the current generation's shifting attitudes and interests.

The practice of inherited customs has been significantly impacted by the changes in the Jordanian society, notably the weakening of family relationships and the trend towards a more individualistic mindset. The importance and frequency of these traditions have decreased as the society's dynamics have evolved and the institution of family has taken a back seat in people's lives. As these traditions were frequently firmly entrenched in familial ties, the fragmentation of family relationships has further undermined their implementation.

The conflict between traditional behaviours and the impacts of globalization and modernization represent the struggle to balance cultural and social identity in the Jordanian society. The importance of ingrained traditions is called into question by globalization, which focuses on universal values and conventions. Some people think their needs may be addressed without relying on these traditions because of the modern society's worldly perspective.

Even though some areas of the Jordanian culture may no longer follow inherited norms, it is crucial to remember that traditions can change over time. Some communities still appreciate and uphold these traditions to promote togetherness, preserve cultural history, and create a sense of community. The continuing conversation and compromise between tradition and modernity will shape the future of these traditions in the Jordanian society.

5.1. Importance of Customs in the Life of Societies

The lives of individuals and the cumulative experiences of civilizations through the course of time are reflected in their customs and traditions. They document the occasions and advancements that mould a community's history. Due to their ability to explain, strengthen, weaken, or even destroy the society, these practices have a considerable influence. Habits permeate many facets of life, including language, interpersonal interactions, dietary preferences, and purchasing decisions. Habits are the social behaviours people acquire and base their actions on in numerous settings. In this approach, customs emphasize the value of lofty ideals such as generosity, sympathy for the less fortunate, and assistance to strangers and those in need.⁴⁰

In contrast to those widespread in more developed civil societies, the customs of the Jordanian society stand out. They represent a more straightforward way of life that emphasizes interdependence, solidarity, and a solid commitment to assisting others. These practices distinguish the community from the intricacy and sophistication frequently associated with civilization, where personal independence is prioritized and notions like interdependence and collaboration may be foreign to the populace. Unfortunately, one of the drawbacks of contemporary civic life is that people frequently put their personal needs before the good social practices that were formerly ingrained in their cultures.⁴¹

The preservation of a society's identity depends significantly on its cultural heritage. It extends beyond the archaeological ruins and items classified as physical heritage and includes tangible and intangible characteristics. The term "intangible heritage" refers to a broad range of human behaviours, values, views, ideas, and emotions passed down from generation to generation. It is often called "moral heritage" or "popular heritage." Folklore comprises folktales, handicrafts, proverbs,

⁴⁰B. M. Yassien, et al. "Relationship between Organisational Trust and Decision-Making Participation," *Journal of Higher Education Theory and Practice* 23.7 (2023), 169-177.

⁴¹R. B. Al-Ozaizi, "Jordanian Traditions," 33.

riddles, oral traditions, social customs, conventional wisdom, and even folk meals. Like the roots of a tree in civilization, heritage acts as the wellspring of identity. The more potent, stable, and prepared the tree is to withstand the changes in time, the deeper its roots go.⁴²

Individual's risk losing their sense of civilized identity if they ignore, reject, or remain unaware of their origin. All the ideals that give people, societies, and even countries their unique characteristics are included in heritage. Based on these ideals is the framework used for constructing people and moulding their religious and worldly beliefs. Heritage results from a significant accumulation of knowledge, beliefs, and customs from different intellectual, religious, and cultural fields. It is a powerful symbol of a nation's faith, reason, and character. The uniqueness of a country distinguishes it from others.⁴³

Many intangible cultural heritage elements have been threatened with extinction due to continuous modernization processes, whereas tangible heritage changes, develops, and is enhanced from generation to generation. To maintain heritage as a crucial component of people's popular culture and give it a sense of national identity, nations must take deliberate steps to revitalize cultural practices. Preserving a particular region's legacy adds to the global enrichment of humanity's collective heritage. The current study is concerned with preserving an essential collection of oral traditions, part of Jordan's intangible moral and cultural legacy. Sadly, many previously common traditions in the Jordanian culture have started to disappear with time.

5.2. Conclusion

Good habits hold a significant place within the Jordanian cultural heritage, as they define the Jordanian identity's material and moral characteristics. Heritage plays a vital role in shaping the collective mindset, instilling values, and fostering public awareness. It acts as an emotional thread that ensures the continuity of generations. Therefore, it is crucial to emphasize its contents, including good habits and encourage their revival due to their immense importance in promoting social cohesion and solidarity. Hence, supporting studies that underscore the significance of reviving these habits in the society become imperative as they can provide a foundation for a better future.

Preserving both tangible and intangible heritage has long been at the core of the new concept of world heritage, as outlined in the 1972 World Cultural and Natural Heritage Convention, established by UNESCO. The Jordanian heritage encompasses numerous good habits, all of which possess noble humanitarian goals. Moreover, they play a prominent role in alleviating life's challenges and fostering solidarity and cooperation among Jordanians. Some of these habits have evolved into customs, such as *dakhalah*, a substitute for the law when a specific problem is not explicitly addressed.

The modern Jordanian state recognizes the essential role of *dakhalah*, as it assists in addressing problems and saving lives when there is no explicit legal provision. However, some customs have begun to fade with societal changes and the shift towards a more civil way of life. Despite this, these traditions continue to significantly impact a subset of Jordanians who actively adhere to them and see their value in fostering interpersonal and societal bonds. Conversely, some Jordanians believe these traditions should be abandoned since they are a financial and societal burden.

Emphasizing the significance of these traditions and promoting their continuation is vital for preserving Jordan's cultural heritage and sustaining their positive impact. Recognizing the value of

⁴²A. Ghazi, "Material Heritage and Intellectual Heritage," *Fikr Magazine* 15, no. 3 (2016): 56-57.

⁴³A. Ghazawi, "Modern Studies in Heritage Preservation," *The Journal of Manuscripts* 1, no. 2 (2022): 118-133.

good practices in Jordanian culture can inspire individuals to build stronger bonds, enhance collaboration, and cultivate a shared sense of responsibility, paving the way for a brighter future.

Conflict of Interest

The authors of the manuscript have no financial or non-financial conflict of interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

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