

RESEARCH ARTICLE	The contribution of local women in revitalizing the traditional socio-cultural heritage (<i>the local traditional dress as a model</i>) "A field study on a sample of housewives who interact with the Directorate of Tourism and Traditional Industries in the province of Jijel."
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Abstract The current study aimed to explore the contribution of local women in revitalizing the traditional socio-cultural heritage, specifically traditional clothing. This was achieved through a field study conducted on a purposive sample of 10 housewives who are in contact with the Directorate of Tourism and Traditional Industries in the province of Jijel. The study employed both the descriptive-analytical and documentary approaches, as well as data collection tools such as questionnaires and interviews. Percentages were used in the data analysis. The findings indicated that local women play a significant role in the activation of traditional socio-cultural heritage.	
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Introduction:

The local woman plays a pivotal role in preserving the socio-cultural traditional heritage, which reflects the true identity of communities and expresses their rich history and customs. In this context, traditional clothing stands out as one of the most important symbols of this heritage, embodying social and cultural values passed down from generation to generation. The contribution of women in activating this heritage through the making, wearing, and transmission of local traditional dress is a vital example that reflects their deep connection to local cultural identity and their commitment to preserving this legacy.

This study aims to shed light on the role of women in the Jijel region in maintaining this cultural aspect, and how they actively contribute to transmitting and reinforcing this heritage within the local community, ensuring its continuity in the face of globalization and social change.

1. Problem Statement:

The cultural heritage of any society holds significant human and social value for the civilizations of nations and peoples. It plays a vital role in transmitting and exposing individuals—especially the younger generation—to the legacies of their country. Cultural heritage serves as a mirror reflecting a community's customs and traditions and is considered a representation of the life philosophy of its members.

Notably, the tourism sector heavily relies on a country's cultural heritage, which often constitutes a major local wealth by focusing on the customs and traditions of the community it represents. One of the essential contributors to the preservation and transmission of this heritage—either directly or indirectly—is the woman.

It is widely acknowledged that the status of Algerian women in general, and those in Jijel in particular, has significantly evolved compared to past generations. Previously, their roles were limited to household tasks such as child-rearing, serving their husbands, cooking, and cleaning. However, women have since placed importance on traditional clothing not only as a family responsibility but as a cultural legacy worth preserving. They now recognize traditional clothing as a vital part of the country's cultural heritage, one that should be protected from disappearing. Furthermore, it has become a potential craft that can generate income, reducing their financial dependence on men, who were traditionally seen as the primary providers.

Traditional clothing is considered a simplified cultural indicator of a civilization's connection to its inherited customs. It embodies resilience and cultural pride by maintaining identity, showcasing local traditions, and telling the story of a region's uniqueness and diversity. Algeria's cultural diversity—from east to west and north to south—reflects the richness of its heritage and the depth of its traditional and civilizational variety.

In Jijel, local women engage in traditional activities, especially in embroidery and tailoring of traditional garments using a variety of fabrics such as wool, cotton, velvet, and silk. Notable items include embroidered veils, shawls, “*el-qetla*”, and “*el-shamsa*.”

To gain a clear understanding of women's contributions to revitalizing traditional socio-cultural heritage, a field study was necessary. Thus, the following central research question was posed:

Do local women contribute to the revitalization of traditional socio-cultural heritage?

To explore this further, a sub-question was formulated:

- Do women contribute to the promotion of local cultural heritage through traditional clothing?

2. Research Hypothesis:

- Women contribute to the promotion of local cultural heritage through traditional clothing.

3. Research Objectives:

- To identify the contributions of local women in revitalizing traditional cultural heritage.
- To explore the main types of traditional clothing produced by local women.
- To examine the socio-cultural dimensions of traditional heritage in supporting tourism in Jijel.
- To investigate the role of traditional socio-cultural heritage in creating employment opportunities.

4. Key Terms of the Study:

4.1 Local Women:

Operationally defined as housewives in various areas of the Jijel province who engage in preserving cultural heritage, particularly through traditional clothing and local cuisine.

4.2 Cultural Heritage:

The concept of cultural heritage draws from the definitions of both *heritage* and *culture*. Heritage refers to the accumulated, inherited knowledge that is rich in values and capable of enduring indefinitely, as long as awareness of it persists—despite societal changes. (*Heritage of the People Journal*, 2007, p. 97)

In its broad sense, heritage also represents *“the living memory of individuals and communities through which both the individual and the society can be understood.”* (Salman, 2007, p. 270)

4.3 Culture (according to E.B. Tylor): Culture is *“that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.”* (Darwesh & Khreibesh, 2011, p. 93)

Based on the above, cultural heritage can be defined as all that is passed down from ancestors in terms of knowledge, literature, arts, customs, traditions, beliefs, and values. It reflects their intellectual activities and ways of thinking, preserved and transmitted across generations, and remains alive in the collective memory and consciousness of every community, thereby safeguarding their identity and cultural components.

Operational Definition in This Study: Cultural heritage refers specifically to traditional clothing as a cultural legacy embedded in the customs and traditions of the Jijel province.

4.4 Customs and Traditions:

Customs and traditions encompass all behaviors related to an individual's daily interactions with themselves and others. These practices are considered sacred within the community and are adhered to spontaneously by its members without necessarily knowing the reason behind them. Their binding nature stems from collective conformity, acceptance, and social monitoring, which can at times amount to absolute obedience. Social customs depend on the circumstances of the society and vary across communities and historical periods. (Ahmed Mostafa, 2005, p. 78)

They are also defined as: *“a social phenomenon that represents a social pattern, meaning it cannot exist or be practiced without social life and interaction with individuals and groups.”* (Selected Faculty Members, p. 338)

Operational Definition: In the context of this study, customs and traditions refer to the practices that local women are engaged in and strive to preserve from extinction and loss.

4.5 Traditional Women's Clothing:

Traditional women's clothing includes all garments that women are concerned with producing. This process involves selecting suitable fabric types and the threads used for sewing. The clothing may be created in its traditional form or may incorporate modern adaptations, provided that the primary traditional structure is preserved to maintain its cultural identity.

Operational Definition in This Study:

Traditional women's clothing refers to the collection of garments that are culturally distinctive to the Jijel province.

5. Theoretical Background of the Study

5.1 Theoretical Approach Adopted:

The Functional Anthropological Approach by Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown: There was a shift in studying culture from the general to the particular—i.e., from examining human civilization as a whole to analyzing individual human cultures as diverse units, each with its unique and historically distinct composition and social systems. This shift highlighted the relative nature of culture, showing that it varies across time and place and cannot be explained through a singular, universal lens as suggested by Tylor.

(Badr, 2007, p. 368)

Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown emphasized the importance of the functional perspective. By understanding the function of a system, we can interpret and comprehend it. Functionality, in this sense, refers to the basic needs that must be met for a group to sustain itself. Functionalism demonstrates that systems are formed and maintained as behavioral patterns aligned with specific norms and values.

(Badr, 2007, pp. 368–369)

Malinowski also explained in an article that culture is a holistic unit that can be analytically broken down into its systems and components, focusing on their interrelations. These relationships are not isolated from human needs—biological and environmental (both natural and man-made). He emphasized that humans seek to satisfy their biological needs, and each society develops cultural responses to meet those needs. These responses then create secondary needs—cultural in nature rather than biological—which are common across humanity.

(Badr, 2007, p. 369)

From this perspective, our study on traditional cultural heritage views culture as a holistic unit, of which cultural heritage is a component. Specifically, customs and traditions in Jijel are part of this heritage. As individual needs begin with biological necessities, we can consider traditional food and clothing as culturally adapted responses to these needs. These needs evolve into cultural expressions that help preserve community identity, reflecting Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown's view that secondary cultural needs support the sustainability and continuity of communities.

6. Previous Studies

6.1 Study by Salwa Henry Gerges:

Title: *An Analytical Study of Some Patterns of Traditional Women's Clothing in Syria and Their Use in Mannequin Draping*

This study aimed to investigate various patterns of traditional Syrian women's clothing across different provinces (western, southern, central, eastern, and northern), highlighting artistic distinctions and the impact of geographical environments on clothing styles. The study also aimed to identify similarities and differences among regions and adapt designs suitable for mannequin draping.

It employed a descriptive-analytical comparative method to describe and analyze traditional clothing and its decorations, emphasizing their artistic and aesthetic values. The study was limited to four Syrian regions:

1. Western region (represented by Hama, Homs, the coastal area, and Jabal al-Arab)
2. Southern and Central Syria (Daraya near Damascus, Horan, and Qalamoun)
3. Eastern Syria (Deir ez-Zor, Hasakah, and Bedouin Arabs)
4. Northern Syria (represented by Damascus)

Findings:

The study revealed a range of unique characteristics rarely found within a single country. Despite regional differences, these styles reflected the interaction between humans and their environment. Climate and terrain played significant roles in color selection, alongside social, cultural, historical, and aesthetic factors influencing traditional clothing.

6.2 Study by Taysir Hussein Ali Jumaa:

Title: *Traditional Handicrafts and Folk Arts in Egypt: A Comparative Anthropological Study of Certain Aspects of Material Culture*

This study focused on material culture, especially traditional crafts and folk arts. It used case study methodology appropriate for describing both primitive and modern cultures, in addition to comparative and anthropological methods. These approaches allowed the researcher to analyze textile arts like weaving, kilim-making, and embroidery based on raw materials, techniques, functions, and ecological and technological conditions.

The study analyzed three societal patterns:

- **Rural:** Kafr Hakim
- **Urban:** Al-Khayyama area
- **Bedouin:** Borg El Arab and El-Dabaa, specifically "Zawyet El-Ikhwan"

Findings:

- Traditional crafts are often inherited and require training and skill development.
- Folk arts merge practical and aesthetic functions, uniting artisan, craft, and artistic expression.
- Interaction with the environment shaped the use and formation of material culture.
- Folk crafts were tied to cultural traits such as diversity, continuity, and disappearance, and to social and economic systems (like division of labor by age or gender, production methods, trade systems, etc.).

6.3 Commentary on the Studies:

The study by **Salwa Henry Gerges** focused on women's traditional dress and aligns with the current research. However, it gave priority to aesthetic elements and geographic or historical factors, while neglecting the role of women in preserving traditional heritage as a vital cultural asset.

The study by **Taysir Hussein Ali Jumaa** effectively compared traditional and modern crafts using a comparative methodology but failed to identify the individuals involved in practicing these crafts—particularly in terms of gender and the dominant social group responsible for maintaining this type of cultural heritage.

7. Methodological Procedures of the Study

7.1 Fields of the Study

The study focused on housewives who are in contact with the Directorate of Tourism and Traditional Industries in the province of Jijel. The study was conducted from the end of September to the end of October.

7.2 Research Methodology Used

7.2.1 Descriptive Method

The descriptive analytical method was adopted due to its suitability for the current study, which aims to uncover the role of women in activating and sustaining traditional cultural heritage.

7.2.2 Documentary Method

This method involved documenting all information related to the traditional cultural heritage. Various records and documents were consulted to support the study.

7.3 Sample

The study relied on a purposive sample of 10 women selected intentionally to gain a deeper understanding of the subject, particularly with regard to traditional clothing.

7.4 Data Collection Tools

7.4.1 Questionnaire

A questionnaire was used consisting of two main sections: one dedicated to personal data and the second related to the first hypothesis, comprising 11 questions.

7.4.2 Interview

The interview was employed as a data collection tool to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the topic and to obtain in-depth responses that clarify the research subject.

8. Analysis of Results

8.1 First Section: Personal Data

Age Range	Frequency	Percentage
20–30	2	20%
30–40	4	40%

40-50	4	40%
Total	10	100%

The results shown in the table above indicate that the dominant age groups among the respondents are those aged between 30-40 and 40-50, each accounting for 40% of the sample. This could be attributed to their discontinuation of formal education or never having attended school, which may have led them to seek meaningful ways to fill their time. Consequently, these age groups often show a stronger interest in traditional clothing and cuisine, likely due to the life experiences they have lived and shared with their mothers and grandmothers. These women tend to transmit the cultural knowledge, customs, and traditions they inherited from their ancestors. On the other hand, the 20-30 age group constitutes only 20% of the sample. This could be due to the fact that individuals in this age range are typically still engaged in their educational pursuits, making their presence among housewives engaged in traditional crafts relatively limited.

Table 2: Educational Level of the Respondents

Educational Level	Frequency	Percentage
No education	3	30%
Primary	1	10%
Intermediate	6	60%
Total	10	100%

The statistics above indicate a relatively close distribution among educational levels, with 30% having no education, 10% primary, and 60% intermediate. This can be attributed to the harsh living conditions of the period, geographical difficulties limiting mobility, family constraints, and economic factors that led many women to dedicate their time to traditional crafts, which became inherited skills passed down through generations.

Table 3: Years of Experience in the Activity

Years of Experience	Frequency	Percentage
5 to 10	4	40%
More than 10	6	60%
Total	10	100%

The results indicate that 60% of respondents have over 10 years of experience in the craft, possibly due to age and long-term commitment to preserving traditional crafts. These women are more likely to maintain local customs and have often taught younger generations, confirming the role of women in preserving cultural heritage. The 40% with 5 to 10 years of experience represent relatively newer practitioners.

Table 4: Training in Craft Activity

Training Type	Frequency	Percentage
Professional	6	60%

Self-taught	4	40%
Total	10	100%

Sixty percent of the sample have learned their craft professionally, likely driven by the need to improve living standards and provide for their families, aligning with the functionalist theory of Radcliffe-Brown and Malinowski, where cultural activities fulfill both biological and secondary cultural needs. Forty percent are self-taught, motivated by passion and family tradition, showing how cultural capital supports heritage preservation.

Table 5: Nature of Activity

Activity Type	Frequency	Percentage
Organized	7	70%
Unorganized	3	30%
Total	10	100%

Seventy percent practice their craft in an organized manner, often holding commercial registrations, reflecting a serious interest in traditional handmade clothing and embroidery. The remaining 30% work informally, selling from home or through community networks. Their motivation is not solely financial but also the preservation and continuation of their craft.

Table 6: Specialization in Craft

Specialization	Frequency	Percentage
Fettela	10	25.64%
Terzi (Majboud)	10	25.64%
Cocktail (Shamsa)	10	25.64%
Caftan	9	23.08%
Total	39	100%

Respondents mostly practice multiple specializations, especially Fettela, Terzi (Majboud), and Cocktail (Shamsa), each accounting for 25.64% of responses. These types of traditional dress are characteristic of Jijel. The Caftan, with 23.08%, is viewed as non-indigenous (Moroccan heritage) by respondents and less associated with local tradition.

Table 7: Type of Product

Product Type	Frequency	Percentage
Traditional	4	40%
Traditional-Modern	6	60%

Total	10	100%
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Sixty percent focus on modernized traditional products, responding to demand for fashionable designs while maintaining cultural identity. Forty percent adhere strictly to traditional styles to preserve local culture and heritage.

Table 8: Participation in Cultural Exhibitions and Events

Participation	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	7	70%
No	3	30%
Total	10	100%

Most respondents (70%) participate in exhibitions to promote traditional clothing, often organized by local tourism authorities, which helps publicize cultural heritage. The 30% non-participants cited family constraints, especially restrictions on travel.

Table 9: Promotion Through Associations

Promotion via Associations	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	0	0%
No	10	100%
Total	10	100%

None of the respondents use associations for promotion, relying instead on the Directorate of Tourism and Traditional Industries, which organizes events and awards for traditional craftswomen.

Table 10: Peak Seasons for Product Demand

Season	Frequency	Percentage
Family Occasions & Holidays	7	70%
Tourist Seasons	3	30%
Total	10	100%

Product demand peaks during family events and holidays, reflecting the cultural importance of traditional dress in ceremonies. Tourist seasons also generate demand, offering opportunities to promote the local cultural heritage internationally.

Table 11: Respondents' Views on Traditional Clothing's Role in Promoting Local Culture

View	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	10	100%
No	0	0%
Total	10	100%

All respondents agree that traditional clothing plays a key role in promoting local culture in Jijel, highlighting its importance in maintaining cultural identity and heritage.

Table 12: Contribution of Traditional Clothing to Job Creation

Contribution to Employment	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	8	80%
No	2	20%
Total	10	100%

Eighty percent recognize that traditional clothing crafts create direct or indirect employment, especially for women with low education levels and older age groups, providing income opportunities. The remaining 20% believe their lack of success or demand limits job creation.

Table 13: Contribution of the Activity to Local Tourism

Contribution to Tourism	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	10	100%
No	0	0%
Total	10	100%

All respondents confirm the activity boosts local tourism, with product demand rising in summer when tourists visit. Exhibitions and festivals organized by tourism authorities also help promote cultural tourism.

Discussion and Conclusion

The field study demonstrates that local women significantly contribute to activating and promoting the socio-cultural heritage through traditional clothing. Participation in cultural events, family ceremonies, and exhibitions plays a major role in heritage preservation. Most women engage professionally in traditional crafts despite low educational levels, motivated by cultural pride and economic needs. Their work maintains the cultural identity of Jijel and supports local tourism and employment.

Conclusion

Based on the results of this study, it is clear that the local woman plays a vital role in activating the socio-cultural heritage of her community. This role is manifested through her efforts to transmit this cultural heritage to her children, thereby

deepening their civilizational roots and introducing the cultural heritage across different geographical environments through her activities and interests. Cultural heritage is a social legacy passed down through generations, transferred by social customs and traditions linked to the social environment and the cultural context in which the individual is raised. Every cultural heritage reflects the nature and structure of the social fabric to which the group belongs. Hence, the local women of Jijel have shown particular interest in traditional clothing as a means to promote the culture of their social environment and to market this type of cultural heritage, which is part of the customs and traditions of Jijel. It is essential for the society in general and women in particular to activate and protect this heritage from loss and disappearance.

Recommendations and Proposals

Based on the study and its findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

- To prioritize cultural heritage as a vital cultural element of any country, whether tangible or intangible.
 - To enhance coordination among various stakeholders supporting traditional activities to preserve the legacy left by ancestors.
 - To organize more cultural events and festivals dedicated to traditional cultural heritage.
 - To support women artisans and develop their creativity by integrating them into associations and assisting them in marketing their products.
 - To strive for the advancement of artisan women, especially those who have not had the opportunity to attend school and thus are illiterate, to better integrate them with different social groups.
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