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Role of hand-printed furniture in shaping tourists' intention to explore local culture

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the influence of hand-printed furniture on tourists' intention to explore local culture, with the mediating role of perceived cultural authenticity, in the context of the hospitality sector in Saudi Arabia. A quantitative research design was adopted, and data were collected from 284 tourists staying at resorts and hotels in Saudi Arabia using convenience sampling. Data were analyzed using structural equation modeling. The results revealed that the use of hand-printed furniture has a positive and significant influence on perceived cultural authenticity, which, in turn, positively influences tourists' intention to explore local culture. However, the direct influence of hand-printed furniture on tourists' intention to explore local culture is not significant. Perceived cultural authenticity plays a mediating role in this relationship. The findings highlight the importance of incorporating cultural elements into the design and presentation of hotels and resorts to enhance tourists' engagement with the local destination. Cultural tourism plays an important role in tourism development and enhances tourists' overall experience in the country.

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1. Introduction

The tourism sector has witnessed exponential growth worldwide and has become a strategic pillar for economic development and social engagement (Al Rousan et al., 2024). In the context of Saudi Arabia, tourism has been established as a key economic agenda as part of Vision 2030. In line with religious tourism, Saudi Arabia has invested significantly in heritage and leisure tourism to attract the attention of local and international tourists to the country (Alshammari et al., 2025). The transformation of tourist destinations at the highest level has been undertaken to provide an enhanced tourism experience in line with cultural expression and natural landscapes. Most importantly, resorts and hotels play a crucial role in providing a culturally immersive experience to tourists alongside accommodation.

In this way, hotels and resorts can give a better cultural experience to tourists by integrating authentic design elements, especially by showcasing the craftsmanship and artistry (Leong et al., 2024). Most importantly, hand-printed furniture has played an integral role in highlighting the local culture and regional aesthetics (Domljan et al., 2025). It comprises patterns, designs, and colors that are rooted in artistic heritage, allowing tourists to have a meaningful and immersive experience and to feel connected with the destination (Liang and Wu, 2024). It also serves as a medium to convey stories, reinforce local identity, and enhance the ambiance in hotels and resorts. Earlier studies covered cultural tourism and hospitality through tangible cues such as decor and culturally embedded designs (Chen and Chen, 2022; Liu et al., 2023). However, there are limited studies that have investigated how hand-printed furniture, as a design element, influences perceived cultural authenticity and tourists' intention to explore local culture.

Perceived cultural authenticity is linked with a psychological mechanism that has a major influence on tourist behavior (Genc and Gulertekin Genc, 2023). Authenticity relates to tourists' perception of particular products and services that connect them with the local culture. It is necessary for tourists to resonate with cultural authenticity in order to engage in other activities, such as visiting tourist spots, attending cultural events, and mingling with local communities (Li and Wang, 2023). In order to build a connection between perceived authenticity and tourists' intention, it is important to provide

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meaningful designs that represent the symbolic identity of the destination.

Culture is an important indicator that helps to build tourists' intention to explore local culture. This enhances tourists' experience, fosters cross-cultural learning, and promotes sustainable tourism (Uslu et al., 2023). Ultimately, it provides substantial support for contributing to the local economy (Li and Li, 2022). In this context, the presence of resorts and hotels in the specific tourist destinations communicates cultural authenticity and encourages tourists to have a memorable experience. As a result, this contributes to attracting more tourists and enhances the competitiveness of the tourism sector in the country.

This study takes the opportunity to fill this gap by examining the influence of hand-printed furniture on tourists' intention to explore local culture, with the mediating role of perceived cultural authenticity. By examining the relationship among the constructs, this study provides empirical evidence to better understand the role of design elements in shaping tourists' experience. This offers insights for designers and hotel managers in Saudi Arabia to strategically plan hotels and resorts in order to promote cultural values through design elements, particularly by incorporating hand-printed furniture that provides a valuable and culturally engaging experience for tourists.

2. Literature review

Cultural tourism has gained wider attention in the tourism industry, with a focus on experiences that encourage tourists to engage with the traditions and heritage of a particular country (Lin et al., 2024). Tourists seek valuable experiences that provide distinctive and culturally enriching exposure rather than merely recreational activities. In Saudi Arabia, the tourism sector is gradually expanding beyond a sole focus on religious tourism (Madkhali et al., 2024). Cultural authenticity provides a competitive advantage to the tourism industry, where hotels and resorts can incorporate design elements into their ambiance. This relates to the extent to which tourists perceive products and services as emerging from the authentic culture of the destination. It enhances their satisfaction by enabling positive interactions with local cultural activities (Sampieri and Bagader, 2024).

This is reflected through environmental cues such as interior design, furniture, and architecture, which serve as physical symbols of local culture. The ambiance of hotels and resorts serves as an intermediary to showcase culture and reinforce cultural authenticity. Interior design and furniture provide an immediate perspective to tourists about the local cultural identity. Hence, embedded design elements in hotels and resorts provide a valuable experience and present the environment in a unique and immersive way, reflecting the traditions of the destination. Altogether, hand-printed furniture provides a holistic representation of a particular culture. By considering local craftsmanship, hotels and resorts can leverage the opportunity to present local culture in a meaningful way.

The inclusion of hand-printed furniture in hotels and resorts creates an appealing design strategy that connects tourists' perceptions with cultural authenticity. Interior design elements convey a cultural narrative by translating local traditions and values for tourists. When hand-printed furniture is embedded with indigenous patterns and artisanal techniques, it represents regional heritage. This resonates with the local context of the tourist destination and strengthens cultural authenticity. Hand-printed furniture represents culture in a unique way, enabling tourists to better understand cultural philosophy. Locally hand-printed is considered more culturally immersive and distinctive, which enhance the ambiance and aesthetic presentation of the environment in the hotels and resorts.

The physical environment of hotels and resorts can be enhanced through an appropriate strategic plan by incorporating hand-printed furniture. In this way, tourists can visually experience local culture and identity with a deeper appreciation of material culture (Nanu et al., 2024). Furthermore, this reinforces the role of interior design in hotels and resorts (Al Fahmawee and Jawabreh, 2022). Keeping this in view, hand-printed furniture plays a vital role in enhancing perceived cultural authenticity; moreover, it also has a direct influence on tourists' intention to explore local culture. Design elements produce positive outcomes by attracting tourists and enhancing their travel experience (Huang and Tsaih, 2022). Furniture that is aesthetically appealing should incorporate cultural elements to build a strong perception among tourists regarding local culture. In light of this, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Use of hand-printed furniture influences tourists' intention to explore local culture.
H2: Use of hand-printed furniture influences tourists perceived cultural authenticity.

Perceived cultural authenticity plays an important role in determining tourists' intention to explore local culture. When tourists notice that hotels and resorts represent local culture, they are more likely to learn about it and prefer to interact with the local community (Genc and Gulertekin Genc, 2023). Tourists are more inclined to visit heritage sites and engage with local artisans. Cultural authenticity enhances tourists' motivation to further explore local culture and build a stronger connection with the destination (Uslu et al., 2023).

Tourists prefer to experience genuine culture that helps them learn about the history of the community. It is necessary that the hospitality environment depicts authenticity that supports visitors in expanding their experience (Yang et al., 2023). Cultural attractions and community-based activities provide vital support in attracting more

tourists to the destination (Kovačić et al., 2023). In view of that, cultural authenticity acts as a psychological factor that attracts tourists and builds a connection with the cultural landscape.

Moreover, perceived cultural authenticity acts as a mediator between hand-printed furniture and tourists' intention to explore local culture. However, hand-printed furniture cannot effectively link to cultural engagement unless tourists understand and interpret its connection with the local culture. Cultural authenticity is associated with a psychological mechanism that resonates with environmental cues and is likely to influence behavioral intention. When tourists perceive that hand-printed furniture in hotels and resorts clearly represents local culture, they feel a direct connection with the local community. Thus, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H3: Perceived cultural authenticity influences tourists' intention to explore local culture.
H4: Perceived cultural authenticity mediates the relationship between the use of hand-printed furniture and tourists' intention to explore local culture.

The proposed relationships among the use of hand-printed furniture, perceived cultural authenticity, and tourists' intention to explore local culture are illustrated in Fig. 1.

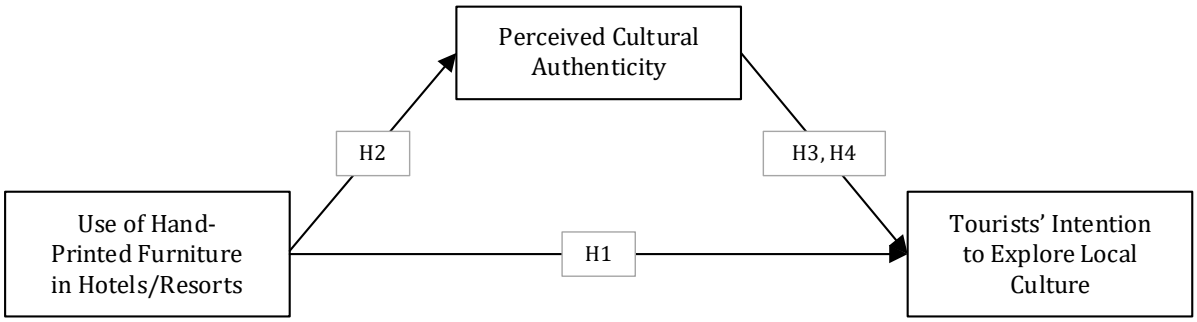


Fig. 1: Research model

3. Methodology

This study uses a quantitative research design to measure the relationships among the use of hand-printed furniture in hotels and resorts, perceived cultural authenticity, and tourists' intention to explore local culture in Saudi Arabia. Data were collected from January to March 2026 using convenience sampling via an online survey from 284 tourists staying in hotels and resorts across various destinations in Saudi Arabia.

The targeted participants were both local and international tourists across luxury resorts, mid-range hotels, and business hotels. However, due to limited field access in the hospitality setting and uneven distribution of tourists, the sample shows a higher proportion of males and domestic travelers. Hence, data were collected at different times of the day in order to ensure diversity and reduce sampling bias. A pilot study was conducted to ensure the validity and reliability of the measurement items with 30 participants prior to full-scale data collection. In order to ensure the presence of common method bias, Harman's (1976) single-factor test was performed, and the results indicated that no single factor accounted for the majority of the variance, as the first factor explained less than 50% of the total variance. Hence, this confirms that common method bias is not a serious concern. A convenience sampling technique was used to collect data from tourists, which may limit the generalizability of findings to the broader tourist population in Saudi Arabia. The imbalance in higher responses from male and domestic tourists as compared to females and international tourists is linked to accessibility constraints in the hotel environment and variations in tourist availability during the data collection period.

Items for each construct were developed using a literature review from relevant studies. Six items for the use of hand-printed furniture in hotels and resorts, five items for perceived cultural authenticity, and six items for tourists' intention were developed. A pilot study was conducted to check the validity and reliability of items. A five-point Likert scale was used to record responses, ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Data analysis was performed using structural equation modeling.

4. Results

Table 1 presents the profile of the study participants. The majority of participants were male and belonged to the age group of 20–29 years. A large number of participants were domestic tourists and held a bachelor's degree. Table 2 presents the assessment of the measurement model. Item loadings for each construct were above the threshold of 0.7. For the use of hand-printed furniture, Cronbach's alpha (0.909) and composite reliability (0.93) were above the threshold of 0.7, while the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) (0.689) was above the threshold of 0.5 and confirmed convergent validity. For perceived cultural authenticity, Cronbach's alpha (0.916) and composite reliability (0.937) were above the threshold of 0.7, while the AVE (0.75) was above the threshold of 0.5 and confirmed convergent validity. For tourists' intention to explore local culture, Cronbach's alpha (0.928) and composite reliability (0.943) were above the

threshold of 0.7, while the AVE (0.735) was above the threshold of 0.5 and confirmed convergent validity. Table 3 shows the discriminant validity using the Fornell–Larcker criterion (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). The diagonal values show the square root of AVE, and the off-diagonal values show inter-construct correlations. Hence, all diagonal values are higher than the corresponding values in the respective column, confirming that each construct is distinct from the other.

Table 4 presents the path coefficient results. The use of hand-printed furniture in hotels and resorts has an insignificant influence on tourists' intention to explore local culture ($\beta = 0.209$, $p = 0.107$, $t = 1.612$); therefore, H1 is not supported. The use of hand-printed furniture in hotels and resorts has a significant and positive influence on perceived cultural authenticity ($\beta = 0.824$, $p < 0.001$, $t = 19.716$); thus, H2 is supported. Perceived cultural authenticity has a significant and positive influence on tourists' intention to explore local culture ($\beta = 0.669$, $p < 0.001$, $t = 5.732$); therefore, H3 is supported. In terms of the indirect effect, perceived cultural authenticity has a significant and positive mediating effect between the use of hand-printed furniture in hotels and resorts and tourists' intention to explore local culture ($\beta = 0.551$, $p < 0.001$, $t = 5.226$); thus, H4 is supported.

Table 1: Participants' profile (n = 284)

Demographics	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	242	85%
Female	42	15%
Age		
Under 20	70	25%
20-29	131	46%
30-39	37	13%
40-49	30	11%
50-59	16	6%
Nationality		
Domestic tourist	228	80%
International tourist	56	20%
Education		
High school or below	104	37%
Bachelor's degree	119	42%
Master's degree	31	11%
PhD	30	11%
Purpose of visit		
Leisure/holiday	186	65%
Business	26	9%
Both leisure and business	72	25%
Length of stay		
Night 1-2	78	27%
Night 3-5	140	49%
Night 6-10	35	12%
More than 10 nights	31	11%
First-time visitor to this destination		
Yes	213	75%
No	71	25%
Frequency of resort/hotel stay per year		
Times 1-2	152	54%
Times 3-5	86	30%
Times 6-10	26	9%
More than 10 times	20	7%

Table 2: Measurement model

Items and constructs	Loadings	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Use of hand-printed furniture in hotels/resorts		0.909	0.93	0.689
USE1: The hand-printed furniture in this hotel/resort reflects local artistic traditions	0.788			
USE2: The furniture design feels authentic and culturally meaningful	0.83			
USE3: The hand-printed furniture enhances the overall atmosphere of the hotel/resort	0.884			
USE4: I can clearly see local identity expressed through the furniture and decor	0.831			
USE5: The furniture makes this hotel/resort feel unique compared to others I have stayed in	0.842			
USE6: The use of hand-printed furniture improves my overall impression of the interior design	0.801			
Perceived cultural authenticity		0.916	0.937	0.75
PER1: This hotel/resort feels genuinely connected to the local culture	0.858			
PER2: The design and décor reflect the true traditions of the destination	0.906			
PER3: I perceive this hotel/resort as culturally authentic rather than artificial	0.918			
PER4: The atmosphere here represents the real identity of the local community	0.802			
PER5: The hotel/resort offers an experience that feels true to the destination	0.842			
Tourists' intention to explore local culture		0.928	0.943	0.735
INT1: Staying at this hotel/resort makes me more interested in learning about the local culture	0.815			
INT2: I feel motivated to visit nearby cultural attractions after my stay here	0.864			
INT3: This hotel/resort encourages me to experience the traditions and lifestyle of the local community	0.876			
INT4: I am more likely to participate in local cultural activities because of my experience at this hotel/resort	0.859			
INT5: My stay here increases my desire to explore the surrounding destination beyond the hotel	0.859			
INT6: The hotel/resort inspires me to engage with local people and places	0.869			

Table 3: Discriminant validity (Fornell–Larcker criterion)

	Perceived cultural authenticity	Tourist intention to explore culture	Use of hand-printed furniture
Perceived cultural authenticity	0.866		
Tourist intention to explore culture	0.841	0.857	
Use of hand-printed furniture	0.824	0.76	0.83

Fig. 2 presents the R^2 results. The R^2 value for perceived cultural authenticity is 0.679, indicating that 67.9% of the variance is explained by the use of hand-printed furniture in hotels and resorts. The R^2 value for tourists' intention to explore local culture is 0.722, indicating that 72.2% of its variance is explained by the model.

5. Discussion

The study findings provide valuable insights on the use of hand-printed furniture in hotels and resorts in shaping tourists' intention to explore local culture. No statistically significant direct relationship was found between the use of hand-printed furniture in hotels and resorts and tourists' intention to explore local culture. It is important to interpret the findings cautiously, as the direct effect was not statistically significant and therefore does not support causal interpretation. This suggests that the relationship should be interpreted as non-causal and not directly influential in predicting tourists' intention. However, the use of hand-printed furniture in hotels and resorts shows an indirect relationship with tourists' intention to explore local culture through perceived cultural authenticity. This indicates that design elements are not sufficient enough to attract tourists but it should pose meaning emerged from local culture (Domljan et al., 2025). There is a positive association between the use of hand-printed furniture and perceived cultural authenticity. When incorporating culturally embedded design in the ambiance of hotels and resorts, it enhances tourists' perception of authenticity. This relates with theoretical perspective of cultural cues which help tourists to build connections with destination (Nanu et al., 2024). Moreover, perceived cultural authenticity indicates a positive and significant influence on tourists' intention to explore local culture. This underscores the critical role of authenticity within the psychological domain in driving tourist behavior toward visiting a destination. When tourists notice that hotels and resorts reflect local culture and traditions, they are more inclined to visit a particular place in order to have a better tourism experience (Liu et al., 2023). To achieve this, they prefer destinations that offer meaningful and enjoyable experiences.

Table 4: Path coefficients

Paths	Beta	Standard deviation	T-statistics	P-values	Results
Use of hand-printed furniture -> tourist intention to explore culture	0.209	0.13	1.612	0.107	H1 rejected
Use of hand-printed furniture -> perceived cultural authenticity	0.824	0.042	19.716	0.00	H2 accepted
Perceived cultural authenticity -> tourist intention to explore culture	0.669	0.117	5.732	0.00	H3 accepted
Use of hand-printed furniture -> perceived cultural authenticity -> tourist intention to explore culture	0.551	0.105	5.226	0.00	H4 accepted

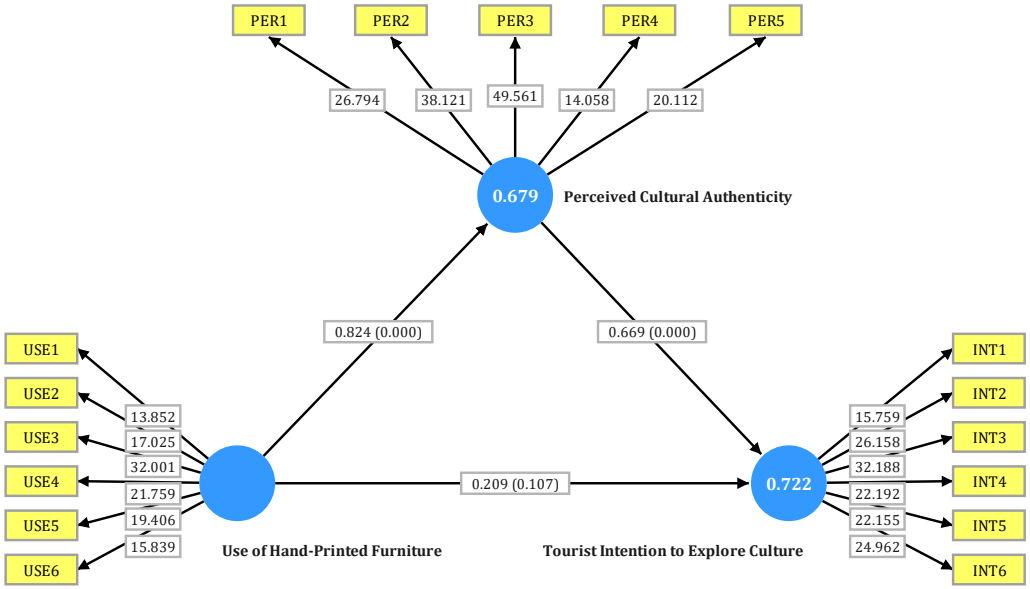


Fig. 2: Structural model results

Most importantly, perceived cultural authenticity acts as a mediator between the use of hand-printed furniture and tourists' intention to explore local culture. This indicates that design elements may have an indirect association with tourists' intention through perceived cultural authenticity. In this regard, hand-printed furniture becomes part of the décor and ambiance as an environmental cue that connects tourists with local culture. As a result, it is important to present hospitality to tourists not only by adding local artistic elements but also by ensuring that design elements embody authentic cultural meaning (Li and Li, 2022). This, in turn, can enhance tourist engagement with local culture and improve

the overall experience. In view of these findings, it is vital to consider the incorporation of hand-printed furniture at tourist destinations, especially in hotels and resorts, to promote local culture. Moreover, this could provide an evolving and enriched experience for tourists and contribute to the transformation of the hospitality economy as part of Saudi Vision 2030. Hence, the country is facilitating tourism operators to effectively present cultural heritage alongside hospitality development.

The study findings provide valuable implications for practitioners and institutions in Saudi Arabia. It is necessary for hotels and resorts to depict local cultural architecture and design, especially through hand-printed furniture, in order to offer a better tourism experience in the region. Interior design strategies should be embedded with local cultural aesthetics to provide a meaningful experience to tourists. This can be accomplished through storytelling and signage that represent the cultural significance of the designs. Hospitality managers should ensure that the interior design and ambiance of hotels and resorts authentically reflect the cultural meaning of the destination. However, the physical design should consistently reflect cultural meaning, along with the incorporation of hand-printed furniture. Most importantly, tourism authorities should facilitate tourism operators in devising strategies to ensure better engagement of tourists.

Policymakers should place greater emphasis on incorporating cultural design elements and promoting traditional crafts within the hospitality sector. Furthermore, collaborative and partnership initiatives should be established between hotels and local artisans in order to strengthen cultural authenticity and support sustainable tourism development in Saudi Arabia.

Regardless of the findings, several limitations should be acknowledged in this study. First, this study used a convenience sampling approach, which limits the generalizability of the findings to the wider population in Saudi Arabia. The sample is skewed toward male and domestic tourists, which may imply potential bias. Therefore, future research could adopt a probability sampling technique to ensure a more balanced representation of demographic groups.

Second, data were collected from hotels and resorts where tourists visited during a specific time period, which may limit the ability to capture perspectives of seasonal tourists. Hence, tourists visiting in different seasons (e.g., summer, winter, spring, and autumn) may show different perspectives toward design elements.

Third, this study relied on survey data collection, which may limit the depth of tourist perspectives. Therefore, future studies could adopt a mixed-methods approach to gain deeper insights.

Moreover, this study deals with hand-printed furniture as a cultural design element within hotels and resorts with a limited focus. Thus, future studies can expand the scope to include architecture, textiles, and storytelling perspectives in the hospitality environment.

6. Conclusion

This study measured the influence of hand-printed furniture in shaping tourists' intention to explore local culture within the hospitality sector in Saudi Arabia. The findings revealed that the direct influence of the use of hand-printed furniture in hotels and resorts is not significant; however, its indirect effect via perceived cultural authenticity is meaningful. As a result, the use of hand-printed furniture significantly influences perceived cultural authenticity, which in turn enhances tourists' intention to explore local culture. Perceived cultural authenticity acts as a mediator between the use of hand-printed furniture and tourists' intention to explore local culture. Hence, culture plays an integral role that connects with the history of a particular tourist destination and provides a meaningful experience to visitors. The study underlines the significance of integrating design and authentic cultural elements into hospitality design in order to foster deeper cultural engagement.

List of abbreviations

AVE	Average variance extracted
INT	Tourists' intention to explore local culture
PER	Perceived cultural authenticity
USE	Use of hand-printed furniture in hotels/resorts

Compliance with ethical standards

Ethical considerations

This study was conducted using a questionnaire-based survey. Participation was entirely voluntary, and all participants were informed about the academic purpose of the research before completing the questionnaire. The collected data were used exclusively for scientific research purposes.

Conflict of interest

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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