

Sustainable development in The Old Wukrah Souq (Qatar) as a Model

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Abstract:

This research aims to explore the relationship between preserving the architectural heritage of traditional markets and their role in fostering sustainable economic development, with a focus on the Old Wukrah Souq in Qatar as a case study. The study presents the historical and architectural characteristics of the market, analyzing the challenges it faces amid urban modernization and economic shifts. An analytical-descriptive methodology, combining literature review and field data collection, is employed to identify factors influencing heritage preservation and economic sustainability. Preliminary findings underscore the importance of adopting comprehensive strategies that include urban planning policies and regulatory frameworks supporting heritage conservation, thereby revitalizing commercial and tourism activities. The research further illustrates how traditional markets can be transformed into cultural and economic hubs that enrich community experience and reinforce national identity. Based on these insights, the study offers practical recommendations for stakeholders to effectively preserve this cultural asset and integrate its historical dimensions into future development plans.

1. Introduction

Traditional markets are an integral part of the cultural and civilizational heritage of any society. They serve as commercial and social platforms that combine the history of a place with its cultural and architectural legacy. In an era of globalization and rapid economic transformations, the importance of preserving these markets has emerged not only as cultural symbols but also as economic assets capable of supporting sustainable development [1]. The Old Souq of Wakif in Qatar is a living example of the blend between traditional architecture and economic and social functions, highlighting its central role in preserving cultural identity and promoting traditional economic and tourism activities. Therefore, the importance of researching how to maintain these markets while considering the urban and economic development within Qatari society arises, as well as investigating the mechanisms that ensure their sustainability as both an economic and cultural resource [2].

Previous studies have addressed concepts of cultural heritage and traditional markets from both historical and contemporary perspectives. However, there is a clear research gap regarding the analysis

of the economic, social, and architectural dimensions of the Old Souq of Wakif as a model to be emulated. Thus, this research aims to investigate the relationship between preserving the urban and economic heritage of traditional markets, highlighting the role of this heritage in supporting the local economy and stimulating cultural tourism.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

The Old Souq of Wakif faces several challenges related to preserving its heritage and architectural character amidst pressures of modernization and economic transformation. This leads to the erosion of its heritage identity and the loss of the economic and social value it once represented. The research problem lies in how to achieve an effective balance between the demands of modernization and the preservation of the urban and cultural heritage of the market, contributing to its sustainability as an economic asset while ensuring the prominence of its historical and social value.

1.2. Questions of the Study

1. What are the architectural and historical characteristics of the Old Souq of Wakif that distinguish it from other traditional markets?
2. What are the main challenges facing the preservation of the urban heritage of the Old Souq of Wakif in light of economic modernization and urban transformation?
3. How can the urban and cultural heritage of the Old Souq of Wakif be utilized to enhance its economic and tourism role?
4. What strategies and policies are necessary to achieve a balance between urban development requirements and the preservation of the market's heritage identity?

1.3. Importance of the Study

1.3.1. Scientific Importance

The research contributes to bridging the knowledge gap concerning the role of traditional markets in supporting the local economy and cultural heritage, enhancing the comprehensive understanding of the relationship between traditional architecture and economic and social development.

1.3.2. Practical Importance

The research offers practical proposals and strategies that contribute to the development of urban heritage preservation policies, enabling stakeholders to make informed decisions to achieve sustainable development for the market.

1.3.3. Cultural and Social Importance

The research raises awareness of the importance of preserving heritage and cultural identity in the face of modernization challenges, contributing to the promotion of a culture of heritage appreciation and preservation as an element of national identity.

1.4. Objectives of the Study

1. To study the historical and architectural elements that characterize the market and their role in building local cultural identity.
2. To investigate the challenges facing the market amid urban and economic developments, while identifying potential opportunities to leverage for supporting sustainable development.
3. To develop a strategic framework that includes necessary policies and recommendations to achieve a balance

between heritage preservation and meeting modernization demands.

4. To explore the possibility of transforming the market into a cultural and tourism attraction that supports the local economy through the development of sustainable commercial and tourism activities.

1.5. Sample of the Study

The study sample includes all stakeholders and beneficiaries of the Old Souq of Wakif, notably:

- Government Institutions: Entities concerned with heritage, culture, and urban planning in Qatar.
- Investors and Business Owners: Contributors to commercial activities inside and outside the market.
- Local Community: Residents and citizens closely tied to the market's heritage identity.
- Experts and Researchers: Specialists in urban heritage, urban design, and cultural economics.
- Visitors and Tourists: Those who see the market as a cultural destination that promotes local culture and stimulates economic activity.

2. Theoretical Background and Previous Studies

2.1. Theoretical Background

2.1.1. Concept of Traditional Markets and Their Civilizational and Social Role

2.1.1.1. Definition and Historical Origins of Traditional Markets

Traditional markets are defined as commercial and social sites that historically emerged in city centers and towns, where buying, selling, and cultural exchange activities occur [1]. These markets served as the vibrant heart of population centers, where artisans, traders, and farmers exchanged goods and services, embodying the core of economic and social life in traditional communities [2]. Some scholars indicate that their historical roots extend back to ancient civilizations in the Middle East and Asia, taking the form of weekly or seasonal markets frequented by people from surrounding areas [3]. Despite modern urban and economic transformations, these markets continue to maintain their heritage character as sites that embody a rich cultural legacy.

2.1.1.2. Role of Traditional Markets in Shaping Cultural and Social Identity

Traditional markets represent not just spaces for buying and selling; they are arenas for exchanging customs, traditions, and values among various segments of society [4]. They contribute to shaping cultural identity by embracing crafts, artisanal products, folk costumes, and local dishes, making them a living window into both tangible and intangible heritage [5]. Hence, their importance lies in transmitting cultural heritage to future generations and deepening the sense of belonging among community members [1].

2.1.1.3. Importance of Traditional Markets as Centers for Social and Economic Interaction

In addition to their cultural role, traditional markets perform vital functions in economic and social development. They create nurturing environments for small entrepreneurs, artisans, and local traders, contributing to direct and indirect job opportunities [2]. These markets also provide a space for interaction between residents and visitors, enhancing the tourism aspect and stimulating investment in diverse commercial and service projects [3]. Thus, traditional markets are essential

hubs for driving local development and achieving long-term economic and social returns [4].

2.1.1.4. Location of the Old Souq of Wakif in Qatar's Civilizational and Historical Context and Its Role in Preserving Local Identity

The Old Souq of Wakif is a living example of urban heritage in Qatar, blending traditional Qatari architecture with the characteristics of a coastal city [6]. Located in the city of Wakif south of Doha, it was established during historical periods when Wakif was a major center for fishing and pearl diving [7]. Despite the rapid urban development Qatar has witnessed in recent decades, the Souq retains its authentic architectural features, such as narrow alleys and traditional stone buildings. The market helps preserve local identity by reviving traditional crafts and activities, with heritage authorities organizing cultural events and art exhibitions that reflect ancient Qatari life and enhance the connection between past and present [5]. It provides a comprehensive cultural experience for residents and visitors, making it an important tourism and heritage destination that supports the local economy and reinforces the sense of belonging and pride in national identity.

Table 1. Comparison of General Characteristics of Traditional Markets and the Old Souq of Wakif

Criterion	Traditional Markets Generally	Old Souq of Wakif
Historical Origins	Emerged in old city centers over time	Established when Wakif was a pearl diving center
Architectural Features	Narrow alleys, traditional buildings, wooden and palm frond roofs	Traditional Qatari stone buildings, renovation preserving original character
Social Role	Platform for social and cultural interaction	Reviving heritage events and Qatari culture
Economic Impact	Supporting traders and artisans, providing local job opportunities	Tourism attraction boosting local economy through small projects
Heritage Preservation	Requires governmental and community initiatives	Continuous renovation and development supervised by heritage authorities

Images1. from the Old Souq of Al-Wakrah in Qatar.





2.1.2. Architectural and Historical Characteristics of Traditional Markets: A Case Study of the Old Souq of Wakif

2.1.2.1. Study of Distinct Architectural Elements Expressing Traditional Character and Local Identity

Traditional architecture in markets revolves around essential elements that reflect local identity, primarily the conscious use of locally available raw materials, such as coral stones, clay, and local woods [8]. Distinctive architectural features include roofs made from palm fronds (baskil), narrow passages providing natural shade and protection from climatic factors, as well as engravings and decorations that lend a unique artistic character to the external facades.

Functionally, this architectural style aids in providing natural ventilation and appropriate lighting, while accommodating commercial and social activities. Recent studies indicate that preserving these elements contributes to enhancing cultural identity and historical connection to the place, with heritage markets becoming "living architectural exhibitions" that reflect the history and rich traditions of Gulf communities [9].

2.1.2.2. Evolution of Traditional Architecture and the Influence of History and Heritage on Market Design

Traditional markets in the Gulf region, including Qatar, have witnessed significant architectural developments over the ages due to their interaction with economic, social, and climatic factors [10]. In earlier phases, design focused on commercial functionality and prioritizing shade and protection from high temperatures. Over time, markets were influenced by regional and international trade relations, reflecting architectural styles by incorporating elements and forms inspired by other cultures.

A UNESCO report [1]. highlights the importance of these markets' connection to the history of local

communities in shaping their spatial identity, as they have become urban spaces hosting heritage events and folk arts. Therefore, the development process for markets needs to link historical components with contemporary needs to preserve the original character while meeting urban development requirements.

2.1.2.3. Detailed Presentation of the Architectural and Historical Characteristics of the Old Souq of Wakif, Comparing Traditional Elements with New Elements Resulting from Modernization

The Old Souq of Wakif in Qatar is a prominent model demonstrating the blend of traditional architecture with modernization and development processes. The market was built using local building materials such as clay and marine stone, with roofs covered with wood and palm trunks [8]. It is characterized by a design that considers natural ventilation through internal alleys and partially enclosed passages, ensuring a pleasant climate for users and visitors.

Despite the renovation efforts in recent years, the general structure has retained its heritage features; facades and passages have been restored to maintain their traditional appearance. However, some new modifications resulting from modernization have emerged, such as the use of modern lighting and air conditioning technologies, along with the addition of new service facilities that cater to contemporary visitor needs [8]. While these updates are crucial for enhancing the market's economic and tourism roles, the emphasis on preserving the authenticity of the design has remained present throughout various stages of development, aiming to safeguard the architectural and historical identity of the place.

Table 2. Comparison of Traditional and New Elements in the Old Souq of Wakif

Element	Traditional State	Modernization or New Element
Building Materials	Coral stone, clay, plaster	Reinforcement with lightweight concrete structures or use of modern weather-resistant materials
Ventilation and Lighting	Skylights (bawah) and small windows	Addition of modern air conditioning systems while maintaining the traditional exterior style
Exterior Design Style	Traditional facades with authentic Arabic engravings	Limited renewal in exterior design with the introduction of decorative elements inspired by local architecture
Auxiliary Functions and Services	Shops selling dates and handicrafts	Modern cafes and restaurants, health and tourism facilities catering to current visitor needs
Internal Passages and Courtyards	Narrow partially covered passages, shared courtyards	Expansion of some passages for ease of movement and addition of lightweight roofs for weather protection

Images 2. from the Old Souq of Al-Wakrah in Qatar.



2.1.3. Sustainable Development and Preservation of Architectural Heritage

2.1.3.1. Concept of Sustainable Development and Its Economic, Social, and Environmental Dimensions

Sustainable development is defined as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (World Commission on Environment and Development) WCED, [11]. It is based on three main dimensions:

1. Economic Dimension: This includes improving living standards, generating job opportunities, and increasing productivity without harming or depleting natural resources in the long term [12].
2. Social Dimension: This focuses on achieving social justice and improving quality of life, while preserving community traditions and cultural heritage. Empowering local communities and enhancing their sense of belonging is a core component of this dimension [13].
3. Environmental Dimension: This addresses the preservation of natural resources, reducing pollution, and curbing excessive consumption, ensuring the sustainability of

ecosystems and maintaining biodiversity [1].

2.1.3.2. The Relationship Between Preserving Architectural Heritage and Achieving Sustainable Development Goals

Architectural heritage is an important part of the cultural identity of any community; it includes not only buildings and historical landmarks, but also collective memory and customs associated with the place [1]. The significance of preserving architectural heritage as a vital element contributing to sustainable development goals can be summarized as follows:

1. Economic Dimension: Preserving heritage buildings and sites contributes to cultural tourism, thereby providing job opportunities and improving income for local residents. For example, the Old Souq of Wakif serves as a cultural and heritage destination that boosts the local economy by attracting visitors and investments from small businesses [12].
2. Social Dimension: Heritage sites reflect community identity and positively impact social ties by fostering belonging and enhancing collective memory. Preserving

architectural heritage supports social cohesion and national pride [13].

3. **Environmental Dimension:** Traditional architecture often features characteristics that suit local climatic and environmental conditions, such as the use of natural building materials and thermal adaptation techniques that reduce energy consumption. Thus, preserving these elements aligns with the environmental dimension of sustainable development [11].

2.1.3.3. Criteria and Indicators for Measuring the Sustainability of Heritage Sites: An Applied Analysis of the Old Souq of Wakif

Sustainability criteria and indicators are scientific tools that help evaluate the ability of heritage sites to balance economic, social, and environmental aspects [1]. Some important criteria, along with their application to the Old Souq of Wakif, are as follows:

1. Economic Criterion:

- **Local Economic Income Indicator:** Measures the percentage increase in income for individuals and businesses in the area surrounding the heritage site. In the case of the Old Souq of Wakif, the increase in domestic and international tourism can be monitored and its contribution to GDP assessed [12].
- **Activity Diversity Indicator:** Evaluates the diversity of commercial and artisanal activities within the market, such as shops, restaurants, cafes, and cultural facilities.

2. Social and Cultural Criterion:

- **Local Community Participation Indicator:** Measures the extent to which residents are involved in decision-making related to the heritage site, such as job opportunities and participation in heritage preservation events. In the case of the Souq, the local community organizes heritage festivals that reflect the region's identity [13].
- **Authenticity Preservation Indicator:** Assesses the commitment of development projects to the original architectural features of the market, such as traditional facades and the use of local materials.

3. Environmental Criterion:

- **Resource Consumption Indicator:** Measures the amount of energy and water used in market facilities. The Old

Souq of Wakif has adopted modern technologies that promote energy efficiency while preserving the heritage character.

- **Surrounding Environmental Quality Indicator:** Evaluates air quality, general cleanliness, and green spaces around the site, and the extent to which restoration efforts maintain the integrity of natural components.

According to these criteria, the Old Souq of Wakif has made significant progress in economic and social indicators, thanks to government and community initiatives supporting traditional crafts and heritage events [12]. Green building concepts have been integrated into the restoration process, based on local architecture that features natural thermal insulation and environmentally friendly materials [13]. These steps can enhance the site's overall sustainability in the long term, especially if development efforts continue under guidelines that preserve architectural identity and raise awareness of the importance of heritage sites.

2.1.4. The Economic Impact of Traditional Markets

2.1.4.1. Analyzing the Role of Traditional Markets in Supporting the Local Economy Through Commercial and Tourism Activities

Traditional markets are vital engines for activating the local economy, as they encompass a variety of commercial activities, including the trade of traditional goods, handicrafts, and agricultural products. Their importance lies in their ability to attract diverse consumer and tourist groups, leading to a vibrant economic cycle that benefits various segments of society [14].

1. Commercial Role:

- They help open direct marketing channels between producers and consumers, enhancing small and medium enterprises [15].
- They provide job opportunities for artisans and those interested in traditional products.

2. Tourism Role:

- Old markets are preferred tourist destinations for those wishing to discover cultural and architectural heritage.
- The increase in tourist traffic to these markets boosts demand for accommodation, transportation, restaurants, and cafes, revitalizing the local economy [10].

Table 3. The Role of Traditional Markets in Supporting the Local Economy

Economic Element	Indicator or Aspect	Impact
Increase in Household Income	Rising number of shops and projects owned by locals	Enhances living standards and increases purchasing power
Support for Small and Medium Enterprises	Provides a suitable environment for showcasing and selling traditional and artisanal products	Boosts innovation and entrepreneurship
Activating Local and International Tourism	Attracting tourists to heritage events and popular markets	Increases hotel occupancy rates and stimulates transportation and restaurant sectors
Economic Diversification at the Local Level	Emergence of new sectors linked to tourism and heritage services	Creates new jobs and reduces unemployment rates

2.1.4.2. Study of Underutilized Economic Potentials of Heritage Sites

Despite the vital role traditional markets play in supporting the local economy, there are numerous underutilized potentials that could yield greater economic returns [15,16]. Some of the most notable include:

1. **Digital Marketing and E-Commerce:**
 - **Utilization of Online Platforms:** Electronic platforms can be employed to showcase products and handicrafts to a broader audience, both locally and internationally.
 - This approach can help compensate for any potential decline in the number of physical visitors and allows artisans to expand their business reach (Ministry of Commerce and Industry, 2020).
2. **Heritage and Cultural Festivals:**

- **Opportunities for Tourism Attraction:** Heritage festivals represent a chance to draw tourists and enhance the market's value both locally and internationally.
- Seasonal competitions and markets can attract investors and promote new heritage industries [10].

3. Development of Service Facilities and Infrastructure:

- **Creation of Tourist Information Centers:** Providing public transport services and informational signage can enhance visitor experience.
- Developing public seating areas and recreational spaces can improve the quality of the visitor experience and extend their stay in the market [12].

Diagram 1. Underutilized Economic Potentials in Traditional Markets



2.1.5. Policies and Legislation in the Field of Heritage Preservation and Their Application Framework on the Old Souq of Wakif

2.1.5.1. Overview of Government Policies and Local and International Legislation Related to Architectural Heritage Preservation

Government policies and legislation, along with international agreements, are fundamental pillars for preserving architectural heritage. Below are the main legal and legislative frameworks relevant to this field:

1. Local Legislation in Qatar:

- **Qatari Antiquities Law:** Regulates the discovery of archaeological buildings

and defines mechanisms for preserving historical sites and urban landmarks [8].

- **Planning Regulations and Requirements:** Include building and expansion permits in historical market areas and guidelines for preserving the authentic architectural character.
- **Roles of Relevant Authorities:** Qatar Museums and specialized ministries are key partners in overseeing architectural projects and restoring heritage buildings [17].

2. International Legislation and Conventions:

- **UNESCO World Heritage Convention (1972):** Directs member states to preserve their sites of global significance [18].
- **Venice Charter (ICOMOS, 1964):** Emphasizes the importance of authenticity and integrity in restoration, and the necessity to document and register all preservation and restoration procedures [19].
- **Nara Document on Authenticity (1994):** Stresses the importance of maintaining cultural and social dimensions in heritage preservation projects [20].

Table 4. Examples of Relevant Agreements and Laws Related to Architectural Heritage Preservation

Agreement/Law	Supervising Authority	Focus Area
Qatari Antiquities Law	Ministry of Culture and Sports, Qatar	Protection of archaeological buildings and sites
World Heritage Convention (1972)	UNESCO	Preservation of sites of global significance
Venice Charter (1964)	International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)	Principles of preservation and restoration for historical buildings
Nara Document on Authenticity (1994)	UNESCO	Focus on cultural value and authenticity

2.1.5.2. Application of These Policies and Legislation to the Case of the Old Souq of Wakif: Strengths and Challenges Analysis

The Old Souq of Wakif is one of the important heritage sites in Qatar, and it has greatly benefited from the existing legislative and regulatory frameworks. However, it also faces challenges that require innovative and sustainable solutions.

1. Strengths in Application:

- **Commitment of Responsible Authorities:** There is clear cooperation between the Ministry of Culture and Sports, the Ministry of Municipality, and Qatar Museums in supervising restoration and rehabilitation efforts (Qatar Museums, 2020).
- **Local Community Awareness:** Increased public awareness of the importance of historical sites positively reflects on compliance with heritage preservation laws and regulations [8].
- **Financial and Institutional Support:** The state provides budgets and allocations to support preservation and restoration projects, along with trained personnel experienced in preservation procedures [21].

2. Challenges in Application:

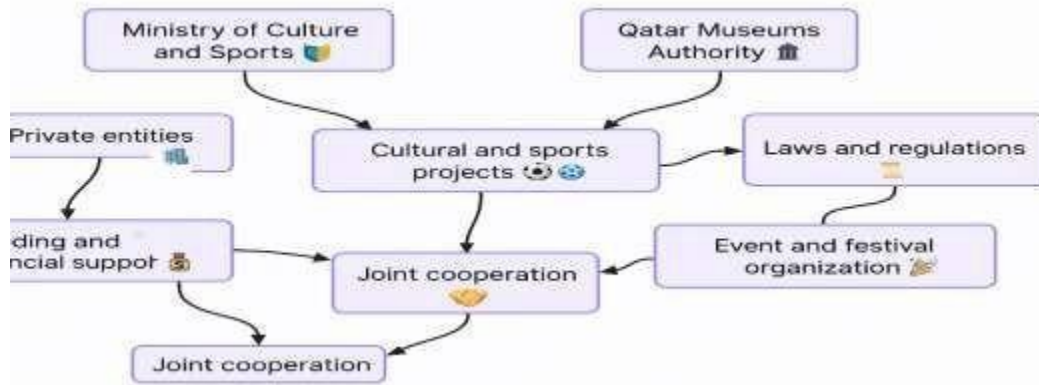
- **Balancing Authenticity and Development:** Rapid urban modernization may complicate the preservation of traditional architectural features of the market [22].
- **Coordination Among Different Authorities:** The involvement of multiple stakeholders (governmental and private) can lead to overlapping responsibilities and delays in decision-making [23].
- **Increased Tourist Pressure:** Rising visitor numbers may threaten the structural integrity of historical buildings and present challenges in crowd management and infrastructure [21].

2.1.5.3. Successful Experiences in Preservation and Restoration, and How They Can Benefit the Development of the Old Souq of Wakif

1. Successful Global Experiences:

- **Medina Market in Marrakech, Morocco:** Rich in history, it employs an integrated restoration program that

Diagram 2. Overview of the Overlap Among Authorities Responsible for Preserving the Old Souq of Wakif



- ensures the preservation of architectural identity while facilitating the integration of modern tourism activities [21].
 - Basta Market in Istanbul, Turkey: A successful experience in transforming the market into a social and cultural space through tourism and artistic programs, involving the local community in decision-making [24].
- 2. Lessons Learned for the Development of the Old Souq of Wakif:**
- Involving the Local Community: Providing opportunities for shop owners and artisans to participate in the decision-making process, enhancing their responsibility and interest in preserving the market's identity [23].
 - Integrated Cultural and Tourism Program: Organizing regular events to showcase traditional arts and crafts, making the market a destination that attracts various demographics [22].
 - Sustainable Planning: Developing strategies to protect heritage buildings from deterioration caused by high human traffic, while ensuring that modern services harmonize with the market environment [21].

Images 3. The Old Souq of Wakif After Some Restoration Work



The images show the details of the original architecture in the Old Souq of Wakif after partial rehabilitation [17]. The Old Souq of Wakif is a living example of the harmonious integration of traditional and modern architectural elements. It has been designed to reflect authentic Qatari heritage with contemporary architectural touches.

1. Traditional Elements:

- Clay and Stone Buildings: The market's houses feature walls made of clay and stone, covered with a layer of plaster and adorned with pebble decorations, reflecting the traditional building style in Qatar.
- Narrow Alleys ("Dawais"): The market is lined with narrow passages leading to the beach or overlooking the sea, adding a historical atmosphere to the place.
- Internal Courtyards (Housh): Traditional houses include internal courtyards surrounded by rooms, with a water well in the center and trees along the sides, reflecting the old lifestyle.

2. Added Modern Elements:

- Diverse Restaurants and Cafes: Some houses have been converted into restaurants and cafes offering a variety of international cuisines, adding a modern touch to meet contemporary visitor needs.
- Varied Retail Shops: The market includes shops displaying modern products such as perfumes, accessories, and clothing, alongside traditional gold and silver markets.
- Modern Service Facilities: The market is equipped with modern amenities for visitors, such as children's play areas and pedestrian walkways overlooking the sea.

This integration of the old and the modern makes the Old Souq of Wakif a unique destination that reflects both Qatar's history and its development.

2.1.6. Rehabilitation and Development Strategies for Traditional Markets: A Model of the Old Souq of Wakif

2.1.6.1. Overview of Global Models and Strategies for Rehabilitation of Traditional Markets

Rehabilitation strategies for traditional markets are a crucial focus in efforts to preserve architectural heritage and enhance economic and social activities within them. Various models and experiences globally include:

1. Al-Hamidiyah Market in Damascus (Syria):

- Underwent multiple restoration efforts aimed at repairing damage sustained over the decades while preserving its authentic architectural elements.

2. Grand Bazaar in Istanbul (Turkey):

- One of the oldest and largest covered markets in the world, where a strategy was adopted to maintain the old architectural structure while modernizing some facilities
- This strategy enhanced the market's role as a global tourist attraction, achieving significant economic returns for the area.

3. Khan el-Khalili Market in Cairo (Egypt):

- Based on the concept of "integrated development," focusing on upgrading infrastructure (electricity and water networks) while preserving narrow passages and the Islamic character of the buildings [25].
- Promotional plans related to cultural heritage helped increase tourist numbers and contributed to diversifying products and handicrafts.

Diagram 3. Key Differences Between Global Strategies for the Rehabilitation of Traditional Markets [25]



2.1.6.2. Case Study of the Old Souq of Wakif as an Applied Model Illustrating How to Transform the Market into an Economic and Cultural Hub

The experience of the Old Souq of Wakif in Qatar is a living example of how to transform a traditional market into a vibrant economic and cultural center by linking restoration efforts to heritage dimensions and activating innovative economic and tourism activities [13].

1. Rehabilitation Stages:

- Inventory and Documentation of Architectural and Heritage Elements: Comprehensive information was gathered on the designs of traditional buildings and old construction methods before any development process began [21].
- Infrastructure Development: This included upgrading water, electricity, and sewage networks, as well as improving pathways and allocating parking spaces in line with

contemporary visitor requirements [17].

- Addition of Tourism and Service Facilities: Establishing restaurants, cafes, and recreational areas while preserving the market's identity through the use of local building materials and decorations inspired by the Qatari environment.

2. Economic and Cultural Outcomes:

- Increase in Visitor Numbers: Thanks to promotional efforts and highlighting architectural heritage, the market

attracted diverse groups of local residents and foreign tourists [12].

- Development of Handicrafts and Traditional Industries: The market became a platform for showcasing Qatari handicrafts and traditional foods, enhancing the economic value for local artisans [23].
- Enhancement of Cultural Identity: Cultural events, art exhibitions, and heritage festivals helped connect city residents and visitors with the region's traditions and customs [13].

Table 5. Comparison of the Old Souq of Wakif Before and After Rehabilitation

Element	Before Rehabilitation	After Rehabilitation
Condition of Buildings	Required maintenance and restoration	Renewed buildings preserving heritage character
Commercial Activities	Relatively limited (some simple shops)	Diverse activities including restaurants, cafes, and craft shops
Tourism and Service Facilities	Rare	Recreational facilities and integrated services for visitors
Annual Visitor Numbers (Approx.)	Low	Significant increase due to tourism promotion

This table is based on documented data published by relevant authorities in Qatar [13,21].

2.1.6.3. Identifying Factors and Mechanisms Contributing to Heritage Preservation While Meeting Urban and Economic Development Requirements

Balancing the preservation of the traditional character of markets with the demands of urban and economic development requires consideration of several factors, including:

1. Comprehensive and Sustainable Planning:

- Integrating the market into the city's overall urban plan, considering population growth and infrastructure [1].
- Utilizing participatory mechanisms in decision-making to ensure effective dialogue among government authorities, the private sector, and the local community [21].

2. Research-Based Restoration:

- Referring to historical studies and archaeological research when embarking on any restoration to avoid losing authenticity or

distorting original architectural elements

- Ensuring that modern building materials align with the local environment and heritage architectural character [25].

3. Encouraging Investment and Small Enterprises:

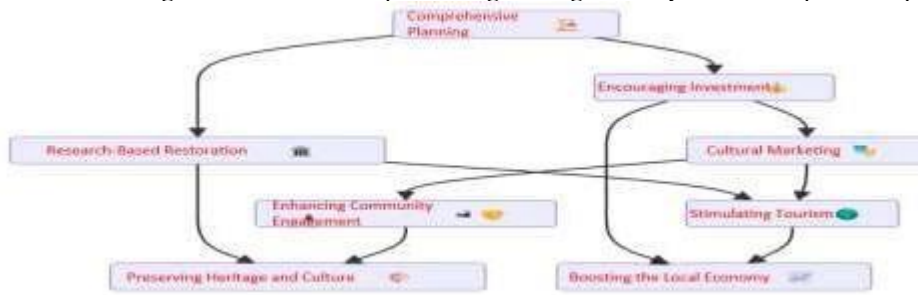
- Providing economic incentives to attract small businesses that support handicrafts and traditional products, enriching the market's economy and increasing its vitality [15].
- Activating partnerships between the public and private sectors to attract investments while preserving the cultural and social values that distinguish traditional markets [13].

4. Cultural and Tourism Marketing:

- Launching marketing campaigns that highlight the historical and architectural value of the markets, focusing on the unique cultural and heritage experience [17].
- Organizing cultural events and festivals aimed at attracting visitors year-round, thereby enhancing the market's economic sustainability [12].

Factors and Mechanisms for Heritage Preservation and Urban Development in Traditional Markets

Diagram 4. illustrates the interconnected factors influencing the strategies for rehabilitating traditional markets, while ensuring a balance between preserving heritage identity and development requirements [1]



2.2. Second: Previous Studies:

Hashim, [29], emphasizes the crucial role of popular markets in supporting the local economy and preserving traditional industries. The study aims to underline the economic and social history of the Gulf and Arabian Peninsula while raising awareness among younger generations about the value of local production. Key findings confirm that heritage markets provide job opportunities and actively involve the elderly and needy families. Additionally, these markets serve as recreational, cultural, and tourism destinations that enhance the historical identity of Gulf communities.

Mohammed [26] investigates the challenges faced by covered heritage markets that feature passages. The study proposes suggestions for their rehabilitation and explores their economic and functional benefits. Key findings indicate that, despite urban development, these markets retain significant economic and tourism value. The research recommends preservation and renewal efforts to create a tourist and recreational shopping experience that attracts both consumers and visitors.

Abdul-Latif [27] identifies the importance of popular markets in energizing tourism and formulates a strategy for their development in Egypt to boost global competitiveness. The findings confirm that popular markets reflect the heritage of peoples and successfully attract a large number of visitors. The study recommends utilizing technological tools and digital marketing to promote these markets on a global scale, enhancing their visibility and appeal.

The key findings reveal that the markets of Old Sana'a, once an ancient commercial and cultural AM [28] reveals the most prominent old markets in Oman, such as Al-Bukhariya Market, Asfour Market, and Suq Al-Sukar, while reviewing their historical and social characteristics. The study emphasizes the distinctive character of these old markets, which preserve the identity of their owners and reflect the region's heritage. Additionally, it

highlights the importance of these markets in maintaining local memory and the overall cultural heritage of the city, underscoring their role in the community's identity and history.

2.3. Similarities and Differences Between Previous Studies and the Current Study

The exploration of traditional markets has garnered significant attention in various studies, revealing both similarities and differences in their findings. Most studies emphasize the economic and social roles of these markets, highlighting their importance as resources that preserve heritage and culture. This intersection underscores a collective recognition of old markets as vital components of local economies and custodians of cultural identity. One of the key similarities across the research is the focus on the economic and social roles of traditional markets. Many studies discuss how these markets serve not only as commercial hubs but also as vital links to cultural heritage. They contribute significantly to the local economy while preserving traditional practices and community values. Furthermore, the importance of tourism and cultural aspects is a recurring theme. Almost all studies affirm that popular and heritage markets are not just economic entities; they also constitute major tourist attractions that support and reinforce local identity. This dual role enhances their significance in the context of cultural preservation and economic development.

Additionally, the necessity for rehabilitation and restoration of traditional markets emerges as a common agreement among previous studies. As urban environments continue to evolve, these studies highlight the urgent need to develop and preserve traditional markets to ensure their sustainability. This recognition of the challenges facing old markets due to urban and economic changes creates a foundation for the current study's objectives.

However, significant differences also exist among the studies, particularly in their geographical scope. For instance, earlier works focus on markets in the Gulf and Arabian Peninsula), Egyptian markets [27,29]. In contrast, the current study zeroes in on the Old Wakra market in Qatar, providing a localized perspective on the challenges and opportunities facing traditional markets.

Methodology and research focus further distinguish the studies. While some emphasized social and economic dimensions [27,29], others concentrated on architectural and restoration aspects [26]. The current study aims to integrate these perspectives by focusing on both architectural and economic preservation while highlighting the heritage identity of the Old Wakra market. This dual focus allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the market's role in the community.

Finally, the specific results and recommendations of previous studies vary significantly. Recommendations ranged from enhancing tourism [27], to activating human factors and preserving architectural authenticity [26]. The current study seeks to consolidate these diverse visions and provide practical recommendations tailored specifically for the Old Wakra market, considering the rapid urban development occurring in Qatar. By addressing the unique context of this market, the study aims to contribute to the broader discourse on the preservation and revitalization of traditional markets in the region.

In conclusion, while many studies share common themes regarding the economic, social, and cultural significance of traditional markets, they also present unique perspectives shaped by their geographical focus and methodological approaches. The current study aims to build upon this existing body of research by providing targeted recommendations for the Old Wakra market, thereby contributing to the ongoing dialogue about the preservation and enhancement of heritage markets in the face of contemporary challenges.

3. Conclusion

This study confirms that traditional markets are not merely commercial centers aimed at financial profit, but are essential components of the cultural and urban heritage of society. The Old Wakra market in Qatar is a living model that embodies this integrated role, merging historical authenticity with economic significance. Preserving and renewing traditional markets according to a scientific and comprehensive methodology represents one of the most important pathways for sustainable development, ensuring a connection between the present and the past, and achieving a real balance

between urban development requirements and preserving heritage identity.

The significance of this study lies in opening new horizons to address the challenges facing heritage markets amid the rapid modernization of contemporary societies, by presenting theoretical foundations and practical experiences. The study also highlighted that integrating the cultural and social dimension into development plans provides sustainable economic opportunities and enhances national belonging among community members.

3.1. Key Findings:

1. The study showed that traditional markets directly contribute to supporting the local economy, whether by energizing trade and handicrafts or attracting tourists, thereby enhancing the economic output of local communities.
2. Restoration and attention to authentic architectural elements contribute to preserving cultural heritage and solidifying the identity of the place, positively impacting the state's image in cultural tourism.
3. Traditional markets face pressures arising from urban transformations and rapid urban expansion, including a decline in the visual identity of the market due to architectural modifications that do not align with the historical character.
4. The study emphasized that involving the local community, artisans, and shop owners in development plans contributes to enhancing collective responsibility and creating a shared identity that protects these markets from extinction.
5. The results indicated the importance of having a legislative framework supportive of preserving traditional markets, in coordination with cultural and tourism institutions, and setting strict criteria governing restoration and development processes.
6. Traditional markets serve as attractive tourist destinations, necessitating the activation of marketing plans and incorporating them into cultural tourism pathways to ensure the sustainability of economic and social activities.

3.2. Recommendations:

1. It is recommended to prepare comprehensive plans for developing the Old Wakra market that include preserving historical architectural features and providing modern infrastructure harmoniously with the spirit of the place.
2. The role of the community, particularly artisans and traditional craftsmen, should be activated through training programs and financial and

- administrative support, ensuring the continuity and innovative renewal of handicrafts.
3. Specific and clear criteria should be established in regulations obliging concerned parties to adhere to the market's architectural identity when undertaking any restoration or urban improvements.
 4. Modern technology and electronic platforms can be employed to promote the market and showcase products and handicrafts, allowing access to a wide range of tourists and investors.
 5. Launching heritage events and festivals that contribute to attracting diverse groups of visitors and enhancing the tourist status of the Old Wakra market, in addition to encouraging local trade.
 6. Establishing partnerships between the public and private sectors to provide financial and technical support for market development while ensuring the preservation of its heritage spirit and encouraging innovation and investment in traditional crafts and products.
 7. It is recommended to integrate student visits and school trips into programs raising awareness of the market's history and cultural values, enhancing the connection of future generations to local heritage.

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