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Preserving Intangible Heritage: A Framework for Assessing and Safeguarding Cultural Practices in Alula, Saudi Arabia

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ABSTRACT

The study explored the preservation of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) in Alula, Saudi Arabia, focusing on farming techniques essential for local subsistence and ecosystem. Alula, a UNESCO World Heritage site, faces challenges due to environmental and social changes. The study employs a risk assessment framework that considers environmental, social, economic, and cultural aspects to assess local perspectives on ICH resources and activities. It also uses quantitative survey-based methodology and participatory techniques for stakeholder insights and change proposals. The study findings highlighted the importance of protecting ICH for cultural identity, community pride, and sustainable development despite low levels of participation and difficulties with intergenerational transfer. It emphasises the need for focused interventions to address these challenges. The suggested framework aligns with Saudi Vision 2030 and the Royal Commission for Alula, aiming to enhance the preservation of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) and support worldwide initiatives for its protection and promotion. However, the study findings also have a limitation due to their focus on a specific population, primarily women aged 36-45, and suggest that future research should consider diverse age groups and gender perspectives.

INTRODUCTION

Alula is a region in northwestern Saudi Arabia that has been at a crossroads of civilizations for millennia (Dalton *et al.*, 2022). It is home to the first UNESCO World Heritage Site of the country Hegra, which was the capital of the ancient Nabataean kingdom. Alula also boasts hundreds of rock inscriptions that showcase the origins and evolution of the Arabic language (UNESCO, 2023). Alula is a living museum of sandstone outcrops, historical developments, and preserved tombs that reflect the rich history and cultural diversity of the region (Groucutt *et al.*, 2020).

Alula, located in northwestern Saudi Arabia, is a significant cultural hub that has been a hub for centuries. Its historical significance is exemplified by its UNESCO World Heritage site designation, Hegra, which was the ancient capital of the Nabataean kingdom (Dalton *et al.*, 2022). Alula's rock inscriptions, recognised by UNESCO as showcasing the evolution of the Arabic language, further highlight its cultural significance (UNESCO, 2023). The region functions as a living museum, with preserved sandstone landscapes, archaeological findings, and rock-cut tombs showcasing the diverse cultures and developments of the Arabian Peninsula (Groucutt *et al.*, 2020).

However, as a historical and cultural site, Alula faces the challenge of preserving both tangible and intangible heritage (Paven, n.d). Intangible heritage, including behaviours, practices, and knowledge, is particularly critical in Alula as it represents the local community's identity, values, and traditions and interactions with the natural environment (Alahmadi *et al.*, 2022). UNESCO defines intangible cultural heritage (ICH)

as practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills, instruments, objects, artefacts, and cultural spaces recognised by communities, groups, and individuals as part of their cultural heritage (Intangible *et al.*, 2023).

Furthermore, ICH encompasses oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge about nature and the universe, and traditional craftsmanship. It is distinct from tangible heritage, which includes tangible objects like buildings, monuments, and art (Kumar & Singh, 2022). ICH requires active participation and transmission from bearers and practitioners, reflecting creativity, diversity, and adaptability. It contributes to social cohesion, intercultural dialogue, and sustainable development by promoting cultural identity and fostering social cohesion (Ubertazzi, 2022).

Moreover, despite the significance of intangible cultural heritage (ICH), physical heritage is generally given precedence over heritage management and conservation because of the difficulties in locating, recording, and protecting ICH, which is frequently dynamic, intricate, and context-specific (Stevens, 2017). As a result, rapid social and environmental changes, such as urbanisation, globalisation, and climate change, often neglect or undervalue aspects of ICH, which can threaten its continuity and vitality by disrupting the transmission, practice, and meaning of the culture (Mora, 2023).

Addressing the highlighted gap, this study assessed and safeguarded the intangible heritage of Alula, Saudi Arabia, focusing on its farming practices as an integral part of the oasis ecosystem and local livelihood. The study utilised a quantitative survey-based approach to comprehend the understanding of intangible heritage resources of the locals in Alula and their practices (Abdullateef *et al.* 2023).

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Consequently, this study utilised a risk assessment methodology to understand local stakeholder attitudes towards intangible cultural heritage preservation practices in a region. A participatory framework was employed to gather qualitative insights from community members, considering natural, social, economic, and cultural risk factors (Nocca, 2017). The data collected can help recommend updated preservation strategies that align with regional cultural dynamics and global goals, emphasising the importance of ongoing stakeholder collaboration for heritage practices' relevance and benefit (Wilson *et al.*, 2018).

Overall, this study focuses on safeguarding Alula's intangible cultural heritage by assessing and promoting cultural practices of the region. It incorporates local stakeholder perspectives and raises global awareness, ensuring the preservation of these traditions. The methodology supports sustainable development and conservation in Alula, highlighting the link between cultural preservation and environmental stewardship. The study aligns with the Saudi Royal Commission for Alula and Saudi Vision 2030 economic reforms, establishing the area as a model for heritage-conscious growth and diversification (Erlach, 2023).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Intangible Cultural Heritage Defined: Forms, Functions and Challenges

Intangible cultural heritage is a crucial part of a community's historical legacy, consisting of traditions, practices, and knowledge passed down through oral traditions, performing arts, social behaviours, and landscape connections (Aktürk & Lerski, 2021). It consists of sayings, customs, and ties to places that shape cultural identities. Through informal exchanges like storytelling and formal practices like cultural performances, communities preserve their shared intangible history, fostering pride in their roots and reinforcing cultural values over time through intergenerational dialogue (UNESCO, 2003).

For instance, Oral traditions are crucial in preserving intangible cultural heritage, as they allow customs, beliefs, and knowledge to spread across generations. However, in today's digital era, informal heritage sharing is rare (Howard, 2016). Traditional storytelling and performance arts have been vital in maintaining intergenerational bonds, but individualised lifestyles have drained communal ceremonies and rituals, risking their significance as identity anchors (Wasylycia-Leis, 2016). An important part of these rich oral customs is telling stories around campfires, during storytelling sessions, and in the close quarters of families (Cvorovic & Coe, 2022). Oral history telling is better at making historical connections because cultural stories are passed down from generation to generation (Smith, 2006). Furthermore, live performances bring intangible cultural treasures to life. Musical concerts, dramatic productions, and ceremonial occasions are among them. These artistic activities are

passionate representations of communities' shared history, values, and emotions. Through their performances, communities are able to maintain their traditions and ensure that future generations do not lose them.

Intangible cultural heritage also includes social customs and behaviours. These activities determine how societies interact, the rituals they use to recall big life events and the conventions that shape their daily lives. They are the glue that holds a community together by weaving different stories into a unified whole (Blake & Du Cros, 2017). Festive gatherings mark the passage of time, and the joy and camaraderie they foster indicate the cultural vitality of the society. Understandings and practices of the natural and cosmic worlds that have been passed down through millennia are a priceless component of our cultural intangible history (Gonçalves, 2016; Patel, 2019). For example, Native American indigenous ecological wisdom, such as Native American astronomy and agrarian practices, are dynamic learning and experimentation that have evolved over generations (McCool, 2016). These cognisances, like star navigation and organic horticulture, foster equitable partnerships between peoples and environments, echoing philosophies of human resilience to diverse biota united through interdependence (Lascoux Ruiz, 2021). As global biodiversity challenges, it is crucial to remember these holistic worldviews and honour ecological cognisance as adaptive success (Whyte *et al.*, 2018; Burroughs, 2022).

Additionally, reviving appreciation for ecosystems as more than resources inspires reimagining humanitarian-environmental relations (Schreiber, 2021). Preserving intangible heritages rooted in ecological reciprocity is vital for diversifying global dialogue and reframing sustainability through interspecies solidarities. This counters dominant narratives that divide nature for human dominance by reinventing partnership on ancestral inclusive terms (Oliver, 2021).

Furthermore, traditional crafts are a visual representation of intangible cultural values, creating intricate artefacts resulting from generations of skills and knowledge. These handicrafts represent the cultural heritage, with their artistic features, production processes, and designs reflecting the shared history (Yang *et al.* 2018). Intangible cultural heritage is as valuable as tangible objects, as it is constantly changing and adapting to its surroundings. Humans are remarkably adaptable and resourceful in the face of changing and uncertain environments, showcasing their ability to maintain and carry on their legacy (Labadi *et al.*, 2021; Giliberto & Jackson, 2022).

Overall, intangible cultural heritage is a significant part of a community's historical legacy, encompassing traditions, practices, and knowledge passed down through oral traditions, performing arts, social behaviours, and landscape connections. It consists of sayings, customs, and ties to places and is crucial for preserving this heritage. Traditional crafts, representing shared history, are valuable tangible objects that adapt to changing environments (Aktürk & Lerski, 2021; Alves, 2018).

Alula Cultural Traditions and Customs

Alula, an old caravan town in northern Saudi Arabia, is a UNESCO World Heritage site that shows the strength of intangible cultural heritage. The traditions and ways of life handed down for many years still impact people's lives (DeTurk, 2022; Gebru, 2017). It gives a chance to see a deep culture in detail, full of colours and variety. The culture of their people comes from many old stories that have been shared for generations. These stories mix history, traditional tales and family knowledge to show the changing ways of this group (Yates, 2019; Schwarz, 2016).

For example, in Saudi Arabia, storytellers are important for preserving cultural heritage and teaching and entertaining young people. Alula's rich history and its people's wisdom. The whispered stories of the storytellers shed light on the Alula people's changing customs, rituals, and beliefs (Bandarin & Van Oers, 2020). Alula's specific cultural legacy is honoured and preserved through the performing arts. Theatre, dance, and music are key components of community festivities because they provide a platform for expressing one's individuality as well as a chance to reconnect with one's ancestry (Alzahrani, 2016). Social conventions and rituals control how the people of Alula interact with one another and deal with major life events (Kennedy *et al.*, 2023; Mekonnen, 2016).

However, rapid modernisation and urbanisation threaten this tradition, necessitating urgent efforts to preserve and document oral narratives for their continued relevance (Siregar, 2023). For example, some old-fashioned art forms that women often take part in are not allowed to be shown or played within the very traditional society of Saudi Arabia (Al-Aqeel, 2021). Preserving culture while being mindful of local feelings is very important. Promoting places where everyone is welcome and letting different cultures interact enhances diversity (Othman & Ibrahim, 2022; Diller, 2018).

Furthermore, Alula's social norms, deeply rooted in the Islamic faith and local customs, offer comfort and continuity during life transitions. However, the evolving social landscape in Saudi Arabia requires a critical examination of traditional practices, such as gender-based wedding ceremonies. Balancing traditional preservation with contemporary adaptation is crucial for Alula's relevance in the modern world. (Bay *et al.*, 2022).

In addition, Alula, a desert community, has a rich history of farming practices, including traditional falaj systems that harness rainwater. These farms serve as social hubs and cultural transmission centres, with women playing a crucial role in seed selection, food preservation, and cooking (Kennedy *et al.*, 2023; Balkhy, 2021). However, climate change and the globalised economy pose challenges, necessitating safeguarding land and water resources, fostering cultural values, and supporting sustainable practices.

Importance of Preserving Intangible Cultural Heritage
Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) is a vital tool for

connecting communities and promoting understanding between cultures. Its dynamic nature necessitates stewardship that is flexible and inclusive, considering local contexts and diverse voices. ICH transfers traditions through generations, showcasing humanity's creativity in the face of change. It strengthens social bonds and cultural identities, promoting appreciation for differences and constructive dialogue. (Labadi *et al.* 2021). ICH also has significant social and economic impacts, sustaining well-being and promoting tourism, education, and community engagement. In today's globalised world, ICH reinforces the importance of local roots in fostering prosperity and understanding between people worldwide. (Raisele, 2021).

Alula's cultural treasures, including oral histories, craft traditions, and social practices, demonstrate the importance of safeguarding intangible heritage in fostering prosperous communities (Erqsous, 2022). Alula aligns with Saudi Vision 2030 and the Royal Commission for Alula's goals of opening to the world while protecting indigenous roots. By supporting the transmission of skills like ancient irrigation methods and women's artistic handicrafts, youth find purpose in linking past and future. Alula's comprehensive, community-centred model sets the gold standard for revitalising cultural systems and promoting a sustainable path forward where culture and progress go hand in hand (Bayaa, 2023).

Furthermore, UNESCO emphasises the importance of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) for socio-cultural continuity and community well-being. ICH, including oral histories, performing arts, and social practices, strengthens social bonds and facilitates cultural transmission (Bortolotto, 2016; Caust & Vecco, 2017). Preserving ICH promotes social cohesion and supports cultural diversity while documenting and revitalising ICH practices fosters mutual understanding among diverse populations. Safeguarding ICH representation is crucial for maintaining indigenous knowledge systems and encouraging cross-cultural appreciation (Erlewein, 2017; Giglitto *et al.*, 2022).

In addition, in the case of Alula, it is vital to maintain social identities and environmental traditions. Its oral stories and interwoven craft and performance traditions demonstrate sustainable resource management and human inventiveness while respecting the environment (Ferwati *et al.*, 2021; Gibson *et al.* 2022). Conserving this heritage requires a comprehensive approach, including diverse voices and dynamics. A community-driven model is needed to document customs and foster evolution. Future opportunities may involve knowledge exchanges with other heritage-tied communities, fostering a global understanding of culture (Wolters, 2021).

As a whole, intangible cultural heritage is vital for maintaining cultural diversity and promoting cross-cultural exchange in a globalized world. Preservation involves documentation, revitalisation, and transmission, strengthening societal bonds. Alula's people-centered model provides insights into participatory preservation

practices (Turner *et al.*, 2022; Gravagnuolo *et al.* 2021). Future opportunities may involve knowledge exchanges with other heritage regions and collaboration between communities, organizations, scholars, and policymakers to deepen global understanding of culture.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The current study employed a quantitative survey method, assessing the perceptions of locals in Alula on the different aspects, knowledge, awareness and transmission of information related to ICH practices of the region. The selection of this method was based on its validity in providing statistical generalisation and quantification of knowledge, attitudes and behaviour (Mohajan, 2020; Wang *et al.*, 2018). The study utilised the online questionnaire containing close-ended questions, which was structured on Google Forms and sent through to gather demographic data and quantitatively measure variables related to knowledge, awareness, participation and preservation of attitudes and transmission of cultural values to the younger generation (Valizadeh, 2022).

In addition, the questionnaire was distributed through WhatsApp groups to adults in Alula, utilising scales and multiple-choice questions. The collected data provided statistical insights on the awareness levels, perception and engagement patterns and exposed the challenges individuals face regarding the transmission of ICH to the youth through frequency analysis aimed at comprehending

and understanding their engagement.

Data Collection and Analysis

The study survey was conducted among 200 Alula community members, aiming to represent gender, age, occupation, education, and residence. 150 valid responses were received, meeting the desired response rate. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics and frequency analysis, with charts and graphs used to illustrate patterns and distributions. (Njagi & Shalle, 2016). Additionally, the study utilised frequency analysis to analyse familiarity with intangible cultural traditions, common knowledge sources, participation frequency, and agreement with themes. Frequency tables and bar graphs visually represented responses for multiple choice and Likert scale questions, allowing easy identification of trends and demographic differences. The analysis provided a comprehensive overview of community perspectives on intangible cultural heritage preservation in Alula. (In & Lee, 2017).

RESULTS

Demographics

The survey surveyed participants aged 36-45, with 79% being female and 21% male. Most held bachelor's degrees, with 8% having a master's degree. About 20% were students, with most not currently employed due to a higher proportion of females.



Figure 1: Demographics

Knowledge and Awareness

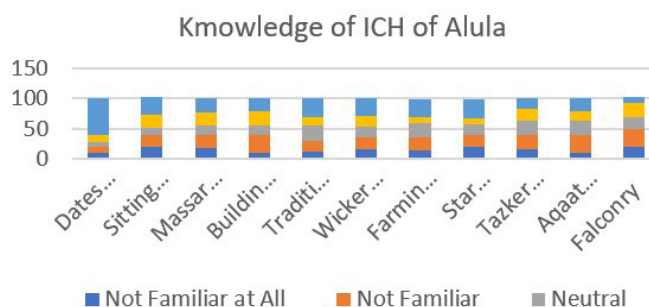
Regarding knowledge and awareness, 58% of participants were familiar with intangible heritage, while 42% were unfamiliar. The following traditions were ranked in order of familiarity: "Dates and Palm Cultivation" scored 72%,

"Sitting on Dakaat Telling Stories" scored 48%, and "Massar Ga Alhaj," "Building with Mud and Singing," "Traditional Pottery Craft," and "Wicker Traditional Craft" scored 44%. "Farming based on the Stars" and "Star Gazing as a Method of Finding" scored 40%.

Are You Familiar With the Concept of Intangible Heritage



Figure 2: Knowledge and Awareness



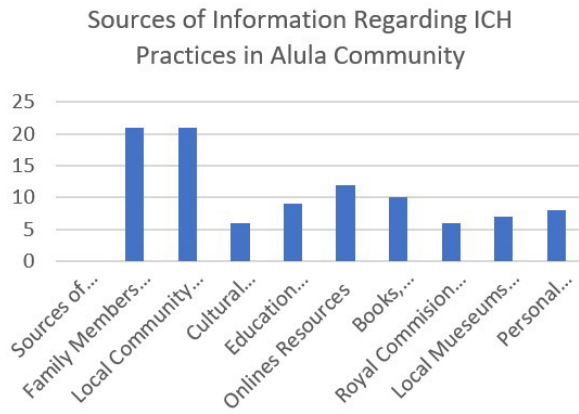


Figure 3:

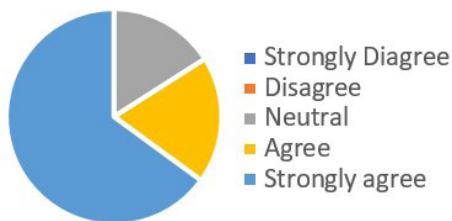
Less familiar were “Tazkera Game” and “Aqaat Syrup Sweetened with Dates” at 36%. The least-known tradition, “Falconry,” received a score of 32%. Participants primarily

acquired knowledge of these traditions from senior relatives, elderly community members, local community events, websites, and social media. It is worth noting that the NGO and RCU were identified as the least common sources of information.

Perception of Cultural Identity

The survey results show that Alula’s cultural identity is unique and valuable, with activities like palm and date cultivation, a unique cultural landscape, traditional games, and seasonal events being integral to its identity. The preservation and promotion of this heritage is crucial for Alula’s cultural heritage. The uniqueness of Alula’s culture should be preserved and highlighted. Over 50% of participants in Alula believe in the importance of preserving intangible heritage for the community’s identity and pride, as it not only enhances the sense of belonging among its members but also boosts community pride.

Importance of Intangible Heritage in Shaping Cultural Identity of Society



Intangible Heritage Contributes to a Sense of Community Pride.

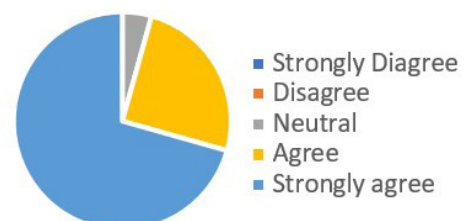


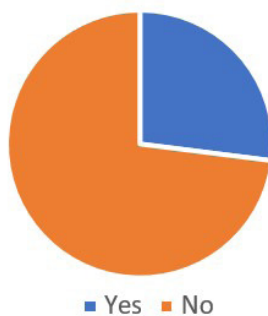
Figure 4: Perception of Cultural Identity

Engagement and Participation

According to the data analysis, 72% of the Alula community did not participate in activities related to their intangible heritage, while only 30% of respondents reported engagement. The primary reasons for

their involvement were educational value, learning opportunities, and cultural preservation and heritage conservation, with these aspects receiving the highest score of 64% in the poll. The majority of participants were motivated by these factors.

Participation in Event Related Intangible Heritage of Alula Community



Influencing Factors for Participation in ICH Activities

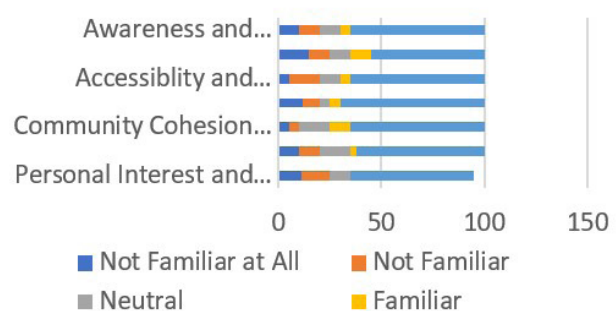


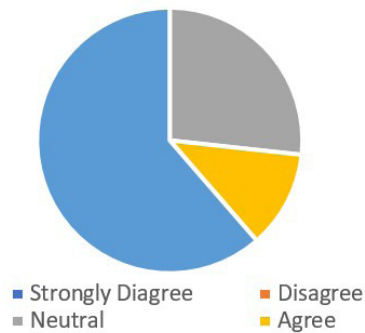
Figure 5: Engagement and Participation

Attitudes Towards Preservation and Promotion

Most participants are satisfied with the current preservation efforts for Alula’s intangible heritage. Almost more than 50% per cent of participants showed

that they participated in ICH preservation events in Alula and emphasised showing satisfaction with efforts in place to preserve the ICH of Alula.

Participation in Efforts to Preserve and Promotion of ICH in our society



Sufficient Efforts are in Place to Protect and Preserve Intangible Heritage in Alula

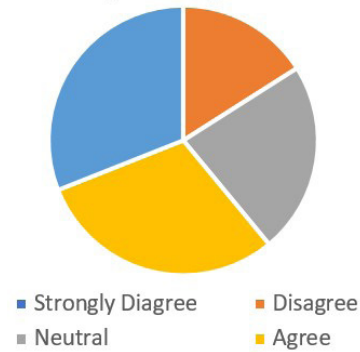


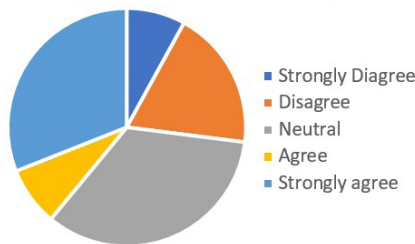
Figure 6: Attitudes Towards Preservation and Promotion

Intergenerational Transmission

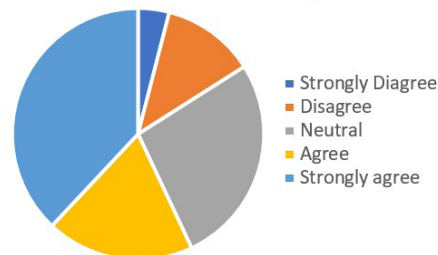
The research findings indicate that the younger generation has a moderate level of awareness about traditions and intangible heritage. Only 40 per cent of the participants agreed that the younger generation has a good understanding of the ICH in our society. However, more than 50% feel that with interaction with ICH, they feel a

sense of community, but 80% of them face challenges in transferring intangible cultural heritage to their younger generation. The findings underscore the importance of sharing traditions and intangible heritage practices with younger generations, highlighting the impact on the sense of belonging and addressing low awareness.

The Young Generation Understand and Appreciate ICH in Our Society



Interaction of Individual with ICH Affects Their Sense of Community.



People Face Challenges in Transmitting Intangible Heritage to Younger Members of The Community

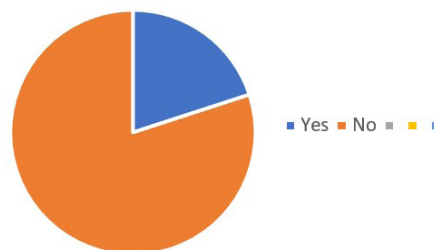


Figure 7: Intergenerational Transmission

DISCUSSION

The current study has explored the knowledge, awareness, and engagement with intangible cultural heritage (ICH) in Alula, Saudi Arabia, by employing a quantitative approach to collecting the perception of locals. The study findings show that around 58% of the respondent has moderate knowledge of intangible cultural heritage, while a sufficient amount of 42% of the population is still unaware. This necessitates the implementation of specifically tailored ICH awareness initiatives, as suggested by Elkasrawy (2016). In addition, these initiatives should involve diverse forms of communication which can cover

different age groups and genders, ensuring the widespread transmission of knowledge within the community (Sousa, 2018).

Additionally, the study findings also showed a range of different events and challenges linked with the preservation of these traditions. One of the major observations of the study was the lower engagement of the younger generation with ICH. Acknowledging this concern, Petronela (2016) emphasise the significance. Of sharing cultural heritage information and traditions with younger generations, and marked it as essential to preserve the intangible cultural heritage. The study also

showed that the major sources of cultural information for individuals are family members and elders, and it has also been noted in different studies and widely accepted as sources which necessitate knowledge transfer among generations (Woodfield & Husted, 2017; Auger, 2016). While educational institutions, cultural organisations, and local community activities are also noted as important platforms for transmitting information on heritage.

The study identifies three main themes and activities of ICH within the Alula community. Survey respondents emphasise the importance of intangible cultural heritage activities for community pride and preserving cultural identity (Esfehiani & Albrecht, 2018). This aligns with previous studies, such as Smith (2006) and Graham (2008). However, the low engagement level of 72% in the survey indicates a disconnect between recognition and active participation, necessitating further research and evaluation of community engagement strategies and techniques (Yehia, 2022).

In addition, a significant number of participants responded to their low engagement with ICH for different reasons, including limited time, busy routines, lack of ICH activities and less awareness (Ateca-Amestoy, 2021). These insights note the challenges that limit the participation of locals in ICH activities (Kim *et al.* 2021). However, on the other hand, participants satisfaction with the current preservation efforts in place for safeguarding the ICH of Alula but also suggested improvements such as introducing more educational programs, seminars and workshops, enhancing promotions and advertising to increase awareness and engagement among the community, especially in the younger generation (Alahmadi, 2021; Gandreau *et al.* 2021; Hassan, 2023).

However, the satisfaction expressed with the current preservation efforts (50%) requires further evaluation. As, the study indicated significant participation by locals in ICH events, but it doesn't evaluate the effectiveness of the initiatives in fulfilling their objectives. Expanding this, Dutta (2019) stressed the significance of critical and in-depth evaluation of community-driven strategies in assessing the preservation efforts and argued against the romanticised narratives (Dutta, 2019; Hartman *et al.*, 2023).

Lastly, the study findings also noted the challenges for the transmission of ICH among the younger generation, as only 40% of the respondents perceive that the younger generation has a good understanding of ICH. These findings align with the study by Hosen *et al.* (2020) and Aswani *et al.* (2018), which identified rapid cultural evolution and globalisation as a threat to transferring cultural heritage to the younger generation. To address these challenges, innovative approaches, such as integrating ICH into formal education and mentorship programs and leveraging digital platforms for sharing cultural heritage.

Moreover, the study suggests establishing a comprehensive framework for ICH preservation and promotion in Alula, addressing the knowledge gaps in diverse engagement

strategies, and, specifically, tailoring efforts to diverse motivating factors and involving community participation in decision-making (Andrii, 2023). Additionally, these efforts should also promote intergeneration transfer of cultural information through mentorship programs (Trivelli & Morel, 2021). Also, regular assessments, and evaluation of preservation initiatives (Kim, 2021).

Overall, the study findings provide a detailed understanding of the current knowledge and engagement of locals with Alula's ICH. In contrast, the survey focuses on 36-45 age brackets, and female participation limits the generalizability of the results. However, it sets a strong foundation for further research covering different aspects with a more generalised sample. By achieving this, the local and international population can benefit from the preservation and promotion of Alula's intangible cultural heritage.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study provided in-depth. Knowledge of the current scene of intangible cultural heritage of Alula, Saudi Arabia. The study highlighted moderately high levels of understanding, accompanied by different areas for development to promote ICH of Alula, including the need for increasing transmission and involvement of the younger generation with ICH. The study provides a strong ground for establishing a comprehensive framework to address the limited knowledge gaps, diversify participation involving the community and enhance youth education towards ICH. In addition, regular assessment of preservation efforts is also emphasised to ensure the relevant influence of culture with time. Lastly, with the implementation of tailored programs with increase community participation, Alula's cultural tradition can flourish with the modern development and strengthen their cultural identity and community pride for future generations to come.

LIMITATIONS AND STRENGTHS

The study limitations may include its quantitative approach and sampling bias. The study focused on community members' perspectives only that may cause generalizability.

However, the study used a quantitative survey methodology to gather data from a diverse demographic, focusing on community opinions and attitudes.

It acknowledged the challenges in preserving and transmitting intangible cultural heritage, leading to targeted interventions and the elimination of obstacles.

The findings offer valuable insights for policymakers, cultural institutions, and local government in developing tailored strategies that consider community needs and preferences, promoting a sustainable approach to safeguarding intangible cultural heritage.

Novelty

The study on intangible cultural heritage preservation in Alula, Saudi Arabia, is unique due to its geographical context, cultural specifics, and risk assessment framework.

It focuses on farming practices and local livelihoods, providing a unique lens for understanding cultural preservation. The risk assessment framework considers environmental, social, economic, and cultural aspects, potentially adapted for replication. The study aligns with Saudi Vision 2030 and the Royal Commission for Alula, and its gender and age focus on women aged 36-45 highlights potential gaps for future research.

Contribution to Knowledge

The study on intangible cultural heritage preservation in Alula, Saudi Arabia, provides a comprehensive understanding of its perception, transmission, and preservation. It introduces a risk assessment framework, focusing on environmental, social, economic, and cultural aspects. The research highlights the importance of sustainable development in the oasis ecosystem and the demographic of women aged 36-45. It aligns with Saudi Vision 2030 and the Royal Commission for Alula, emphasizing the need for effective community engagement strategies to preserve cultural heritage.

Research Gap

The study on intangible cultural heritage preservation in Alula, Saudi Arabia, fills a research gap by examining the region and introducing a risk assessment framework. It emphasizes the importance of farming practices in the oasis ecosystem and the intersection of cultural practices, environmental sustainability, and local livelihoods. The study links it to Saudi Vision 2030 and the Royal Commission for Alula, addressing the gap in understanding cultural heritage preservation's alignment with national development goals. It also highlights the need for effective community engagement strategies and challenges in transmitting intangible cultural heritage to younger generations.

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