

MARYAM OMAR ALFALASI

ADVISOR : ANDRA CLITAN

CO-ADVISOR: ELMAR SCHULLER

FASHION DESIGN

STRATEGIC DESIGN MANAGEMENT

2024-2025

حوار
بين

الزمنين

A
DIALOGUE
BETWEEN
ERAS





Acknowledgments

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Introduction

This project focuses on the revitalization of Talli, a traditional Emirati craft practiced by women. This chapter introduces the central focus of the research, addressing the decline in interest in the traditional Emirati craft of Talli and the need for its preservation. It explores how Talli can be revitalized to engage younger generations while ensuring its relevance in modern Emirati society. The study aims to develop strategies to safeguard Talli, incorporating sustainable solutions that honor its cultural significance while making it accessible and appealing. Additionally, the chapter outlines the study's scope and recognizes potential challenges.

1

“He who does not know his past cannot make the best of his present and his future, for it is from the past that we learn.”

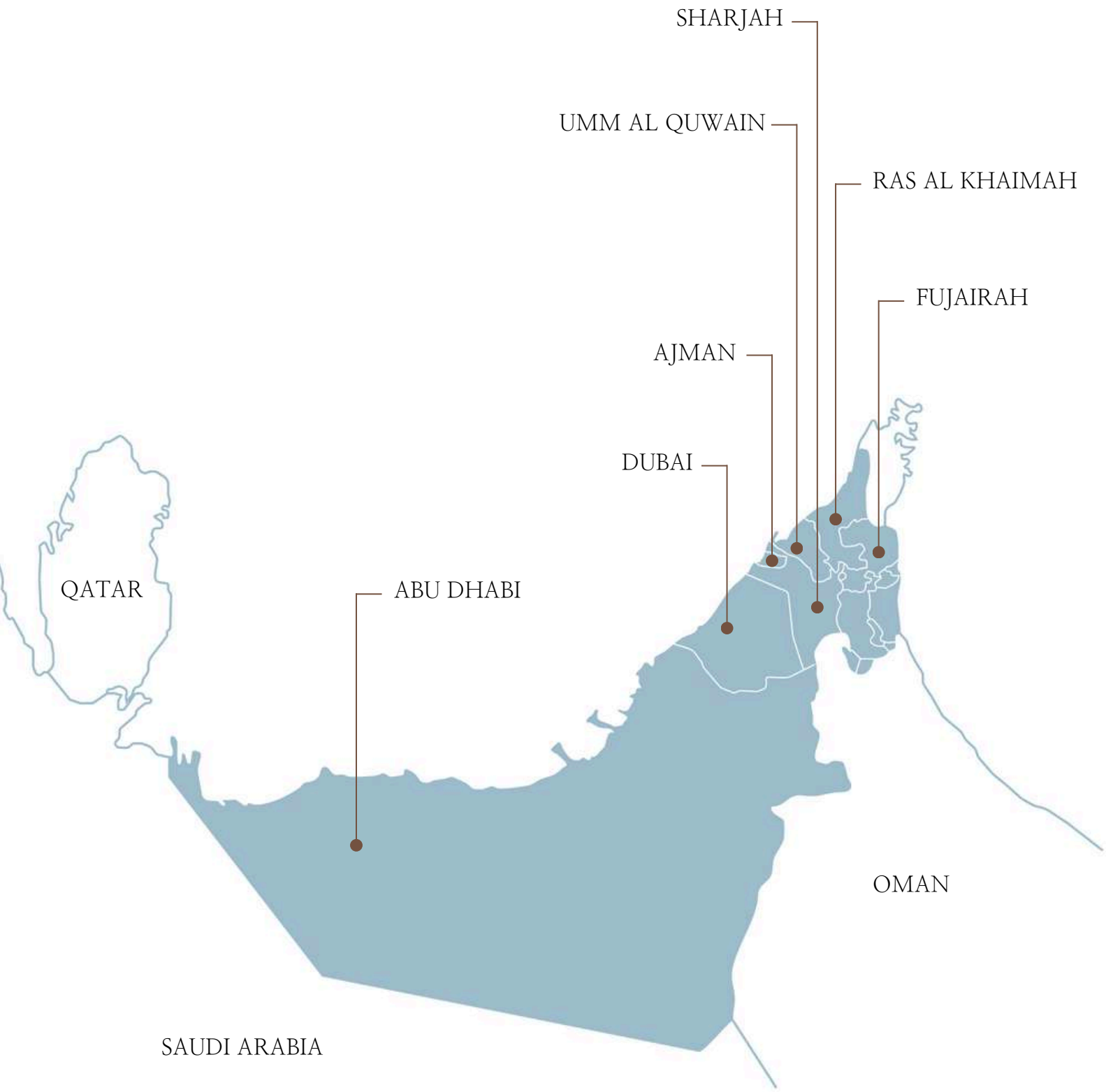
Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan



The United

Geography & Location

Located in the Persian Gulf, The United Arab Emirates is a federation of seven Emirates, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ras al-Khaimah, Ajman, Umm al-Quwain, and Fujairah with a total area of approximately 83,000 km. It borders Oman in the east and Saudi Arabia in the south, it shares maritime borders with Qatar in the west and Iran in the north. The UAE emerged as an independent state on December 2nd, 1971 consisting of six Emirates Ras al-Khaimah was the last of the seven emirates to join the union in 1972, before the union the region was previously called the Trucial States when it was under British domination (Shoup, 2022). It was considered to be part of the Oman peninsula of southeastern Arabia, thus the region has lots of influence from Oman's rich history. The UAE's terrain is diverse, featuring three distinct landscapes: mountains, shorelines, and deserts. The Hajar Mountains dominate the eastern region, with cooler temperatures and more greenery than the surrounding areas. The shoreline stretches along the Arabian Gulf, where coastal cities like Dubai and Abu Dhabi are located, offering sandy beaches, mangroves, and salt flats. Inland, the desert terrain, makes up two-thirds of the region's territory, the Rub' al Khali (Empty Quarter), consists of vast, arid expanses of sand dunes with temperatures soaring in the summer, this combination of landscapes reflects the UAE's rich geographical diversity (El Mutwalli, 2011). In the UAE, Emirati nationals represent a minority within the country's population, which is predominantly made up of expatriates. Out of a total population of approximately 10 million people, only about 1 million are Emirati citizens (fcsc.gov, 2018). This demographic shift has shaped the UAE into a highly diverse, multicultural society.



Arab Emirates

Life Before and After Oil Discovery





(Mediaoffice.abudhabi, 2022)

The decline of the pearl industry began before World War II due to several factors. In 1921, Japan introduced more affordable cultured pearls, which significantly impacted the market. Followed by the economic depression of the 1920s and 1930s, which affected the wealth of many potential buyers. In 1947, the Indian government imposed a ban on pearl imports, further exacerbating the situation. This period was particularly challenging for families who had specialized in pearl diving and lacked alternative sources of income. The discovery of oil dramatically transformed the UAE, the first oil in the region was struck in 1958, and by 1969, Dubai began exporting oil. The region's rulers immediately invested in improving the lives of their citizens, by building new schools, housing, hospitals, and infrastructure. Today, the UAE produces approximately 2.3 million barrels of oil per day and holds the sixth-largest proven oil reserves in the world. This marked a pivotal moment in the country's history, driving its rapid development and shaping its future economic growth (dct.gov, 2022).

Statement of The Problem

There has been a noticeable decline in interest among younger generations in the traditional Emirati craft Talli, largely due to globalization and the rise of mass-produced embroidery. Access to materials and learning spaces has become difficult, limiting opportunities for young people to learn and practice these skills. Without modern approaches to make these crafts more accessible and appealing, there is a risk of losing these valuable cultural traditions. Solutions are needed to revitalize Talli, ensuring its preservation and evolution in contemporary society.

Research Question

How can the traditional Emirati handcraft of Talli be revitalized and reimagined to engage young Emirati women, ensuring its relevance, added value, and continued evolution within contemporary UAE society?



Aim

The aim of this research is to preserve the traditional UAE Talli craft by modernizing it to inspire and engage young Emirati women through innovative approaches that bridge the past and present, ensuring its relevance in contemporary Emirati society while creating new value.

Objectives

1

To understand the Talli craft and its importance within UAE cultural heritage.

2

To develop creative strategies to preserve and innovate the Talli craft to engage the younger Emirati generation (15 – 30 years old).

3

Explore and implement innovative strategies to create new value and increase awareness of the Talli craft, while assessing its potential for scalability.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to explore and develop creative strategies to revitalize the traditional Emirati craft of Talli, with the aim of making it more accessible and appealing to younger generations in a modern, globalized world. This research will focus on addressing the key challenges associated with the decline of the craft, while also introducing modernized approaches to preserve and innovate the craft. The study seeks to offer new creative solutions that not only solve these problems but also add additional value to Talli through the integration of contemporary design and creative applications, ensuring its relevance and sustainability in contemporary society.



Scope

The scope of this thesis includes the revitalization of the traditional Emirati craft of Talli, specifically focusing on making the craft more accessible, relevant, and appealing to younger generations. The project will incorporate creative strategies to modernize Talli, examining how it can be integrated into contemporary fashion, design, and technology. Additionally, this research will investigate the potential for scalability and cultural value that can be added to the craft, ensuring its sustainability and growth in the future.



Limitations

- **Geographical Constraints:** The study will focus primarily on the UAE and the preservation of Talli within the Emirati context. Broader applications in global markets or other regions will not be explored in depth.
- **Participant Comfort:** When engaging with artisans, especially those from older generations, they might feel hesitant to fully share their experiences or opinions, this could limit the depth of insights gathered during interviews or focus groups.
- **Time Limitations:** The timeframe of the project might not allow for long-term observation of how proposed solutions affect the preservation and appeal of Talli among younger generations.
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Modifying traditional practices to make them more contemporary and appealing might risk being perceived as altering the authentic cultural heritage of Talli.

Literature Review

This literature review establishes the cultural, historical, and theoretical context that informs the development of the project. It explores key themes related to heritage preservation, traditional crafts in the UAE. The review also highlights the challenges facing traditional practices in contemporary society and underscores the urgency of developing accessible, youth-oriented tools to sustain cultural continuity. This framework supports the project's aim to reimagine Talli as a living tradition, one that remains relevant, respected, and resilient in the modern era.



Basic Definitions

Cultural Heritage

According to UNESCO Institute for Statistics, “cultural heritage includes artefacts, monuments, a group of buildings and sites, museums that have a diversity of values including symbolic, historic, artistic, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological, scientific and social significance. It includes tangible heritage (movable, immobile and underwater), intangible cultural heritage (ICH) embedded into cultural, and natural heritage artefacts, sites or monuments. The definition excludes ICH related to other cultural domains such as festivals, celebration etc. It covers industrial heritage and cave paintings.”(Unesco.org, 2016).

Talli

According to Dubai culture, “Talli is a traditional embroidery craft, which local women used to practice in their homes to produce embroidered textiles to be used in decorating various types of female clothing, or ‘Talli Batool’. Talli designs are distinguished by their bright colours and are used to decorate the collars, hem and cuffs of formal wear.”(Dubai Culture, 2024).

Modernization

Cambridge Dictionary defines modernization as “the process of starting to use the most recent methods, ideas, equipment, etc. so that something becomes or seems more modern.” (Cambridge Dictionary, 2024).

Sustainability

The United Nations Brundtland Commission defined sustainability as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” (United Nations Brundtland Commission, 1987).

Conservation of Cultural Heritage

According to UNESCO “refers to the measures taken to extend the life of cultural heritage while strengthening transmission of its significant heritage messages and values. In the domain of cultural property, the aim of conservation is to maintain the physical and cultural characteristics of the object to ensure that its value is not diminished and that it will outlive our limited time span.” (Unesco.org, 2015).

Cultural and Historical Influences on Women's Dress in the UAE

The UAE's geographic location, with its coastline stretching 750 km along the Indian Ocean, has historically provided access to major trade routes, particularly the region known as Sahil Oman (the coast of Oman). These routes were critical not only for the exchange of goods but also for the exchange of cultural practices and dress styles. The movement of goods between Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and beyond introduced new fabrics, designs, and styles, all of which influenced how local Emirati dress evolved. Clothing in the UAE became a reflection of these cultural interactions, blending traditional garments with styles and materials imported from neighboring regions. The continuous movement of nomadic groups, particularly from Hadramawt in Yemen and Najd, also contributed to the exchange of dress customs throughout the Arabian Peninsula (El Mutwalli, 2011). The nomads, who lived a more transient lifestyle, needed practical, durable clothing that was easy to wear, pack, and transport. This influenced the creation of simpler garments, focusing on utility over extravagance. Despite this, there remained a deep connection to regional aesthetics, as even simple garments were often enhanced with embroidery or colorful accents. These practical designs helped shape the foundational elements of Emirati dress, which evolved over time to include more decorative features influenced by trade and regional customs.



Climate and Culture in Emirati Attire

The desert climate also had a major impact on the types of clothing worn. The extreme heat during the summer months, combined with the high humidity along the coast, made it essential to wear light, breathable fabrics. Fabrics like cotton and linen were favored, allowing airflow and keeping the body cool during the day. In contrast, the cooler desert nights from November to April required layering. Layers of clothing created air pockets that provided insulation, keeping the body warm while maintaining flexibility in adjusting to temperature changes. In addition to these environmental influences, the migration and interaction of Bedouin tribes and Arab Sunni tribes, particularly the Huwalah, played a significant role in the spread of dress styles throughout the region. These tribes, with their strategic settlements along the coast, brought with them new ideas and dress customs from Iran, Pakistan, and other parts of the Gulf (2008, *المسلم*). Their influence helped further diversify the styles of clothing seen across the UAE, contributing to the rich tapestry of dress customs that defined the region.



“Heritage forms the memory of our homelands and the identity of our societies through which we reflect on the significance of our global culture and history, evoking the priceless results of the collective human effort and establishing an intellectual and creative legacy passed down through generations. It serves as a bridge for understanding and communication among different people and cultures and a bedrock for developing modern societies worldwide.”

Sheikha Latifa bint Mohammed bin Rashid
Al Maktoum

Emirati Women's Roles in the Past

In the past, Emirati women played crucial roles in their households, they were the heart of the family, tasked with childcare, preparing meals, and maintaining the household while men were often away, engaged in trade, fishing, or pearl diving. Despite the harsh desert environment and the scarcity of resources, Emirati women displayed remarkable resourcefulness and resilience, turning local materials into functional, sustainable household items. Some of their household duties include cooking and cleaning, often requiring significant effort given the lack of modern conveniences. Women would prepare meals using locally available ingredients, many of which required time-consuming preparation, cleaning was also challenging considering the dusty environment, floor sweepers made of palm fronds were used, and fetching water from wells or nearby sources required some effort. Their lifestyle played a role in the emerging crafts that were created and used out of necessity, they crafted functional objects for daily use out of readily available material from the environment around them. These crafts demonstrate the sustainability of the Emirati lifestyle in the past.

Life was undoubtedly hard for Emirati women in the past, with the absence of modern utilities like electricity, running water, or advanced tools they still managed to be resilient through their resourcefulness and craftsmanship, and they were able to sustain their households. Their efforts were essential to the fabric of Emirati society, and their dedication ensured that families thrived even under difficult conditions (Decker, 2013). It is essential to ensure that these values are passed down through generations, preserving traditions and making sure the sustainability of the past continues to inspire the present.



Crafts in the UAE



Khoos baskets & mat



Traditional Sadu Weaving Pattern



Talli Threads

Traditional women's crafts in the UAE, such as Al-Sadu, Khoos, and Talli, are deeply intertwined with the nation's cultural heritage. These crafts were integral to daily life, as women would create essential household items, including mats, baskets, and textiles, which were not only practical but also passed down through generations. These crafts were considered a social activity that brought women together, strengthening community bonds while ensuring the preservation of these traditional skills. Today, these crafts continue to play a vital role in maintaining the cultural identity of the UAE.

(Images by author)

Al Sadu



Al Sadu

Al Sadu, a form of handwoven textile made from camel and goat hair, it was essential for Bedouin communities in the resource-scarce Arabian Peninsula. This craft emerged from their ingenuity and resourcefulness, providing practical uses such as tent covers, carpets, and camel saddle covers. In addition to its functionality, Al Sadu serves as an artistic expression through geometric patterns and symbols passed down through generations. The designs often incorporate elements from the desert environment and Bedouin life, such as sand dunes, palm trees, camels, falcons, and dallah coffee pots, all of which reflect the region's culture and landscape (Abu Dhabi Culture, 2018).





(Image by author)



Al Sadu

The Al Sadu process begins with the selection of wool, typically from goats or camels. This material is then sorted, cleaned, and spun by hand using a spindle to create yarn. The cleaning process involves blowing and shaking to remove debris like plant matter, followed by soaking in water and soap multiple times to ensure the fibers are clean and ready for use. Once the yarn is spun, it is often dyed using natural ingredients like henna, saffron, indigo, and turmeric, which give the textiles their bright, vibrant colors. The yarn is then woven using a floor loom made from local palm wood. If large quantities of material are needed, multiple looms may be used, with two women working together to pass the yarn between them, a process that emphasizes the communal nature of the craft. Today Al-Sadu is part of the UNESCO 'List of Intangible Cultural Heritage'.(Unesco.org, 2024).



(Images by author)



(unesco, 2025)



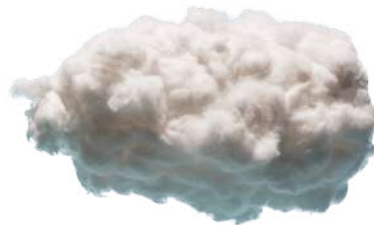
(unesco, 2025)

Process

Goat/Camel hair



Wash



Spin



Dye



KhooS



The palm tree is a highly versatile and abundant resource in the UAE, historically playing a crucial role in the daily lives of Emirati families. Every part of the palm tree was utilized, making it an invaluable asset in both construction and crafts. Palm stems were used to build homes serving as roofs, walls, and inner roofing. The adaptability and abundance of palm trees meant that their leaves could be harvested year-round, providing a sustainable resource that families relied upon (Google Arts & Culture, 2018).

One of the most significant uses of palm leaves was in the craft of Khoos, the intricate art of weaving palm fronds to create a variety of household items, these items were essential for daily life in the desert environment, offering practicality and durability. For instance, mats made of Khoos were used to cover floors, while baskets served to store food and other supplies. The use of natural, locally sourced materials made Khoos an environmentally sustainable craft. Since palm leaves were harvested locally and required minimal processing, the craft left a minimal ecological footprint.



(Saeed, 2015)

Khoos



The process of creating Khoos requires a skilled hand. It begins with the collection of dried palm leaves, which are then sliced lengthwise into bundles. These bundles are placed in water to soften the leaves, making them easier to weave. The palm leaves can also be dyed in various colors using local spices, with common colors of purple, green, and red. The fronds are dyed by placing them in a container of dyed water until the color deepens. Once the palm leaves have been properly prepared, the process of weaving, known as Siffa, begins. This weaving process allows for the creation of a variety of household items, each designed to suit different needs. Mats, for instance, might be woven more tightly for durability, while baskets may be crafted with decorative patterns to add artistic value (AbuDhabi Culture, 2020.). The entire process, from the collection and preparation of the palm leaves to the final weaving, reflects the resourcefulness and creativity of Emirati women, who have passed down the knowledge of Khoos through generations.



Mahafah



Shreet



Jefeer



Suroid

Khoos

(Images by author)



(Image by author)

Process

Palm tree



Dry palm frond



Dye



Cut & soak



Talli



Talli is an intricate form of embroidery that has been practiced for generations, particularly by women in the UAE. It holds great cultural significance, as it is used to adorn the hems, cuffs, and necklines of traditional garments, such as Thawbs and Kandoras. The craft involves weaving together cotton threads, along with metallic threads like gold or silver. In the past, real silver and gold were used, although nowadays nylon threads are more common as they are cheaper and available in a variety of colors. Through Talli, women are able to create beautiful and delicate patterns, it is not only a reflection of the artistic skills of Emirati women but also serves as an expression of their cultural identity and heritage. The practice of creating Talli was often a social activity, with women gathering in small groups to weave while sharing stories and maintaining a sense of community, these gatherings allowed for the transmission of knowledge from one generation to the next, ensuring that the art of Talli was passed down through generations (Unesco.org, 2024).



(Images by author)

Talli



Talli

The process of creating Talli begins with preparing the necessary equipment needed for its production, the Kajouja is essential as it is the main tool for embroidery and consists of a metal base in the shape of two cones attached at the head and has two rings on top to support a circular pillow (2008, *المسلم*). To create the simplest form of Talli known as bu-khoosa ten cotton threads are gathered together and spun around a wooden spool, this process is repeated in order to fill six spools. Then the threads along with the metallic thread known as “khoos” are tied in a knot and pinned on the pillow, where the weaving can begin, everytime the talli gets longer it can be wrapped around the pillow, usually three rounds on the pillow indicate one meter of Talli.





(Image by author)

Process

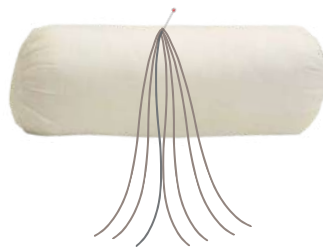
Gather equipment



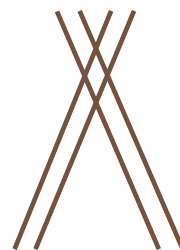
Fill each spool



Gather threads and pin



Begin weaving Bu-khoosa



Talli

This craft is unique among traditional Emirati crafts because it is one of the few created by women for women, its purpose is to adorn women's garments, and played a significant role in women's fashion in the past, with intricate designs that emphasized elegance and beauty to elevate their garments. This makes it a symbol of femininity in Emirati culture, the decorative touches reflect the emphasis on feminine aesthetics and has been a way for women to express their identity and creativity through their attire. Moreover, the use of real gold or silver threads in the past was a status symbol, the more elaborate and heavier the Talli embroidery, the wealthier the woman wearing it was perceived to be.



(Nationalclothing.org, 2018)



(Image by author)

Talli was not only a craft but also a social activity, women would gather with their neighbors and family members to work on their Talli creations together, these gatherings were social events where they would exchange stories, catch up with one another, and pass on the craft to younger generations. Young girls would observe and learn the intricate patterns and techniques, ensuring that the tradition of Talli was passed down through the family. These social settings fostered a sense of community and solidarity among women. Compared to other Emirati crafts like Al Sadu or Khoos, Talli is considered more difficult to learn due to the complexity and time-intensive nature of the weaving process, the simplest form of Talli can take up to three hours to produce one meter (Google Arts & Culture, 2018) regardless of the experience one has with the craft it requires immense patience, making it essential to encourage younger generations to learn and preserve this craft so that it is passed down and kept alive in modern times.



(Ahmed, 2022)



Bu-khoosa

The simplest form of Talli can take up to three hours to produce just one meter.

(Image by author)



Al-Badla (trouser cuffs)

Can take from 2-6 months to complete.

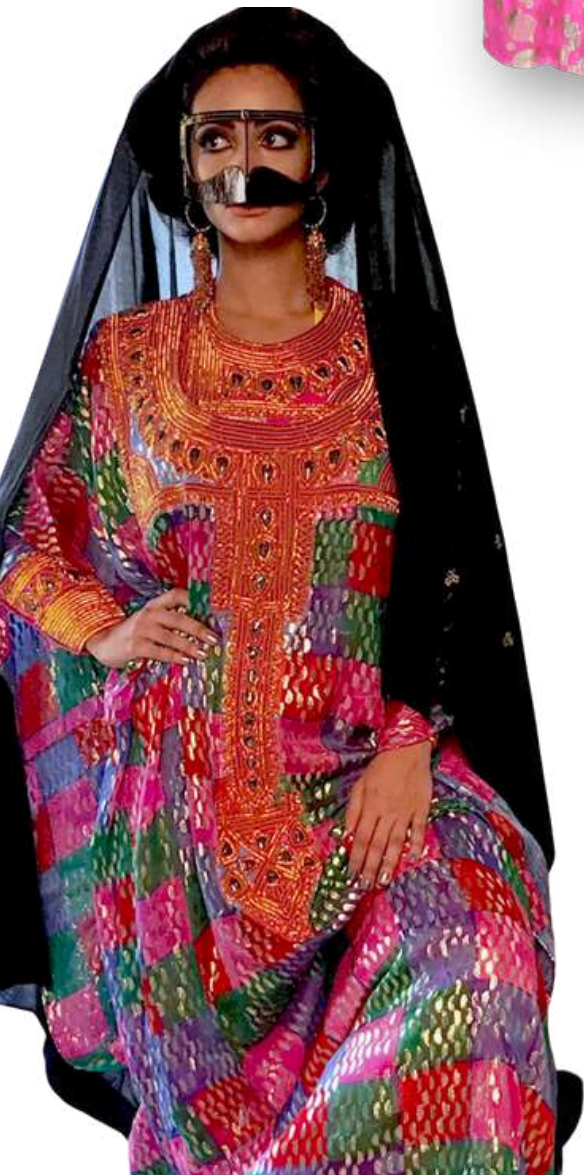
(Image by author)

Talli

Garments belong to:
Sheikha Salama bint Hamdan Al Nahyan
Abu Dhabi 1980



Kandora



Thawb





(Image by author)

In the past, young Emirati girls made their own Kajouja using household materials before obtaining a traditionally made one. They repurposed leftover cans for the base, sewed fabric cushions for spools, and sewed large to place on top of the cans. This DIY approach ensured accessibility to Talli, with a sustainable approach by creatively reusing materials. It highlights how Emirati women preserved and passed down their craft through resourcefulness and tradition.

The traditional Kajouja setup, consisting of a metal stand and a fabric pillow, has remained unchanged since women in the UAE began practicing Talli. While decorative elements such as fabric coverings, lace, and embroidery have been added over time, the fundamental structure and materials have stayed the same. The metal base is typically made by a welder, while the pillow is either homemade or crafted by a tailor, providing the necessary support for weaving.



(unesco, 2025)

Talli

Heritage

Heritage refers to the legacy passed down from previous generations, encompassing both tangible and intangible elements that shape our identity and connection to the past. According to UNESCO, cultural heritage includes both physical artifacts and traditions that reflect the values, beliefs, and knowledge of a society (Unesco.org, 2024). Cultural heritage is divided into two categories, tangible and intangible heritage, tangible heritage includes physical objects, sites, and monuments that have historical, architectural, or cultural significance. In the UAE, examples of tangible heritage include the Al Ain Oasis, a green oasis that has supported human habitation for thousands of years and a space that hosts festivals showcasing traditional farming methods, another example is the Jebel Hafet Tombs, ancient burial sites dating back over 5,000 years, providing insights into early human settlements in the region and indicates the importance of maritime in the region (Ministry of Culture, 2020).





(wimac, 2025)

Intangible heritage, on the other hand, refers to non-physical elements like traditions, practices, and knowledge that are passed down through generations. It includes customs, rituals, and skills that form part of a community's cultural identity. In the UAE, notable examples of intangible heritage are falconry, a traditional hunting method that has been practiced for centuries, and Arabic coffee, which is a symbol of Emirati hospitality and generosity. Both tangible and intangible heritage are vital to preserving cultural identity, with UNESCO emphasizing the importance of safeguarding these elements for future generations. While tangible heritage connects us to the physical remnants of the past, intangible heritage ensures that traditions and practices remain alive and relevant.



(Harper's Bazaar Arabia, 2021)

Importance of Preserving Intangible Heritage

Cultural Identity and Continuity

Intangible heritage plays a vital role in shaping a community's cultural identity. It includes the knowledge and practices that define a society's way of life, such as language, rituals, music, dance, and craft techniques. These cultural expressions foster a sense of belonging and pride among individuals within a community. By preserving intangible heritage, we ensure that future generations remain connected to their roots and understand the values, beliefs, and traditions that shaped their ancestors.

Promoting Cultural Diversity

The preservation of intangible heritage helps to maintain and promote cultural diversity. In a rapidly globalizing world, many unique traditions are at risk of being forgotten. Safeguarding these cultural practices ensures that a variety of languages, customs, and expressions continue to exist, contributing to the richness of global culture. Intangible heritage acts as a counterbalance to the loss of diversity that can result from modernization and globalization.

Economic Value

Many forms of intangible heritage, such as traditional crafts, festivals, and performing arts, offer significant economic value to communities. Cultural tourism, for example, is often built around intangible heritage, attracting visitors who seek authentic experiences of local customs and traditions. By preserving these traditions, communities can develop sustainable economic opportunities, creating jobs and income while ensuring the continuity of cultural practices.

Global Cultural Dialogue

Preserving intangible heritage contributes to a global dialogue between different cultures. It fosters mutual understanding and respect among diverse communities, helping to reduce conflict and promote peaceful coexistence. By valuing and preserving intangible heritage, societies recognize the importance of cultural exchange and the role it plays in building a more inclusive and tolerant world.

(Stephenson, 2023)

Existing
Strategies
Reviving
Traditional
UAE Crafts



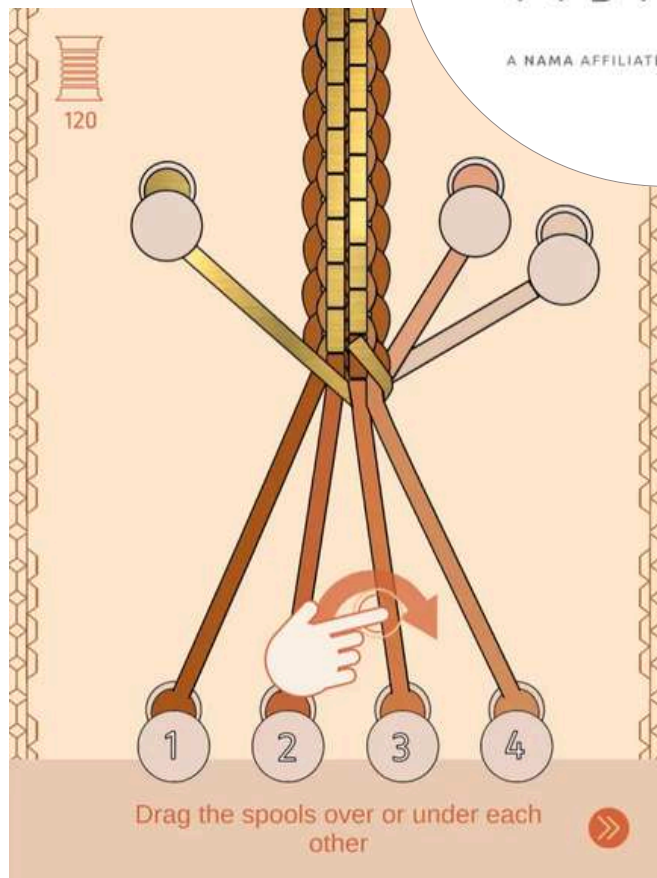
House of Artisans - Abu Dhabi

The House of Artisans in Abu Dhabi is a key initiative by the Department of Culture and Tourism. Its primary mission is to safeguard Emirati intangible heritage, focusing on the preservation and promotion of traditional crafts such as Talli, Al Sadu, and Khoos (Qasralhosn.ae, 2019). The center offers workshops, exhibitions, and programs to teach these skills to younger generations, making sure that the techniques are passed down and remain relevant in a modern context. The experience provides a hands-on, educational approach to craft preservation, which is essential for knowledge transfer. However, while its focus on community and education is strong, the initiative could expand its reach by incorporating digital platforms or e-learning opportunities to make these crafts more accessible to a global audience. Additionally, more collaborations with contemporary designers could help in integrating traditional crafts into modern fashion and decor, expanding their appeal to younger generations.

(Harper's Bazaar Arabia, 2021)
(Instagram.com, 2020)

Hiraf App by Irthi Crafts Council

The Talli App, developed by the Irthi Contemporary Crafts Council, aims to digitally preserve and promote Talli. The app provides a virtual platform where users can learn about the craft, access tutorials, and even experiment with virtual Talli weaving patterns (Gulf News Report, 2021). This initiative merges technology and tradition, allowing users from anywhere in the world to engage with this craft in an accessible, modern way. However, one limitation is that the tactile nature of Talli, its textures, materials, and hands-on process, cannot be fully replicated in a digital format. While the app is an excellent introduction to Talli, it should complement, rather than replace the physical object.



(Creative Dialogue, 2019)
(Shosho, 2021)



Al-ghadeer Emirati Crafts

Al-ghadeer Emirati Crafts is an initiative that supports underprivileged women by providing them with opportunities to earn an income through craftsmanship. It focuses on the revival of traditional crafts like Talli, Sadu, and Khoos, and aims to provide women with economic empowerment through the sale of handmade goods (Alghadeeruaeacrafts.ae, 2023). Alghadeer emphasizes sustainability by using locally sourced materials and training women in traditional techniques that they can pass on to future generations, their crafts are used to create modern items to appeal to a larger audience. Alghadeer is a commendable initiative for its social and economic impact, Although, its primary challenge lies in scalability. While the initiative creates high-quality, handmade items, increasing production while maintaining the authenticity and quality of the craftsmanship could be difficult. One potential solution could be exploring collaborations with international brands or luxury markets that would help bring more attention to these crafts and expand the initiative's global reach without compromising the craft's integrity.



Tamashee - Local brand

Tamashee is a local footwear brand that incorporates traditional Emirati craft motifs, such as Talli, into modern, high-end shoe designs. The brand seeks to highlight regional identity while promoting sustainability through its designs. By merging traditional techniques with modern fashion it is able to bring traditional Emirati craftsmanship into the global market, allowing it to appeal to a younger, fashion-conscious audience (Tamashee, 2018). However, it could do more to emphasize the storytelling aspect of the craft. Incorporating more narratives about the artisans behind the designs or promoting craftsmanship workshops while promoting their products could further enhance the cultural value and deepen the connection between consumers and the traditions they are buying into.

Tashkeel - Art and Design Incubator

Founded in 2008 by H.H. Sheikha Lateefa bint Maktoum, is a leading art and design incubator in Dubai that supports contemporary creative practices rooted in the UAE. Through collaborations with local artisans, Tashkeel bridges generations by connecting emerging designers with skilled Emirati craft practitioners in traditional techniques like Safeefah (palm frond weaving) and Al Sadu. These partnerships help preserve and reinterpret heritage crafts within modern design contexts.



(Tashkeel, 2025)
(Lutyens, 2019)
(Interior Design, 2022)

Methodology

The proposed research is situated both theoretically and methodologically within the fields of cultural heritage preservation, traditional craft revitalization, and contemporary design strategies. This study aims to explore how the traditional craft of Talli can be revitalized and adapted for modern Emirati society, with a focus on increasing accessibility and appeal to younger female generations. Based on the findings of the literature review and case studies presented earlier, the proposed research will adopt a mixed-method approach for gathering and analyzing data. According to Sharon Andrew and Elizabeth Halcomb's book *Mixed Methods Research for Nursing and Health Sciences* (2009), mixed-method research is "a systematic approach to addressing research questions that involve collecting, analyzing and synthesizing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single research project" (Sharon, 2009, p. vi). This research will rely on qualitative data, collected through semi-structured interviews with Talli artisans, focus groups with younger Emirati women (15–30 years old), and participant observations in Talli workshops. These methods aim to gather rich, detailed insights into the cultural significance of Talli, the challenges artisans face, and potential solutions for revitalizing the craft. On the other hand, the research will analyze the qualitative data using thematic analysis, allowing the identification of key themes such as accessibility, modernization, and cultural engagement. This approach ensures a comprehensive understanding of how Talli can be preserved and made relevant for future generations.

3

Collection Method

General background

This research will utilize a mixed-method approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of the revitalization of the Talli craft. While qualitative methods such as semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and observational studies will offer deep insights into the cultural significance and personal experiences of artisans and younger Emirati women, quantitative methods will gather data on demographic trends, levels of awareness, and interest in Talli through surveys. This blend of methods ensures a well-rounded collection of both statistical trends and personal experiences.

Benefits

The mixed-method approach in this research provides a comprehensive understanding by integrating both quantitative data from surveys and qualitative insights from interviews and focus groups. This ensures a balance between numerical trends and rich, descriptive narratives. This method of data collection helps verify trends across different sources, ensuring reliable findings. The approach combines surveys capturing broader trends and interviews exploring deeper, contextual insights. This yields actionable data, offering both clear metrics on awareness of Talli and detailed insights into the challenges and opportunities for its modernization and preservation.

Process

Data collection for this research will include both quantitative and qualitative methods. A structured survey will be distributed to younger Emirati women to gather insights on their awareness, interest, and barriers to engaging with Talli, providing a quantitative foundation for identifying key trends. In parallel, semi-structured interviews with Talli artisans and younger women will explore the cultural significance, challenges, and opportunities for revitalizing the craft. Focus groups will gather opinions on how to modernize Talli, while observational studies of Talli workshops will document the learning process and the social dynamics of the craft's practice.

Limitations

Some potential limitations of this study include low survey response rates, as younger participants may not find the topic immediately relevant, affecting the data's representativeness. Qualitative data from interviews and focus groups might be subjective and prone to bias, with participants possibly offering idealized accounts, and the researcher's interpretation may influence analysis. Additionally, the time-consuming nature of qualitative methods could limit the depth of analysis or the number of participants involved. Finally, balancing differing perspectives from older artisans and younger participants may present challenges in arriving at a unified solution.

Analysis Method

General background

The analysis for this research will follow a mixed-method approach, which integrates both qualitative and quantitative data to provide a greater understanding of how the traditional Talli craft can be preserved and revitalized. The qualitative data gathered from interviews, focus groups, and observational studies will be analyzed using thematic analysis, which helps to identify key themes such as the cultural relevance of Talli, the barriers to its practice, and potential solutions for its modernization. Meanwhile, the quantitative data obtained from surveys will be analyzed using descriptive statistics to identify trends in awareness, interest, and engagement with the craft among younger Emirati women. This integrated approach ensures that both statistical trends and personal narratives are considered, providing a balanced and detailed view of the research topic.

Benefits

Thematic analysis offers rich insights into the cultural and social dynamics of Talli, while quantitative methods provide a broad understanding of trends and engagement levels. By using both approaches, the research enhances its validity, where qualitative themes are confirmed by quantitative data. This method is also flexible, allowing for the discovery of emerging themes that might not have been anticipated. Together, the combination of numerical data and personal experiences offers a balanced perspective, providing a holistic understanding of the challenges and potential solutions for revitalizing Talli.

Process

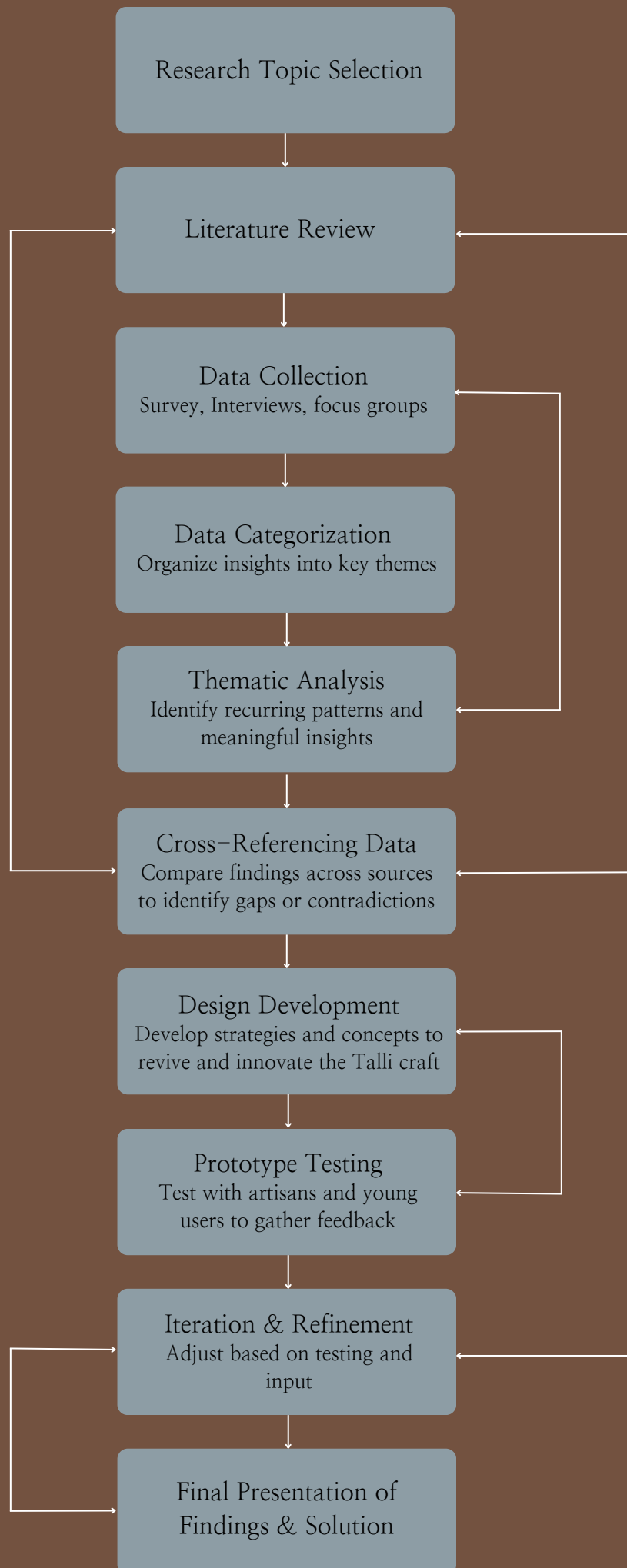
Thematic analysis will be used to identify key themes from interviews, focus groups, and observations, focusing on barriers to learning Talli, its cultural significance, and modernization opportunities. Data will be categorized to highlight commonalities and differences between artisans and younger generations. Sub-themes like resource availability will help map the current state of Talli and potential areas for intervention. Descriptive statistics will analyze survey data, calculating means and frequencies to quantify interest levels and barriers, supported by graphs for easy comparison. Cross-referencing will ensure that qualitative insights align with quantitative findings, confirming trends or highlighting discrepancies in engagement with Talli.

Limitations

Sample size can be a limitation, as a small or unrepresentative survey sample may affect the generalizability of quantitative data. Additionally, analyzing qualitative data can be time-consuming, especially when coding large amounts of information, potentially impacting the depth of analysis. The thematic analysis relies on the researcher's interpretation of data, which may introduce bias or subjectivity. Finally, integrating both quantitative and qualitative data may present challenges, as the two data types may not always align or may yield conflicting results.

Outline of Research Design Process

The flowchart outlines the step-by-step process of this research. It begins with the selection of the research topic, followed by a thorough literature review on traditional UAE crafts, particularly Talli. Data is then collected through surveys, interviews, and focus groups, which are categorized into key themes for further analysis. The thematic analysis is conducted to identify patterns and insights, followed by a cross-referencing process to compare qualitative and quantitative findings. The insights gained are used to develop strategies for modernizing Talli, which are then tested with artisans and younger Emiratis. Finally, the findings and strategies are presented, discussing results and implications. This process ensures a comprehensive and methodical approach to modernizing Talli while preserving its cultural significance.



Methodological Limitations

A potential methodological limitation is the subjectivity inherent in qualitative analysis, as interviews and thematic analysis rely on the researcher's interpretation, which may introduce bias. Additionally, time constraints may limit the depth of data analysis, especially given the labor-intensive nature of analysing qualitative data from interviews and focus groups. The small sample size for qualitative research, often determined by access to artisans and younger participants, can also affect the generalizability of the findings. Finally, qualitative and quantitative data may often have different results which may prove challenging, as data might not always align, complicating the final analysis.



Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations in this project are crucial to ensure that both the cultural significance of the craft and the rights of participants are respected. First, cultural sensitivity and respect must be at the forefront, as Talli is a deeply rooted tradition in Emirati culture. The research must avoid misrepresentation, ensuring that the craft is depicted authentically while carefully balancing innovation with tradition. In Addition, Informed consent is another critical ethical element, before participating, Talli artisans and younger Emirati women will be fully informed about the purpose, process, and potential outcomes of the research. Participants will voluntarily give consent and will have the right to withdraw at any time. Finally, any modernization efforts should respect the cultural roots of the craft, ensuring that it remains an authentic representation of Emirati heritage. This approach will help maintain the integrity of Talli while exploring opportunities for its evolution.

Data Analysis

This section presents the analysis of the qualitative data collected throughout the research process, including interviews, surveys, and focus groups conducted with Emirati artisans and young participants. The data was categorized into key themes that emerged from both observation and direct user input, highlighting challenges, preferences, and opportunities related to preserving and modernizing the traditional craft of Talli. By identifying recurring patterns and contrasting perspectives, the analysis helped shape the design direction of the project. This phase of the project bridges the gap between research and design, ensuring that the final outcome is grounded in real user needs and cultural relevance.

4

Moza Saeed Al Muhairbi - Emirati Artisan Interview Analysis

Cultural Preservation	Innovation and Adaptation	Community and Social Value	Challenges	Materials & Supplies
<p>Importance of heritage</p> <p>"These crafts must continue. We grew up with these traditions, and they benefited us."</p>	<p>Modern materials</p> <p>"Yes, we've added modern threads and mixed colors like beige and red. We've created new designs, and we even used Talli in baskets and trays."</p>	<p>Community and exchange</p> <p>"In the past, we didn't sell Talli. We made it for our own clothes, for relatives and neighbors, and exchanged it with others. It wasn't about money—it was about community and tradition."</p>	<p>Younger generation's interest</p> <p>"I taught my daughters, and they learned, but they didn't continue. They know how to do it but don't practice it anymore."</p>	<p>Source of materials</p> <p>"For Khoos, we had it in Liwa, and people brought supplies from Dubai to Abu Dhabi, to the islands, and even from Qatar and India."</p>
<p>Passing down knowledge</p> <p>"My mother taught me, and I also learned from my neighbors when we were young."</p>	<p>New uses for Talli</p> <p>"We've even modernized how we use Talli—adding it to notebooks, belts, and more."</p>	<p>Social gatherings</p> <p>"In 2002, we were part of a women's association, and Sheikh Fatima encouraged us to gather and work on various crafts. Some made traditional desserts like luqaimat and khabees, while others focused on their crafts."</p>	<p>Dependence on Kajouja</p> <p>"No, Talli cannot be made without the Kajouja. Other crafts like Al Sadu can be done by hand, but Talli specifically requires the Kajouja."</p>	<p>Traditional tools</p> <p>"The Kajouja is the same as before, made of metal."</p>
<p>Responsibility of youth</p> <p>"Sheikh Zayed, may God rest his soul, said, 'Those who have no past have no present.' This past is our responsibility to preserve."</p>	<p>Blending traditional and modern</p> <p>"For example, we mix new thread colors with red, beige, and black to modernize Talli. We've even combined Talli with other crafts like Khoos."</p>	<p>Supportive networks</p> <p>"My sisters—in-law, daughters, and I would prepare Talli threads, while others wove Khoos or crafted other traditional items."</p>	<p>Changes in materials</p> <p>"Today, you'll find all colors because of nylon, the spools have changed too, they used to only come in wood now they are made from plastic."</p>	<p>Modern threads</p> <p>"The Talli technique itself hasn't changed—it's the materials and colors that are different."</p>
<p>Storytelling and traditions</p> <p>"In the past, storytelling and Talli were deeply intertwined. Women who worked on Talli, Al Burqa or Khoos weaving would gather together from 8 AM to 10 AM, sitting with their coffee and sharing stories."</p>	<p>Adapting techniques</p> <p>"We've adapted the craft to include new elements."</p>	<p>Shared learning</p> <p>"We would take our Kajouja and sit next to an older woman who taught us."</p>	<p>Time-consuming process</p> <p>"We started, made mistakes, and kept correcting them until we perfected it. First, you don't understand right away; you make mistakes and learn by fixing them."</p>	<p>Number of threads used</p> <p>"It can go up to 40 or even 60 threads, depending on the design."</p>
<p>Generational knowledge</p> <p>"Our parents passed on these skills, and we were self-sufficient, learning all these crafts from a young age."</p>	<p>Potential Kajouja redesign</p> <p>"I wouldn't change much except for adding practical features like storage space underneath for threads and pins."</p>	<p>Intergenerational ties</p> <p>"We would gather palm fronds and visit an elder lady who would guide us."</p>	<p>Balancing tradition and modernity</p> <p>"We've adapted the craft to include new elements."</p>	<p>Kajouja manufacturing</p> <p>"The Kajouja is made locally, often by welders and blacksmiths in Dubai. The cushion, however, is handmade at home usually, and the threads are sourced individually."</p>
<p>Skills and identity</p> <p>"These traditions shaped us. I hope the future generations will embrace these crafts and skills, as they are an essential part of our heritage and identity."</p>	<p>Thread material changes</p> <p>"The original threads used to be silver, but now they're nylon. Colors have expanded too; in the past, we mostly had white and silver threads."</p>	<p>Teaching skills</p> <p>"We teach Talli, Khoos, and all the skills we have, fulfilling whatever is needed of us."</p>	<p>Limited awareness</p> <p>"People must preserve heritage, learn Talli, learn Khoos—learn everything. You never know when these skills might be needed."</p>	<p>Kajouja evolution</p> <p>"Could be useful, especially for keeping tools and materials organized."</p>

The Talli artisan interview was incredibly beneficial for my research as it provided firsthand insights into the cultural, social, and practical aspects of Talli craft. Through her statements, the craftswoman highlighted the significance of Talli's preservation as an essential component of Emirati culture, highlighting its significance as a symbol of identity and tradition alongside to its craft value. The craft's cultural and social relevance was emphasized by her insights on how Talli was traditionally passed down through the generations and how it promoted connections between communities.

A key takeaway was her acknowledgment of challenges in engaging younger generations, despite their exposure to Talli, due to the perceived disconnect with modern lifestyles. The artisan also discussed how traditional instruments like the Kajouja, which have not changed are essential to Talli-making. The insight proved to be crucial as it allowed opportunities for innovation, especially in the redesign of the Kajouja to preserve its traditional qualities while making it more appealing and accessible for modern users.

The interview also revealed that the craft has experienced some changes due to the advent of contemporary materials and new uses, but it has remained rooted in its traditional technique. This harmony between tradition and modernity reaffirmed the importance of intentional efforts to guarantee Talli's relevance in modern Emirati society. The conversation gave me valuable guidance for my future research steps, which include looking into possible Kajouja redesigns and creating strategies for engaging younger generations in maintaining this intricate craft.



Sara Al Mansoori - Emirati Artist Interview Analysis

Cultural Preservation	Innovation	Challenges in Craft Revitalization	Engaging the Younger Generation	Support and Opportunities
<p>Importance of Talli</p> <p>"It is so important because this is our heritage and talli is something that has to be taught and it takes a really long time to produce."</p>	<p>Modernizing the craft</p> <p>"There are some things you can change and advance like the Kajouja but the Talli, Khoos, and threads should remain as it is authentic to the culture."</p>	<p>Production difficulties</p> <p>"Nothing works from the first time usually, and there is a lot of measurements, especially for installations."</p>	<p>Lack of awareness</p> <p>"I think they are unaware of it, most of them know that Talli is used to adorn a women's dress, but I don't think they've been exposed to the thought that they can work with Talli."</p>	<p>Institutional support</p> <p>"There are many institutions you can contact... Irthi in Sharjah, House of Artisans in Abu Dhabi, and Al Ghadeer."</p>
<p>Role in Emirati identity</p> <p>"It requires patience and skill so it is important to keep passing it down through generations."</p>	<p>Combining old with new</p> <p>"I see a light fixture with Khoos weaving on it, that would grab my attention because it's something that combines the old with the new."</p>	<p>Permit and logistical issues</p> <p>"Some projects require lots of permits, so waiting to get those can be difficult at times."</p>	<p>Suggestions for a starter kit</p> <p>"Make a mini version of the Kajouja as a starter kit so that it's less intimidating to learn."</p>	<p>Networking opportunities</p> <p>"I have an amazing opportunity for you... it's a textile installation that features many different Emirati crafts."</p>
<p>Encouragement to preserve culture</p> <p>"I love what you are doing and I am so happy that you are doing something linked to culture and preserving it because it is something so important."</p>	<p>Balancing tradition with modernization</p> <p>"You need to look at your work yourself and take a step back, observe what you have made, and see if it reflects your culture."</p>	<p>Material durability challenges</p> <p>"For my last project, I used 3D printing for some elements, and it looked great for about a week, but then it started to break."</p>	<p>Making crafts relatable</p> <p>"A great way to engage the younger generation is by using something that resonates with them and combining it with culture to make it interesting."</p>	<p>Recommendations for outreach</p> <p>"I really recommend that you start an Instagram page and start adding your work... you will get opportunities through the platform."</p>



The interview with Sara Al Mansoori provided valuable insights that enriched the research direction. She highlighted the cultural significance of Talli, emphasizing its role as a symbol of Emirati heritage that requires patience, skill, and the preservation of generational knowledge. This reinforces the importance of incorporating heritage education into initiatives aimed at revitalizing the craft for modern audiences.

Sara identified key challenges in promoting Talli, such as production difficulties, material durability, and logistical hurdles. These insights stressed the need for thoughtful innovation that preserves cultural integrity while addressing practical concerns. Additionally, she noted a lack of awareness among younger Emirati women, many of whom associate Talli solely with garments and remain unaware of its broader applications. This emphasized the need for creative outreach and modern adaptations, such as integrating traditional elements into contemporary products that resonate with younger audiences.

The interview also highlighted the importance of institutional support, with suggestions for collaborating with organizations like Irthi, House of Artisans, and Al Ghadeer to enhance preservation efforts. Sara's recommendations reinforced the necessity of partnerships and platforms that facilitate the transmission and celebration of traditional crafts. Overall, the interview offered actionable insights into the challenges, opportunities, and strategies for revitalizing Talli, contributing to both the conceptual framework and practical approaches of the research.

Talli Workshop

Female Emiratis

I conducted a Talli workshop with 6 Emirati women aged between 16 and 30, which lasted approximately three hours. Each participant was provided with a Kajouja setup and an informational card outlining step-by-step instructions for creating the Talli weave. Observations showed that participants took around 30 to 45 minutes to grasp the technique and perform the weave continuously. However, the shiny thread (Khoos) posed a challenge, as it was prone to flipping, leading to some imperfections in their weaves. Despite this, the participants expressed enjoyment and gained a new learning experience, as none of them had tried Talli before, though they had a general understanding of its cultural significance.



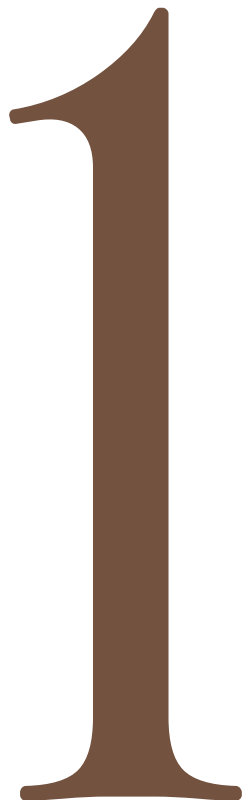
(Image by author)



(Image by author)

Interestingly, the most engaged participants were the youngest (16 years old) and the oldest (30 years old), while two participants aged 17 and 18 took multiple breaks, highlighting diverse levels of engagement within the group. By the end of the workshop, four participants requested information on where to purchase a Kajouja and threads, reflecting their interest in continuing the craft independently. Moreover, the participants shared the workshop on social media, and I was informed that their friends expressed interest in learning Talli and acquiring the necessary tools.

This experience demonstrated that younger generations, when provided with accessible opportunities and resources, show a strong willingness to engage with Talli. The workshop highlighted the importance of addressing barriers such as access to materials and knowledge while affirming that interest in preserving this traditional craft remains alive among Emirati youth.





(Images by author)



Workshop Results



Talli Workshop

International Students

The modern Talli workshop, designed to simplify the craft by using larger yarns and ropes, provided significant insights into the learning process and engagement with Talli. The workshop hosted 14 participants from six different nationalities, all of whom were new to Talli. Despite their lack of prior experience, all participants successfully learned the weaving technique through the step-by-step paper instructions I provided, with some requiring minimal guidance at certain stages. The effectiveness of the instructional material demonstrated the importance of clear, well-structured resources in facilitating the learning process.

One key observation was the impact of using larger threads on the participants' ability to learn. Compared to traditional thin Talli threads, the larger threads enabled participants to master the craft much faster, with most completing their first Talli weave in just 20 minutes. This faster learning curve provided a sense of achievement and immediate gratification, which can be a motivating factor for beginners. In contrast, traditional Talli threads are more intricate and time-consuming, often taking hours to achieve a small section of weaving. This finding suggests that starting with larger threads could be an effective introductory method before transitioning to the traditional technique, reducing initial frustration and increasing accessibility.



(Image by author)



(Image by author)

Participants also shared overwhelmingly positive feedback, with many describing the process as therapeutic and an escape from their work routines. This shows Talli's potential as a mindfulness activity, combining cultural engagement with mental well-being. The enthusiasm of participants was further evident as many documented the experience by taking photos and sharing them on social media, amplifying the craft's visibility and sparking interest beyond the workshop.

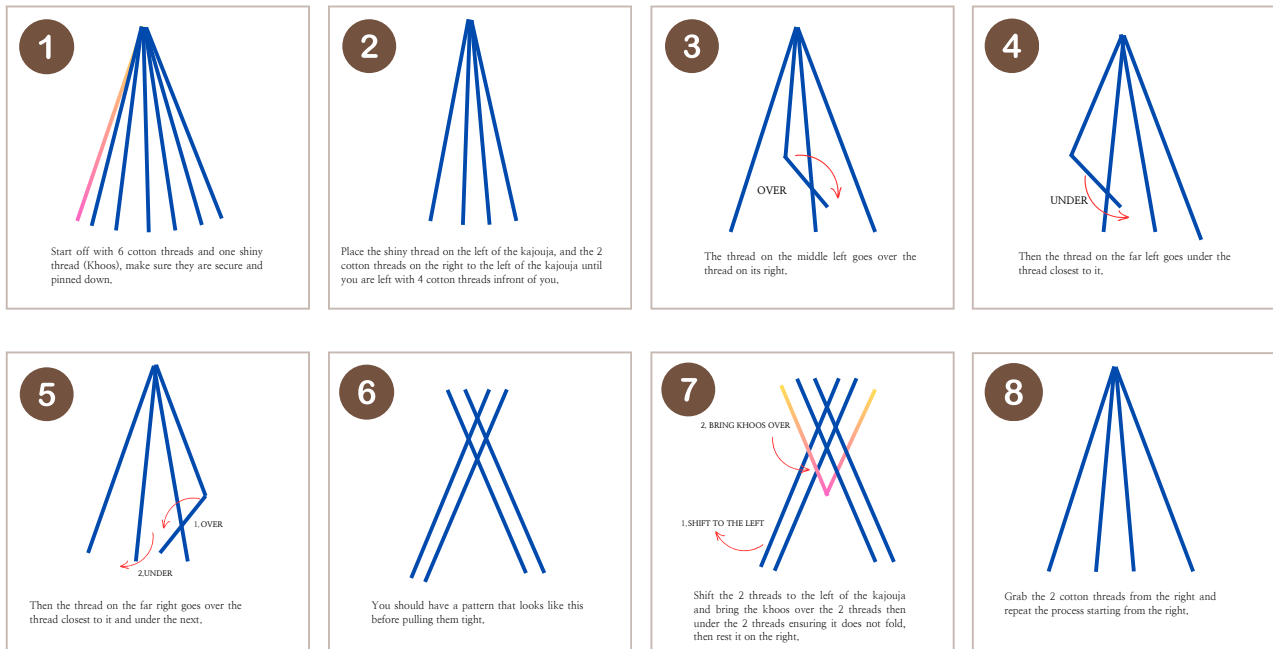
Additionally, several participants expressed a desire to keep their completed pieces, indicating a sense of personal attachment and pride in their creations. While the pieces were retained for research purposes, this interest highlights the potential for creating workshops where participants can take home their work, further reinforcing their connection to the craft. Overall, this workshop demonstrated the value of modernizing Talli techniques to make them more approachable and engaging, while also providing a pathway to preserving and promoting the traditional craft in a contemporary context.





(Images by author)

Talli Instructions Step by Step



The step-by-step guide provided during the workshops proved to be an effective and user-friendly tool for participants. Many participants were able to independently follow the instructions and successfully complete their Talli weaving with minimal assistance from me. The clear visuals and simple breakdown of the process allowed even those unfamiliar with Talli to grasp the technique quickly, building their confidence as they progressed. This guide benefits my project by demonstrating that accessible and well-designed instructional materials can lower the barriers to learning traditional crafts like Talli. Its success reinforces the potential of creating supplementary resources, such as an instructional booklet or app, that could accompany a Talli starter kit. Additionally, it validates the importance of simplifying complex processes to make them more approachable for beginners, particularly for younger generations who may lack prior exposure to the craft. The effectiveness of the guide aligns with the broader objective of preserving and revitalizing Talli by making it more accessible and engaging for new learners. It highlights the importance of leveraging visual aids and structured instructions as part of an overall strategy to modernize the craft while preserving its authenticity.





Workshop Results



Difficulty in Sourcing Talli Supplies

The search for a functional Kajouja revealed significant challenges in accessing traditional craft tools. Despite extensive efforts and hours spent in well-known craft and textile hubs like Satwa and Souq Al Ras, only decorative Kajoujas were found, with no functional options available for use. This highlights a gap in the availability of practical tools necessary for practicing Talli. A few functional Kajoujas were found at the Al Hosn Heritage Festival, but since this event only takes place once a year, it does not serve as a consistent or reliable source. After hours of searching, a functional Kajouja was eventually obtained through a personal connection facilitated by a family member. This difficulty in sourcing essential materials emphasizes the declining accessibility of traditional tools, highlighting the need to ensure they are always available so that future generations can easily engage with and learn traditional Emirati crafts like Talli.



(Image by author)



(Image by author)

Souq Al Ras

Decorative Kajoujas



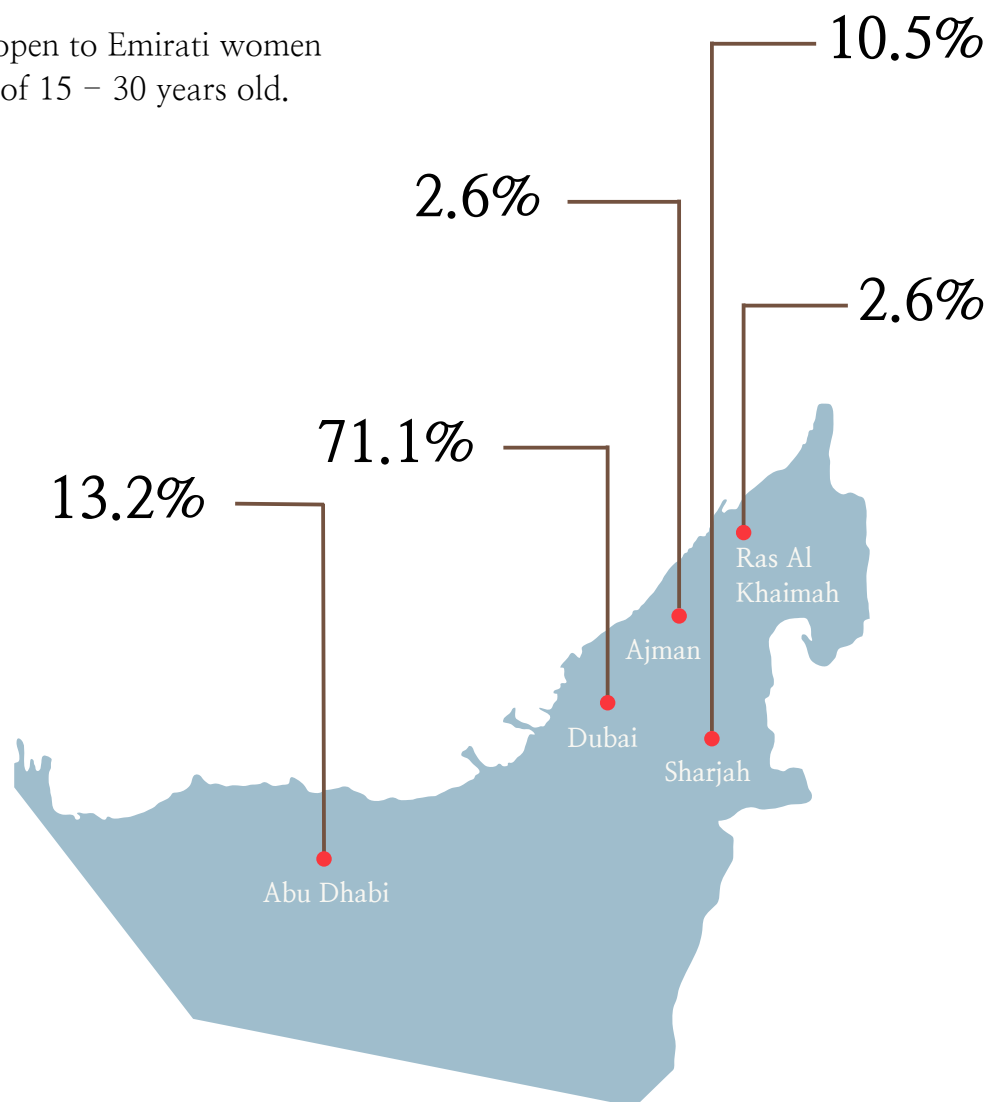
(Images by author)

Survey Analysis

Participants Demographics:

76 participants

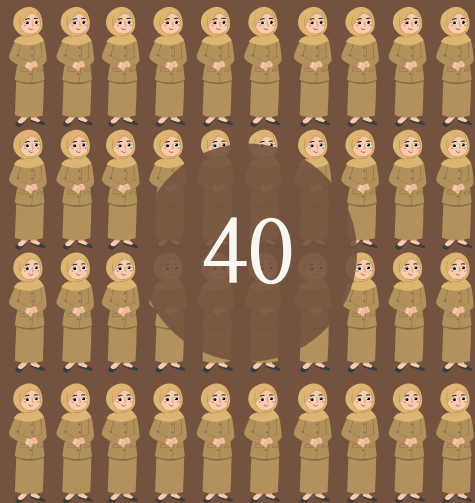
Survey was only open to Emirati women between the ages of 15 – 30 years old.



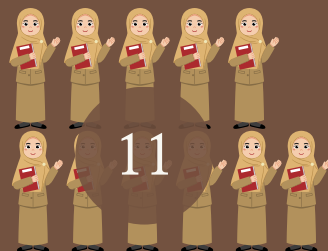
Age Demographics



15 – 18

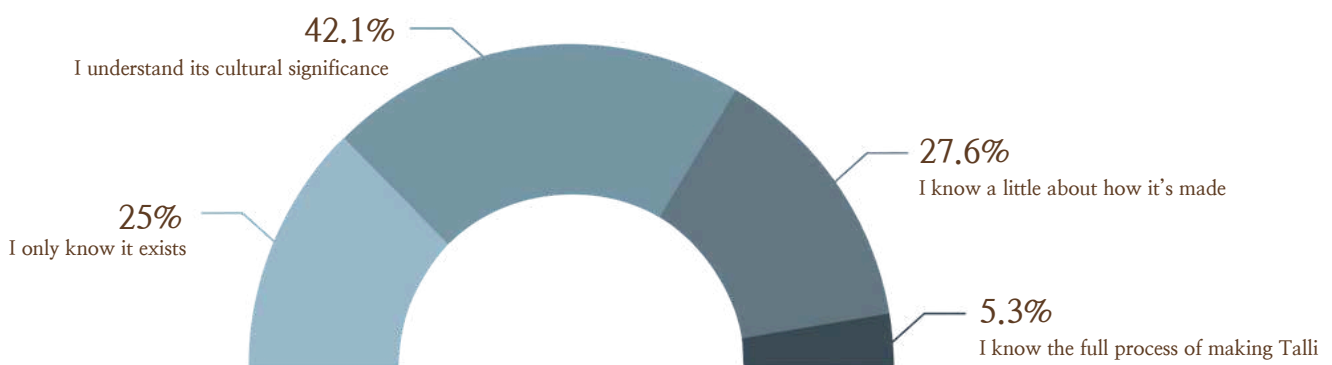


19 – 24



24 – 30

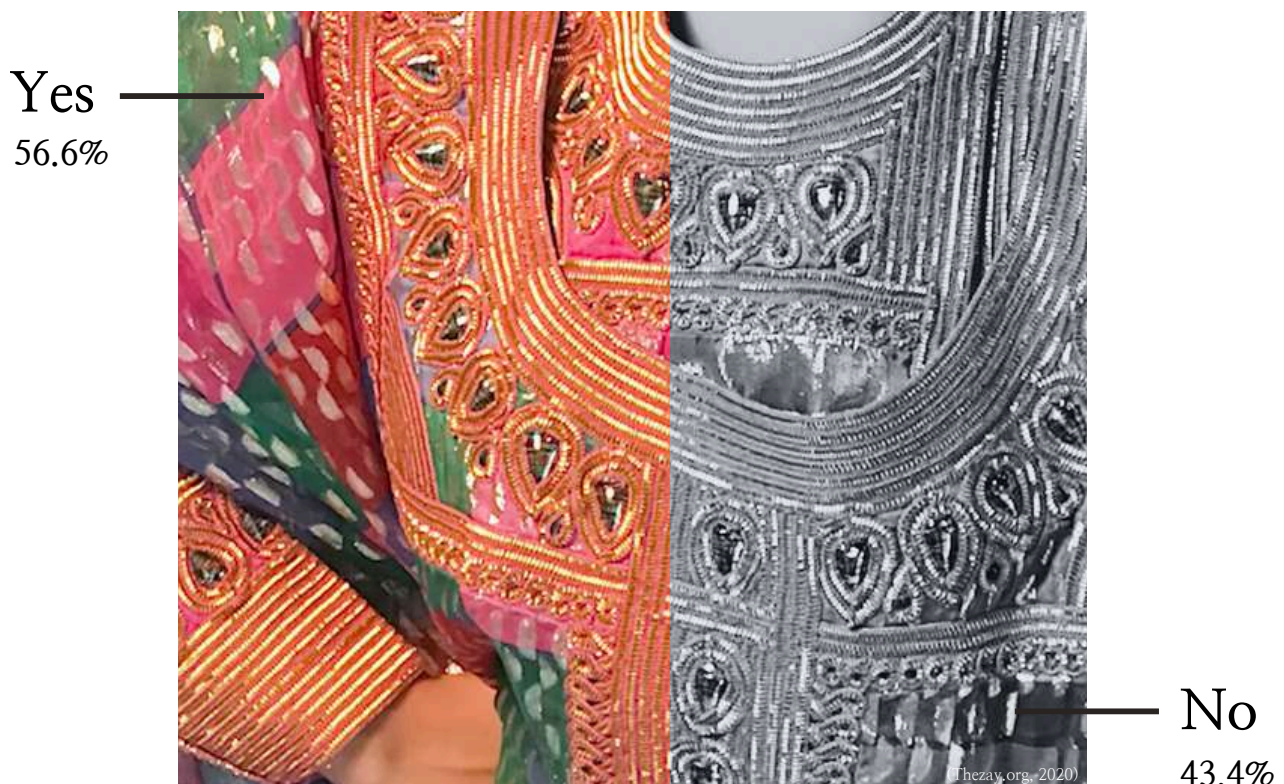
How would you describe your knowledge of Talli?



The data shows that 42.1% of Emirati women aged 15–30 understand Talli’s cultural significance, highlighting its recognition as part of UAE heritage. However, only 5.3% know the full process of making Talli, emphasizing the rarity of practical expertise. A significant portion, 27.6%, knows a little about how Talli is made, suggesting some exposure but not comprehensive knowledge. Meanwhile, 25% are aware of Talli’s existence but lack further understanding, showing a gap in deeper cultural connection. These results indicate that while Talli is recognized culturally, practical engagement and knowledge of its techniques are limited. This highlights the need for initiatives to make learning Talli more accessible and appealing to this demographic.

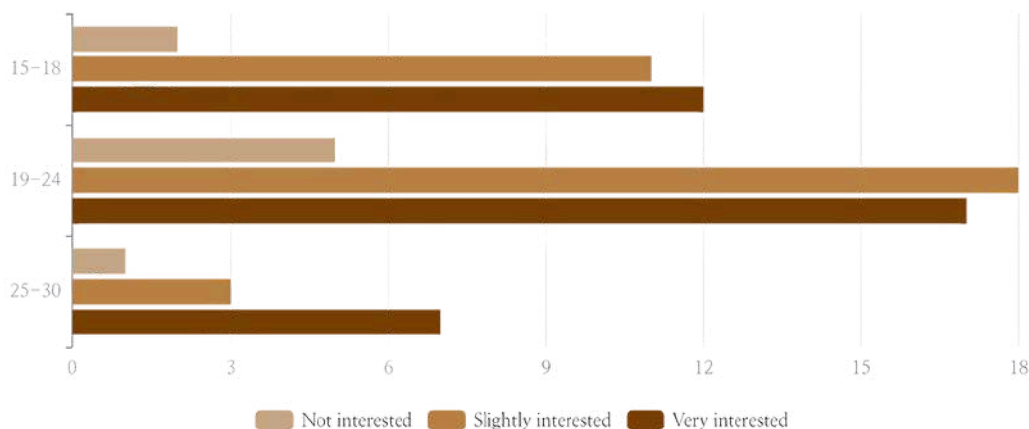
Do you own a garment embellished with Talli?

This visual demonstrates that 56.6% of the Emirati women surveyed own a garment embellished with Talli, while 43.4% do not. The majority ownership highlights Talli's presence in traditional clothing and its continued relevance in Emirati fashion. However, the significant percentage of respondents who do not own such garments suggests a gap in its integration into everyday wardrobes or a decline in its accessibility and appeal among younger generations. This could reflect a generational shift where traditional crafts are viewed more as heritage symbols than everyday fashion staples. This split suggests an opportunity to make Talli more accessible and modernized while preserving its cultural significance, ensuring it appeals to those who may not currently engage with it.



How interested are you in learning more about Talli?

The results show a promising trend, with the majority in all age groups expressing strong interest. The "Very interested" category dominates, especially in the 19–24 age group, where engagement appears to peak. This indicates a clear enthusiasm among young women for exploring and engaging with Talli. Overall, the findings highlight significant interest in Talli across all age groups, these results suggest a need for tailored initiatives to cater to the varying levels of interest and availability among different age groups, ensuring Talli's relevance and preservation in contemporary Emirati society.



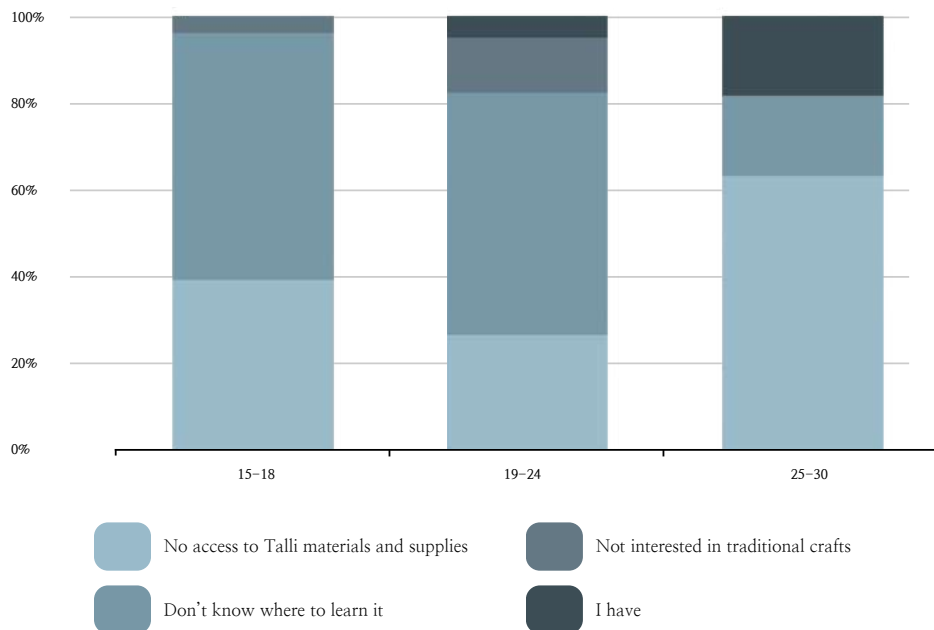
The chart demonstrates a clear interest and demand for the craft of Talli among Emirati women aged 15–30, with a significant number of participants in all age groups expressing a strong desire to learn more. The "Very interested" category dominates, particularly in the 19–24 age group, highlighting their enthusiasm for engaging with this traditional craft. Despite this evident interest, 10.5% of the participants answered "Not Interested", although the issue may lie in accessibility or a lack of knowledge rather than a lack of interest. These findings indicate that while there is a strong appreciation and curiosity for Talli, many participants may not know how or where to start. This reinforces the need for initiatives that make the craft more accessible, such as beginner workshops.

Would you consider attending a Talli workshop if it were available?



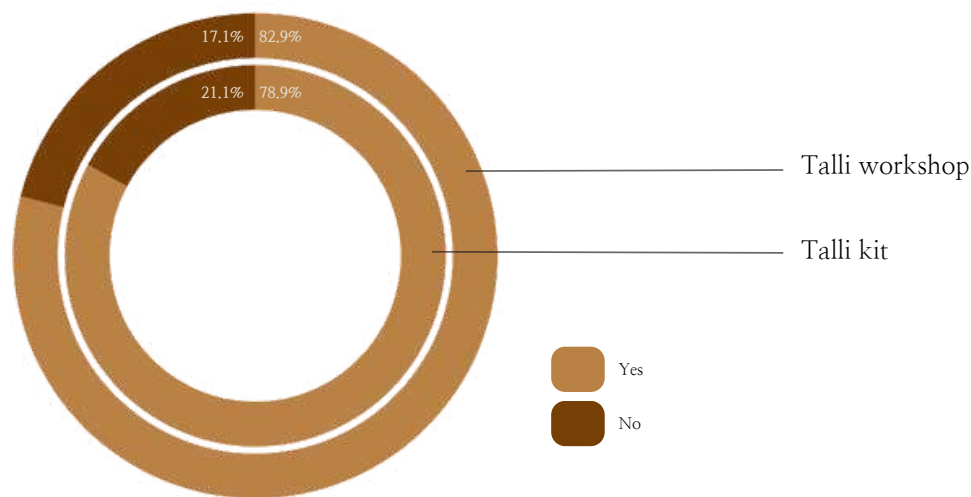
The data reflects significant interest among Emirati women in attending a Talli workshop if it were available. A substantial majority, 82.9%, expressed a willingness to participate, indicating strong enthusiasm for engaging with this traditional craft. Only 17.1% of respondents indicated that they would not attend, suggesting that the potential barriers to participation may lie in logistical factors, such as availability, awareness, or convenience, rather than a lack of interest. The overwhelmingly positive response emphasizes the importance of providing accessible and well-structured Talli workshops to meet this demand. It also aligns with previous findings that highlight a general interest in Talli and a need for opportunities to learn the craft. The data supports the idea that workshops could be an effective tool not only to revive Talli but also to foster cultural appreciation and participation among younger generations.

What are the main reasons you haven't engaged with Talli before?



The data illustrates the main reasons Emirati women aged 15 – 30 have not engaged with Talli. The data reveals that the most prominent barriers vary slightly between age groups but are primarily centered around accessibility and awareness. For the 15 – 18 age group, the leading reasons are "No access to Talli materials and supplies" and "Don't know where to learn it," suggesting that logistical issues are a major deterrent for this younger demographic. This indicates a clear need for workshops and material kits to make Talli more accessible to this group. The 19 – 24 age group shows similar trends, with "Don't know where to learn it" being slightly more prominent. This highlights a lack of resources or communication about where they can engage with Talli. In the 25 – 30 age group, there is a notable increase in individuals who have already engaged with Talli, showing a higher connection to the craft in this older segment. However, "No access to materials and supplies" remains a significant barrier even for this group. Overall, while interest may exist across all age groups, accessibility and a lack of knowledge about learning opportunities are the primary challenges.

If a “Talli kit” was available to purchase would you consider buying it?



The chart highlights the comparative interest in two distinct approaches for engaging with Talli, attending a workshop and purchasing a Talli kit. The outer circle reveals that 82.9% of respondents expressed a willingness to attend a Talli workshop if it were available. This overwhelming majority demonstrates a strong interest in hands-on, guided learning experiences. Workshops likely appeal to those who value social interaction. The inner circle shows that 78.9% of respondents would consider purchasing a Talli kit. Although slightly less than the workshop preference, this still indicates a significant demand for an accessible and flexible way to learn the craft independently. The Talli kit allows individuals to explore and practice Talli at their own pace, making it an attractive option for those with busy schedules or a preference for self-directed learning. The close percentages between the two options suggest that both formats are effective ways to promote Talli. Workshops provide communal engagement, while the kits cater to those who prefer learning on their own. The 17.1% and 21.1% of respondents who are not interested in workshops or kits may reflect barriers such as limited awareness, access, or interest in traditional crafts. Overall, the data indicates that Talli has the potential to be revitalized through dual approaches.

Any additional comments or suggestions on how Talli can be preserved and modernized for younger generations?

The responses highlight several key approaches to preserving and modernizing Talli for younger generations. Many participants emphasized integrating Talli into educational settings, such as schools, to teach it as part of art or design curriculums. Leveraging technology, like creating tutorials, videos, or apps, was also suggested to make learning Talli more accessible and engaging for youth. Accessibility to materials and supplies participants suggested easier access to tools through kits. Incorporating Talli into modern fashion, such as trendy jalabiyas or contemporary products, was frequently mentioned, reflecting the need to blend tradition with modern design. Workshops and interactive events were seen as effective ways to engage and educate, creating a sense of community while teaching the craft. Overall, these suggestions provide practical ways to make Talli relevant and appealing to younger Emirati generations.

More workshops on how to teach the younger generation about talli and how to make it

More fun interactive workshops and modern designs

It can be added in trendy events and popups that younger people go to

If it was being spoken about through school and education

If school involved traditional things more

Mixing it with modern trends to engage current generations

make the supplies easy to find

make videos to access online that explain how to do it

Promote it on social media more

Make it easy to find

It can be preserved by including it more into educational workshops or events such as how the sadu and the khoos is being celebrated and revived in multiple ways like in exhibitions and etc

make modern version of a talli thoub

Teach traditional crafts in school

It can be incorporated in jalabyas made by popular jalabya brands that are trending among the youth

brands can modernize it and use it for their products

An app that has tutorials

Digitally

Get their interest through places they go and content they consume so they can be exposed to their culture

Make it modern for kids to enjoy

Explain its cultural significance

To preserve and modernize Talli, create digital content highlighting its cultural significance, introduce modern designs to appeal to younger tastes, and integrate it into contemporary events and lifestyles.

Taught in school

Talli workshops

Definitely introducing it more within art or design in schools, we always see it being done but never get the chance to participate and learn young.

Incorporate it more in daily life

Create easy to follow tutorials

Offer more classes that help younger generations stay in touch with our culture & heritage

Maybe more exposure of its craft through workshops

Make the kit available in malls

Including it in more modernized ways yet still preserving its significance and history

Introducing a gamified aspect, like tutorials on how to use talli to make clothes for your Barbie doll.

More awareness

Through the use of workshops, the use of social media and integrating it into modern fashion

make supplies more accessible

As a kid, I was obsessed with making bead bracelets and stitching. I think a Talli kit would be a fantastic idea, offering a fun learning experience for both kids and adults.

Prototyping & Material Research

This section documents the prototyping development phase of the project, where ideas were generated through sketching, 3D modeling, physical prototypes and material exploration. Prototyping served as a critical tool to test functionality, scale, ergonomics, and user interaction, while material research focused on sourcing sustainable, locally relevant options that align with the cultural and environmental values of the project.



Talli Supplies



Pillow



Kajouja (stand)



Scissors



10 cotton threads



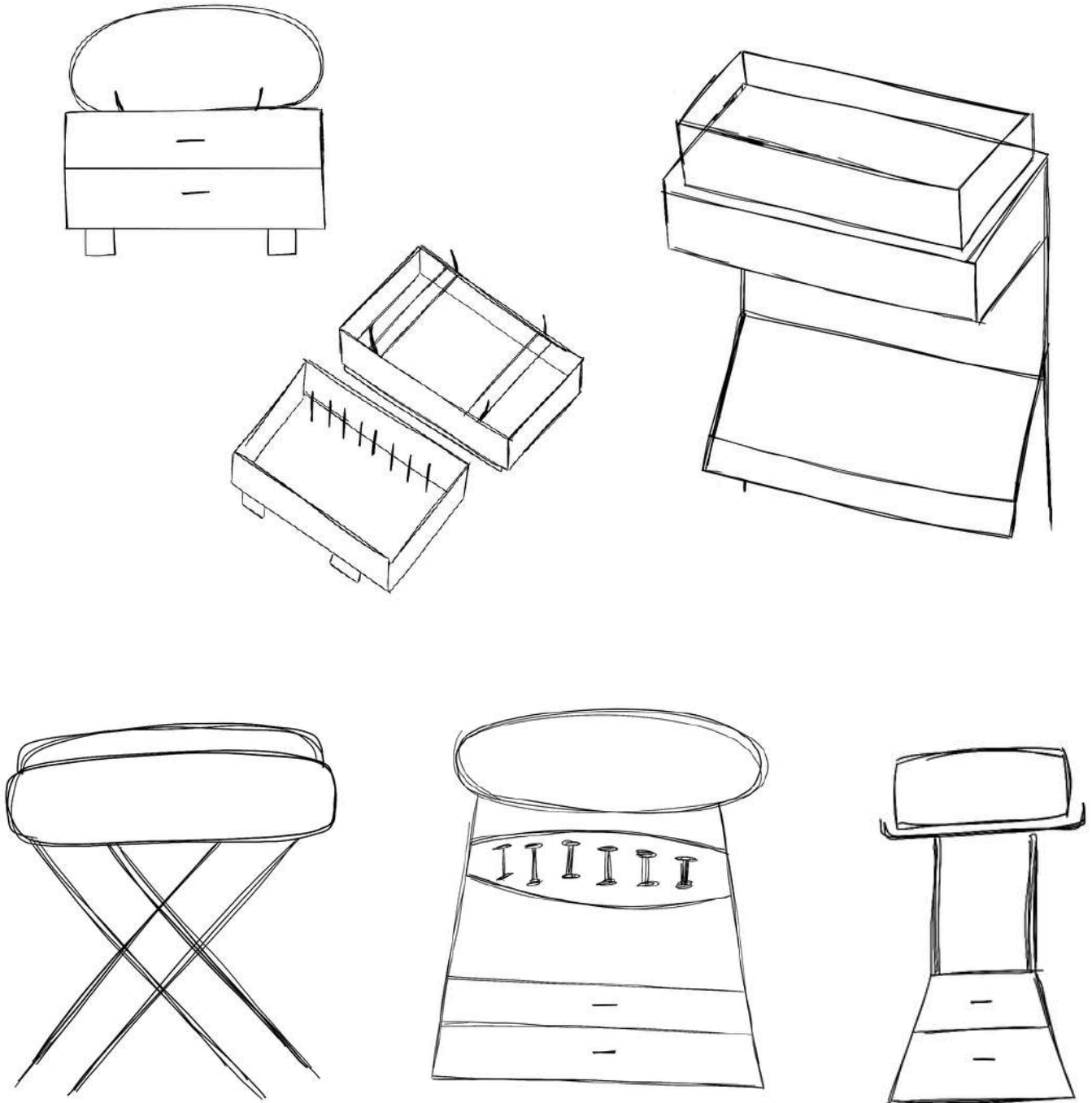
Pins



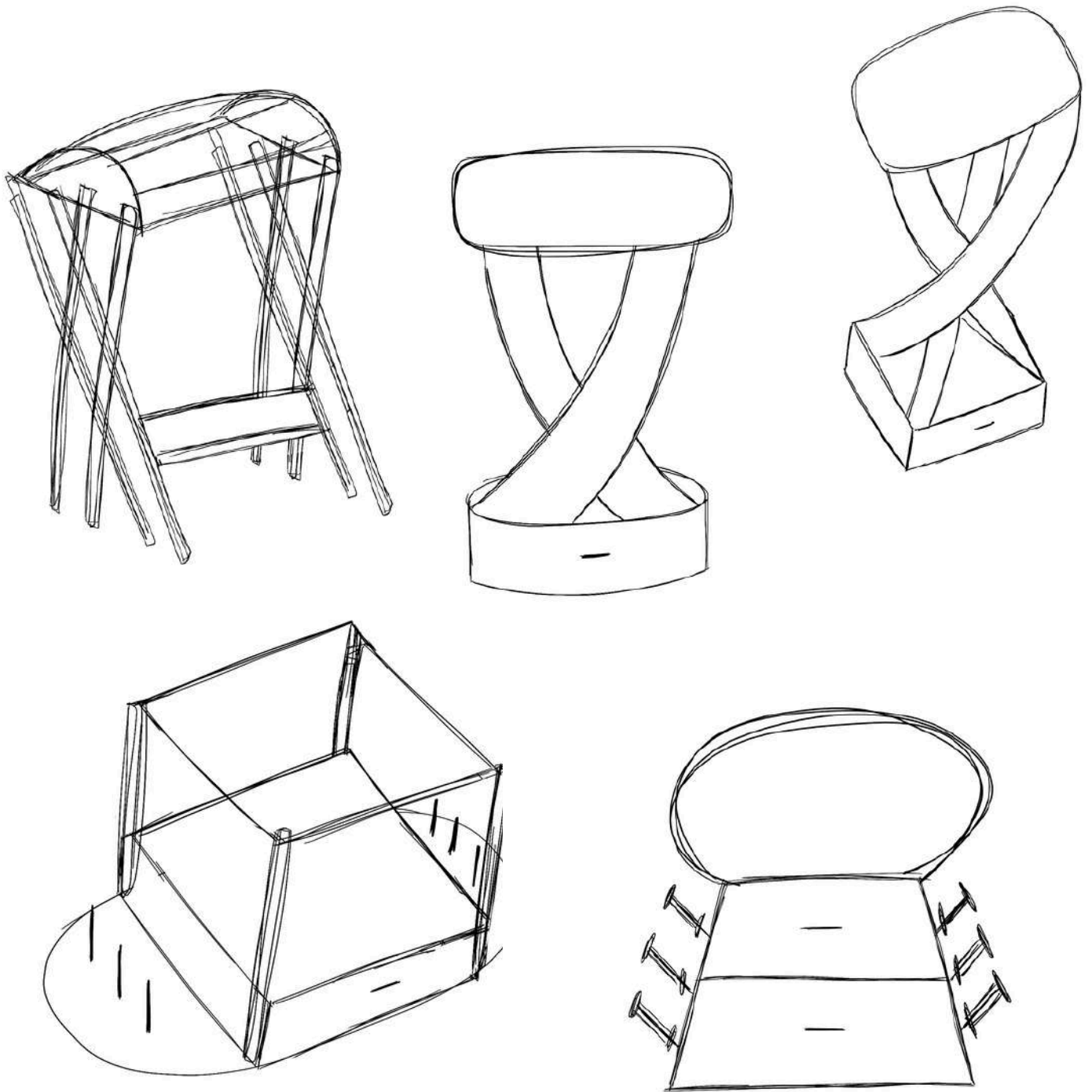
Elastic



6 spools + 1 spool Shiny thread



Initial Sketches



The initial sketches for the modernized Kajuja focus on integrating storage space, aesthetics, and practicality to enhance its functionality while maintaining its cultural essence. Traditional Kajujas have remained unchanged for generations, with a simple metal base and a cushioned top. This redesigned version aims to address convenience and accessibility by incorporating built-in compartments for storing threads, spools, and tools, ensuring that everything needed for Talli weaving is within reach. The design also considers ergonomics and portability, making it easier to transport and store. While preserving the heritage and craftsmanship of the original Kajuja, this updated version introduces modern materials and thoughtful design elements to encourage engagement with Talli in a more sustainable and user-friendly way.



Spool storage area

Magnetic pins holder

Drawer

MDF
PROTOTYPE

1



(Images by author)

MDF prototype 1 presents a modernized Kajouja design, integrating functionality and organization to enhance the Talli-making experience. The design includes a spool storage area for easy access to threads, a magnetic pin holder to keep essential tools in place, and a drawer for additional storage, ensuring that all necessary materials are neatly contained.



———— Spool storage area

———— Magnetic pins holder

———— Drawer

MDF PROTOTYPE

2



(Images by author)

MDF prototype 2 builds upon the design of Prototype 1, maintaining key features such as the spool storage area, magnetic pin holder, and drawer while introducing structural modifications. The open-frame design enhances accessibility, making it easier to reach tools and materials. Additionally, the rounded base provides more stability, and external peg holders offer easier access to spools. These refinements aim to improve practicality and user convenience.



—— Round pillow

—— Talli weave inspired design

—— Spool storage area

MDF
PROTOTYPE

3



(Images by author)

MDF prototype 3 takes a more aesthetic and culturally inspired approach, incorporating a Talli weave-inspired design into its structure. While it enhances cultural relevance and visual appeal, it lacks the extensive storage features seen in the previous prototypes.



————— Double pillow

————— Possible to add 2 small drawers

MDF
PROTOTYPE

4



(Images by author)

MDF prototype 4 features a compact, box-like structure with a double-pillow detail, creating a visually distinct and layered appearance. While its design is sleek and space-efficient, it lacks an open framework, which was later found to be beneficial for easier weaving—allowing threads to hang freely without obstruction. The potential addition of two small drawers provides some storage capacity, the insights gained from this prototype highlight the importance of structural openness for improved functionality in Talli weaving.



————— Square pillow

————— Spool storage area

————— Magnetic pins holder

MDF PROTOTYPE

5



(Images by author)

MDF prototype 5 features a tall, open-frame structure, allowing unobstructed thread movement and easier weaving, an improvement over more enclosed designs. The square pillow provides a stable working surface, while the spool storage area and magnetic pins holder offer functionality for organizing materials. The elevated design creates a comfortable working height, reducing strain during use. However, its taller structure may require more stability to prevent movement while weaving.

Prototype Analysis

Prototype	Storage Space	Durability	Aesthetic	Cultural Relevance	Weaving Comfort
1	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓
2	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
3	✗	✓	✓	✓	—
4	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗
5	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓

This table provides an analysis of the five MDF prototypes, evaluating key factors such as storage space, durability, aesthetics, cultural relevance, and weaving comfort.

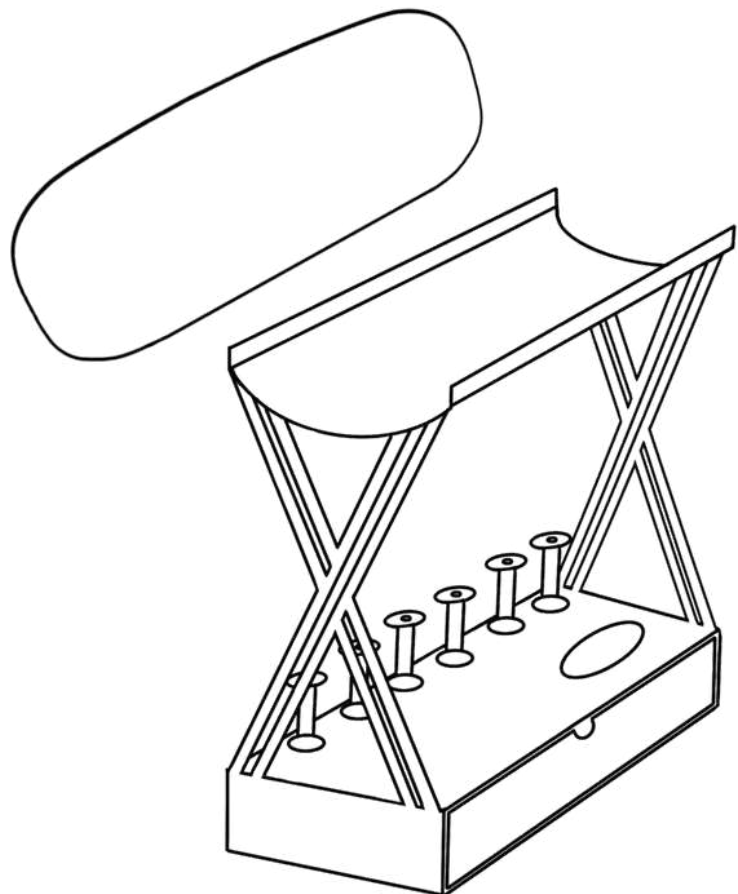
Prototypes 1 and 2 excel in storage capacity and organization, making them practical for tool management, though Prototype 1 lacks durability. Prototype 3 stands out for its cultural relevance and aesthetics, incorporating traditional weaving design elements, but it lacks storage space. Prototype 4 introduces a compact design, though the absence of an open middle section slightly restricts weaving ease. Prototype 5 effectively enhances weaving comfort with its open structure, allowing threads to hang freely, but lacks cultural references.

The findings indicate that while some designs focus on functionality and practicality, others prioritize aesthetics and cultural elements. The ideal design would combine key strengths from each prototype, balancing practical storage, durability, weaving efficiency, and cultural representation.

This final design sketch is the result of insights gained through multiple prototype iterations, each addressing different aspects of functionality, aesthetics, and cultural relevance. Through testing, key challenges such as storage limitations, weaving comfort, and structural durability were identified and refined.

The final sketch integrates storage space for spools and tools, a structurally stable base, and an open middle section to facilitate easier weaving. Inspired by traditional Talli weaving patterns, the crisscrossed frame adds both cultural significance and aesthetic appeal while ensuring stability and support. This design successfully combines the best elements of previous prototypes, creating a modern yet practical Kajouja that enhances both the usability and cultural authenticity of the Talli weaving process.

- ✓ Storage space
- ✓ Durability
- ✓ Aesthetic
- ✓ Cultural relevance
- ✓ Weaving comfort



Material Research

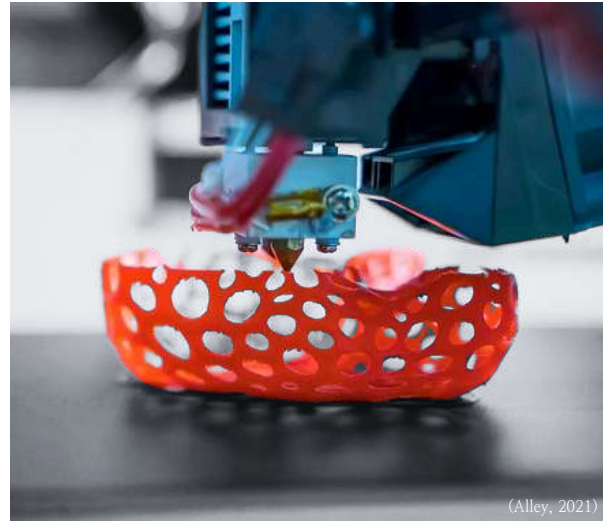
Material research played a critical role in shaping the development of the Talli Kit, as the project aimed to align both concept and construction with the values of sustainability, cultural relevance, and local identity. In choosing materials, priority was given to options that are locally sourced, environmentally responsible, and connected to the UAE's natural resources. Exploring sustainable alternatives reflects the project's commitment to innovation and supports a more circular, context-aware design process.

ADRH COLLECTIVE

DATE FORM

Date Form is a sustainable solid surface material made from locally sourced date seed waste, offering an eco-friendly alternative that aligns with UAE's culture and environment. The material is customizable in thickness and size, making it adaptable for various design applications. By repurposing agricultural byproducts, it supports waste reduction while maintaining durability and aesthetic appeal.





ADDITIVE MANUFACTURING

3D PRINTING

3D printing using PLA filament offers complete design flexibility, allowing for customizable, lightweight, and cost-effective production. With a range of color options, it provides an adaptable and efficient manufacturing method, making it ideal for prototyping and personalized designs.

SUSTAINABLE
MATERIAL

PLYPALM

Plypalm is a durable and sustainable material made from local palm tree branch waste, transforming it into a solid hardwood alternative. Deeply connected to UAE culture and environment, it promotes eco-friendly design solutions while maintaining strength and longevity.



SUSTAINABLE FABRIC

PILLOW

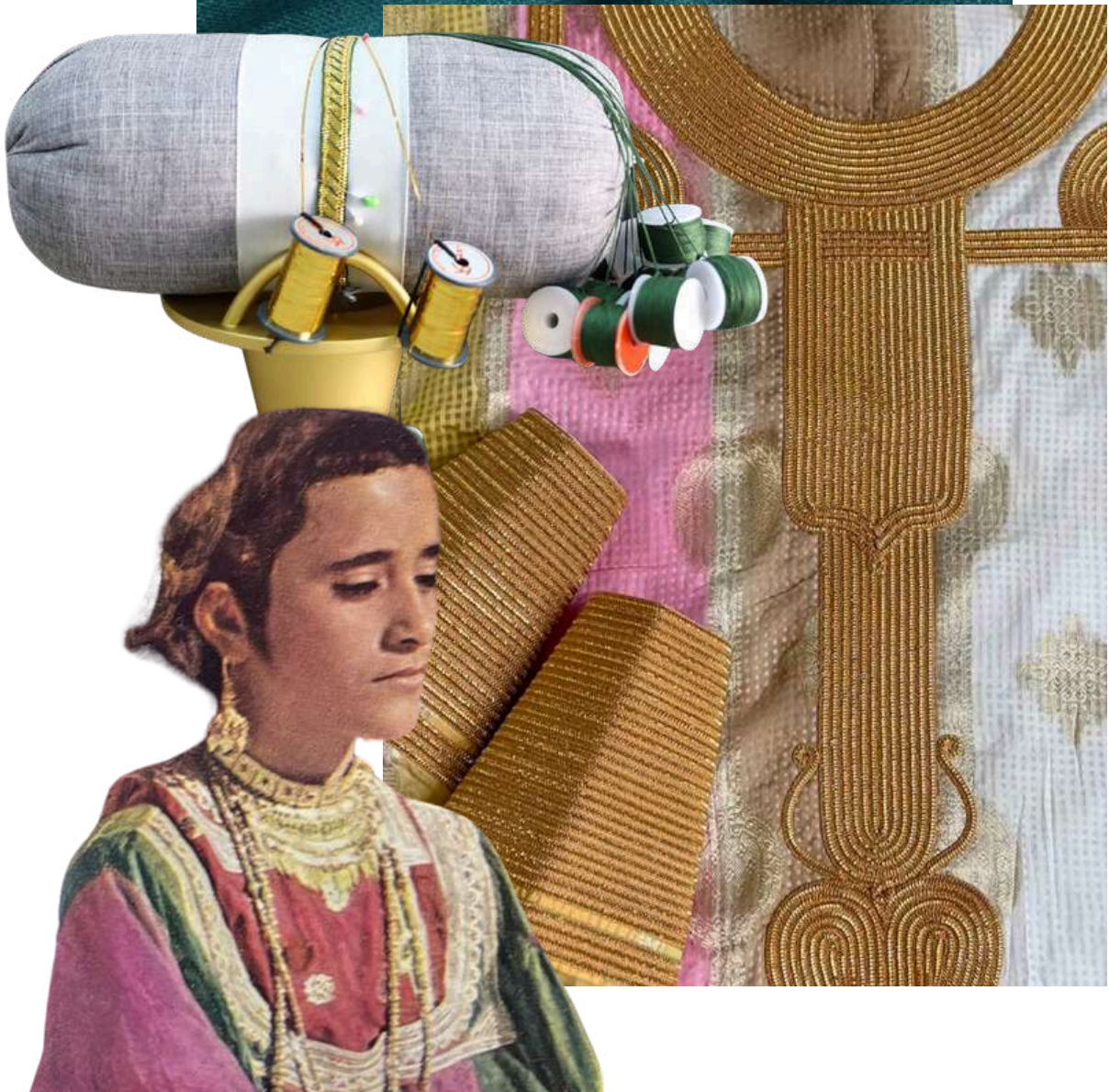
For the pillow, linen was selected as the primary fabric due to its sustainable and durable qualities. Made from flax, linen requires minimal water and little to no chemical treatments, making it an environmentally responsible material. It is also 100% natural, biodegradable, and strong, ideal for repeated use in a hands-on craft like Talli. The material will be applied to the pillow in double layers to ensure durability for long-term use.

As an alternative, 100% cotton with custom digital prints can also be used to add a unique visual element to the kit. However, care is taken to ensure that printed designs do not overpower or distract from the Talli itself, which remains the central focus of the tool and the craft experience. This thoughtful material selection supports both sustainability and the preservation of cultural tradition through design.



MOOD





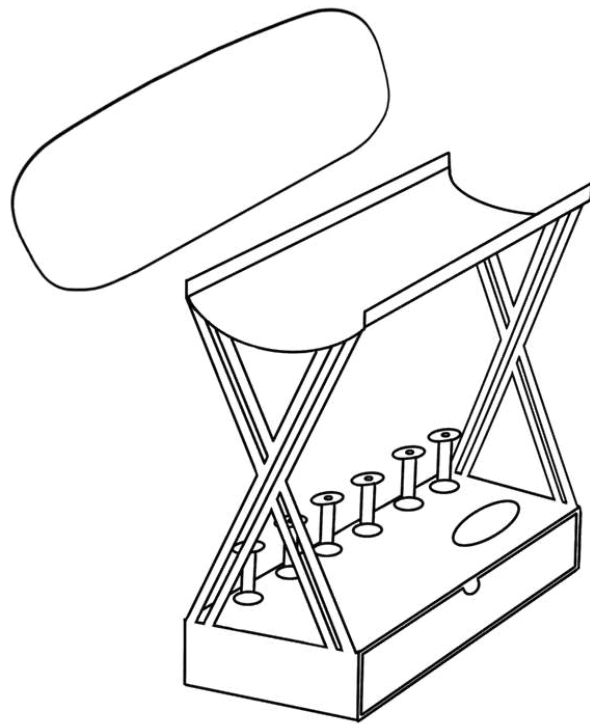
BOARD

Design Development & Branding

This section outlines the evolution of the Talli Kit's visual identity and physical design, from initial sketches to refined prototypes. Guided by user feedback and cultural context, the design development process focused on creating a tool that is both functional and symbolic, honoring the heritage of Talli while appealing to contemporary users. This includes the creation of a bilingual logo, a cohesive visual language, and thoughtful packaging and instructional materials.

6

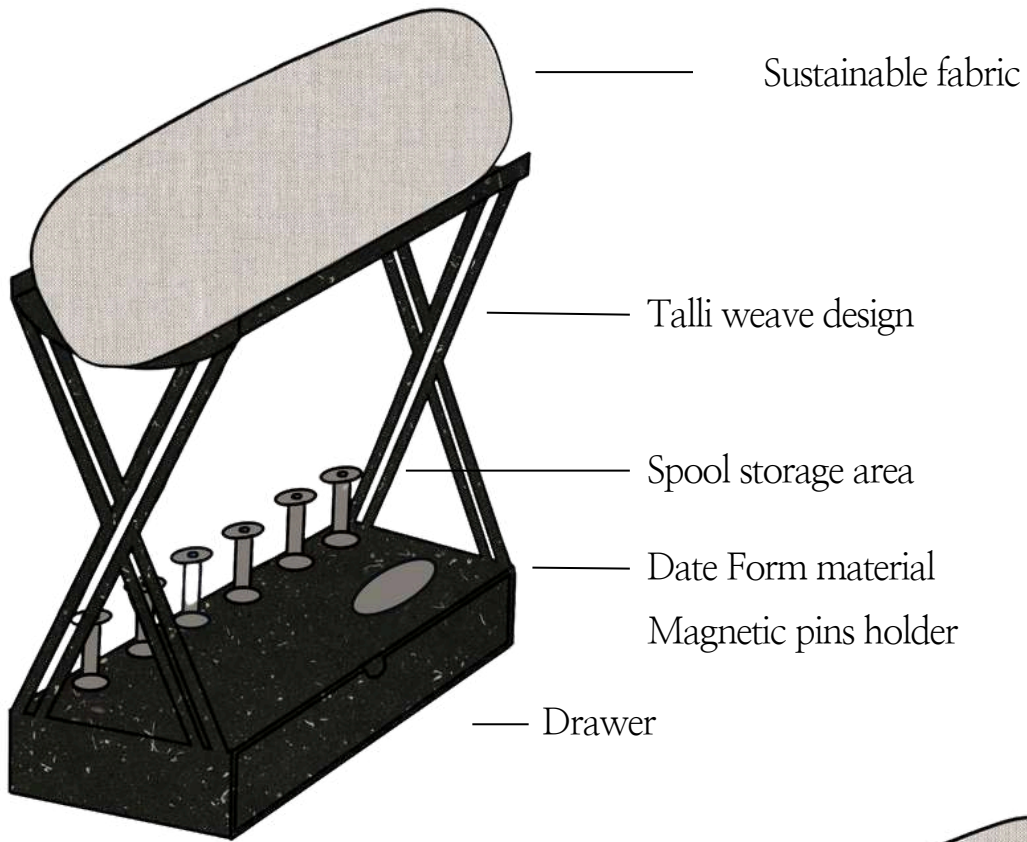
Design Iteration



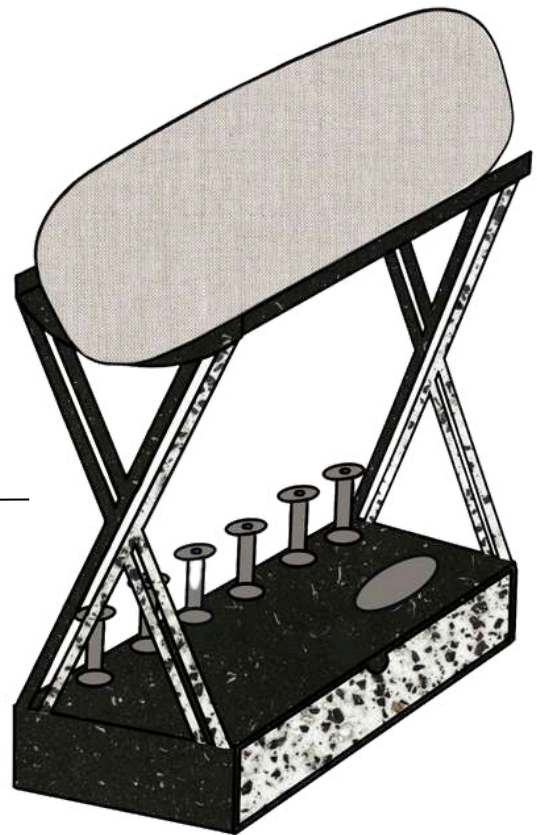
This final design integrates functionality, sustainability, and modern innovation to enhance the traditional Kajouja. It features a spool storage area and a drawer for organizing tools and materials efficiently. The structure is crafted from Date Form, a sustainable material that offers various color options, aligning with both environmental responsibility and aesthetic versatility.

Another key innovation in this design is the 3D-printed spool, which eliminates the need for traditional elastic to secure threads, ensuring a more durable and sustainable solution.

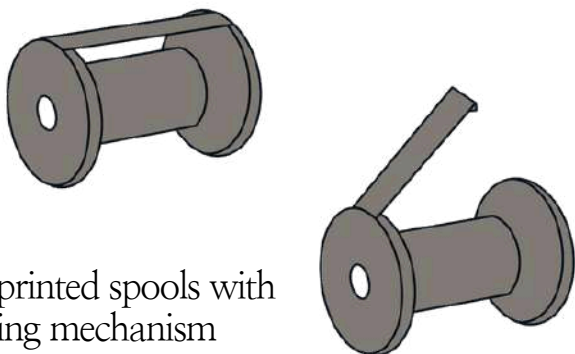
Additionally, the pillow is made from ethically sourced sustainable fabric. This design modernizes the Talli crafting experience while preserving its cultural significance.



Option to combine 2 Date form colors



3D printed spools with closing mechanism

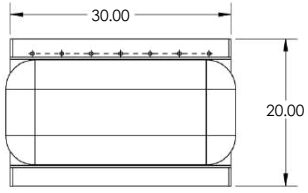


Design Iteration

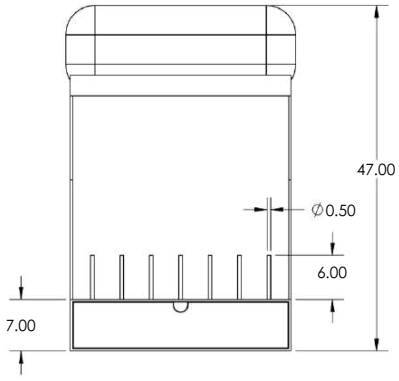


At this stage of the project, the design of the Talli Kit has been further developed and refined based on insights gathered from earlier prototyping and user feedback. Although still in progress, this iteration incorporates changes that bring the product closer to manufacturing readiness.

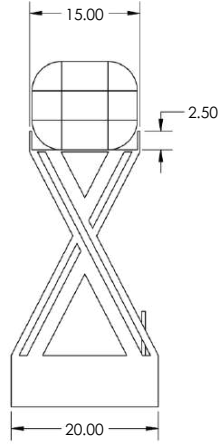
One of the key adjustments involved modifying the original design direction due to material constraints. The chosen material, DateForm, made from date seed waste is rigid and cannot be bent or curved. As a result, the initial sketch, which included more rounded features, had to be re-evaluated. The design was adapted to work within the material's structural limitations, while still maintaining its intended functionality and visual language.



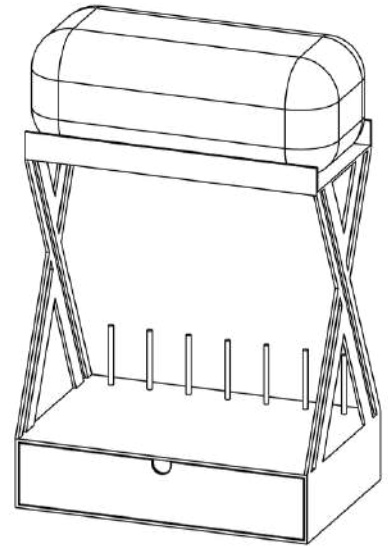
Top View



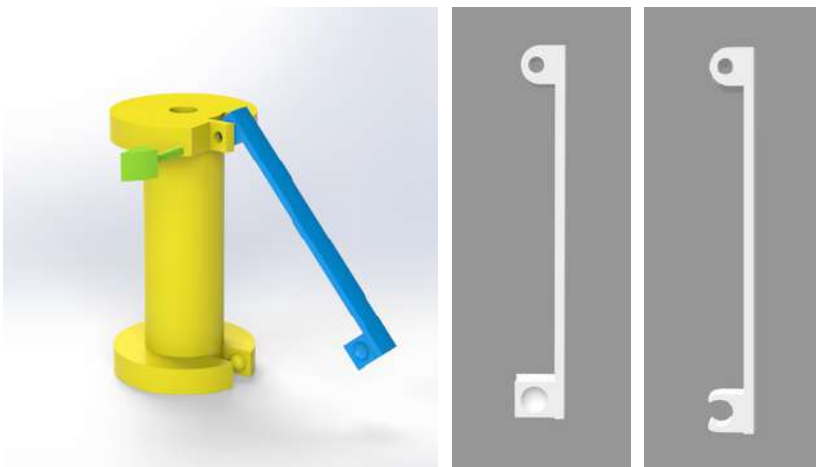
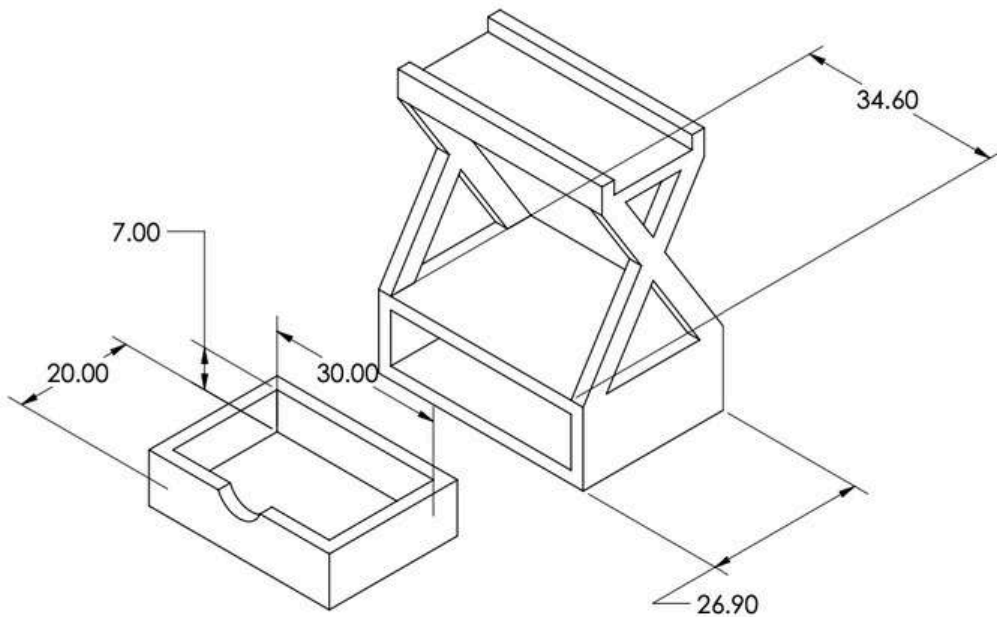
Front View



Side View



Final Manufactured Design



The initial spool design (left) featured a closing mechanism, but after 3D printing and testing, it proved difficult to open and close efficiently. Therefore, a modified version (right) with an open-end latch was developed, making the mechanism more accessible and user-friendly. This improved design was selected as the final version for the Talli Kit.

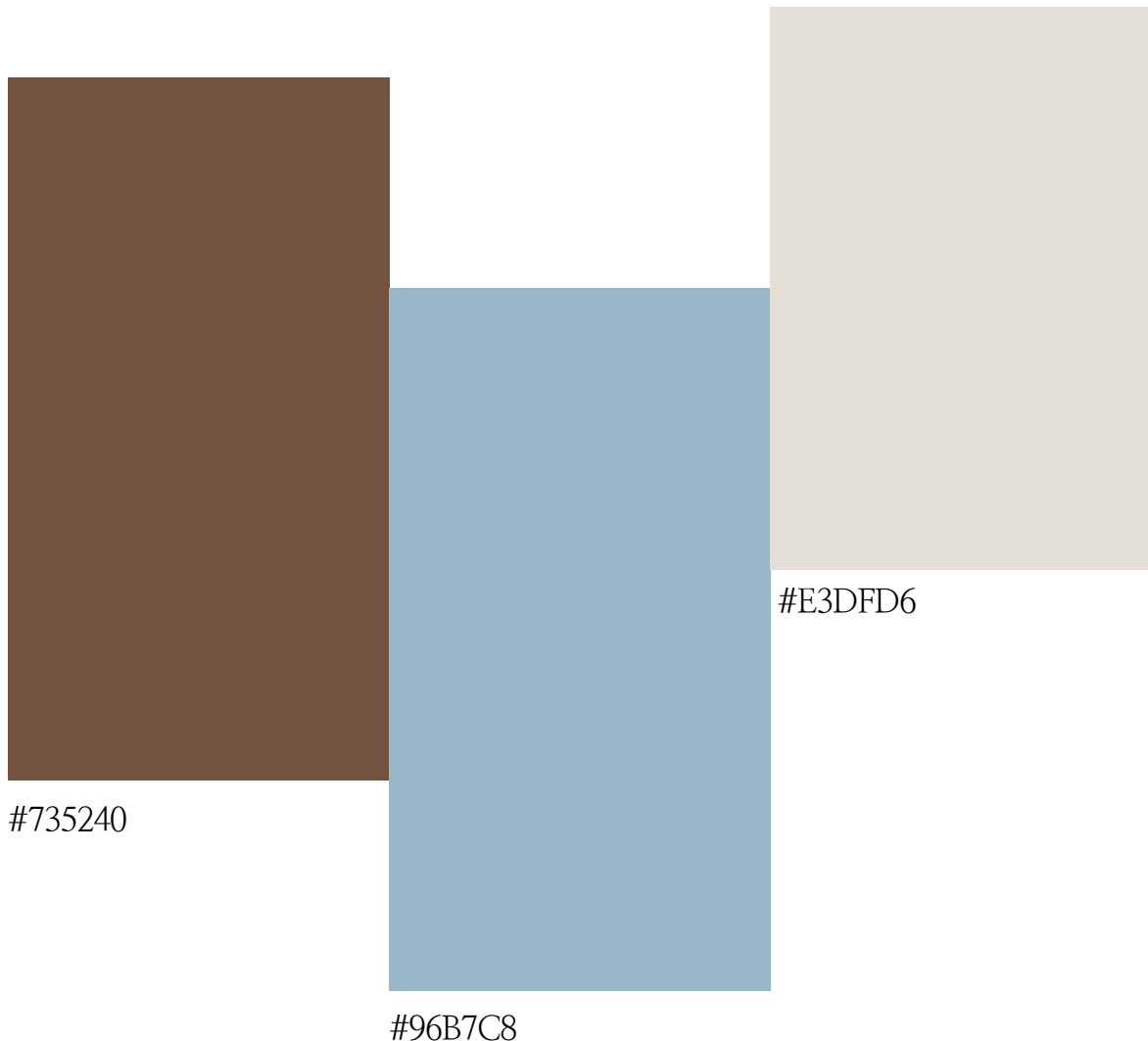


As the design progressed, a few structural modifications were made to enhance both functionality and manufacturability. The base of the Talli Kit was increased by 5 cm in width to improve overall stability during use and to accommodate a larger internal storage compartment, an essential feature identified through user research.

Material thickness was another key consideration; the original plan called for a uniform thickness, however, adjustments were made based on both the material and manufacturing feedback. While the main structure is produced using 5mm DateForm for its lightweight and sustainable qualities, the "X" side detail was reinforced to 23mm in thickness (using plywood) to provide additional structural support. This targeted increase allowed for improved durability without adding unnecessary weight to the entire product.

Additionally, the "X" design, originally more open and intricate, was simplified and closed off to remove gaps. This change was made in direct response to manufacturer recommendations, ensuring better structural integrity and more efficient fabrication. Despite the simplification, the visual language of the "X" still effectively symbolizes the interwoven nature of Talli, maintaining its cultural reference within a more practical form.

Color Palette & Logo



This color palette was carefully selected to reflect the core values of the Talli Kit: heritage, sustainability, and contemporary relevance. The deep brown evokes the richness of the date palm and the DateForm material used in the Kajouja. The soft blue introduces a sense of calm and modernity, drawing inspiration from the colorful threads of Talli while symbolizing a fresh, youthful feel. Finally, the neutral linen tone connects directly to the natural fibers used in the kit, such as the linen fabric and date seeds, reinforcing the project's commitment to sustainability. Together, these tones create a harmonious balance between past and future, allowing the craft to remain the visual focus while enhancing the users visual experience.



TALLI KIT عبده تلي



The Talli Kit logo successfully captures the essence of the project by blending cultural authenticity with modern design. It features both Arabic and English text, presented in a unified, balanced composition that reflects the project’s mission to bridge generations and make traditional Emirati crafts accessible to a wider, contemporary audience. This bilingual approach reinforces inclusivity and reflects the multicultural, forward-facing nature of the UAE today.

At the heart of the logo lies a bold, central graphic that mimics the intersecting threads of the Talli weaving process before they are pulled tight—an iconic visual cue that immediately connects the viewer to the craft. This design not only adds a dynamic, recognizable element to the logo but also symbolizes the tension, precision, and structure inherent in the Talli technique and the bold typography conveys confidence and clarity.

Talli Kit

This section provides a detailed breakdown of the Talli Kit and its individual components, reflecting the final design direction informed by extensive research, user feedback, and material exploration. Each element has been carefully considered to ensure functionality, cultural relevance, and ease of use, making the craft of Talli more accessible to both beginners and experienced artisans.



Talli Kit Components



The Talli Kit includes a set of carefully considered components designed to support beginner users in learning and practicing the traditional Emirati craft of Talli. At the core of the kit is a modernized version of the Kajouja. The stand features a built-in drawer for storing tools and threads, a linen-covered pillow that provides a smooth working surface, and a base fitted with seven spool holders for easy access and storage.

To accompany the stand, the kit includes fourteen 3D-printed spools. While the Bu Khoosa weave, taught in this kit, requires only seven spools, additional spools are provided to allow users to replace any lost or damaged pieces and to encourage exploration of more intricate patterns in the future. For practical use, the kit also contains a pair of scissors and a magnetic pin holder, which helps maintain an organized and efficient workspace by preventing pins from scattering. An instructional card is included as well, printed on sturdy card stock with English on one side and Arabic on the other. It provides clear, step-by-step guidance for creating the Bu Khoosa weave and includes a QR code linking to the Talli Kit website for additional resources and tutorials.

Kit Components:

- Modernized Kajouja stand with a drawer and spool holders
- Linen-covered pillow
- 14 3D-printed spools (filled with thread)
- Scissors
- Magnetic pin holder
- Bilingual instruction card (Arabic & English) with QR code to website



Instruction Card

The Talli Kit includes a thoughtfully designed bilingual instruction card that has been refined and improved based on feedback gathered during earlier workshops. Printed on durable, high-quality card stock, the double-sided guide features English on one side and Arabic on the other, making it accessible to a wider audience and respectful of the craft's cultural roots.

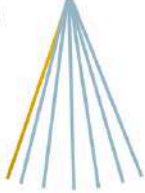
The card provides clear, step-by-step instructions on how to begin weaving Talli, using beginner-friendly language and visuals to ensure that anyone, regardless of experience, can confidently engage with the craft. The layout has been carefully structured to make the learning process enjoyable.

To further support users, a scannable QR code is included on the card, linking directly to the Talli Kit website. There, users can explore more about the history and significance of Talli, watch video tutorials, and access additional resources to help perfect their weaving technique. This integration of print and digital learning tools enhances the overall experience and allows the user to build their knowledge about Talli and Emirati culture.





1



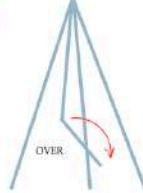
Start off with 6 cotton threads and one shiny thread (khook), make sure they are secure and pinned down.

2



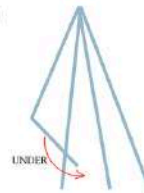
Place the shiny thread on the top left of the pillow, and place the 2 cotton threads on the right, so the top left of your pillow and you are left with 4 cotton threads in front of you.

3



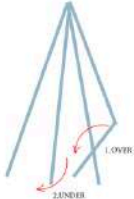
The thread on the middle left goes over the thread on its right.

4



Then the thread on the far left goes under the thread closest to it.

5



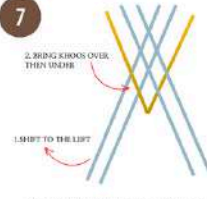
Then the thread on the far right goes over the thread closest to it and under the next.

6



You should have a pattern that looks like this before pulling them right.

7



Shift the 2 threads to the left of the pillow and bring the khook over the 2 threads then under the 2 threads ensuring it does not fold, then rest it on the right.

8



Grab the 2 cotton strands from the right and repeat the process starting from the right.

امسح للمزيد من المعلومات:



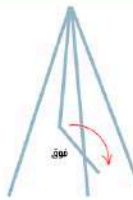
تعليمات التلي خطوة بخطوة

٤



ثم يمر الخيط في أقصى اليسار تحت الخيط المجاور له.

٣



الخيط في المنتصف من الجهة اليسرى يمر فوق الخيط المجاور له على اليمين.

٢



مع الخيط اللامع في أعلى يسار المحدة، ثم انقل خيطين من اليمين إلى أعلى يسار المحدة حتى يتبقى ٤ خيوط نظيفة أمامك.

١



ابدأ ب ٦ خيوط نظيفة وخط واحد لامع (كحوك). تأكد من تثبيتها على المحدة بشكل جيد.

٨



كرر العملية من جديد من الجهة اليمنى.

٧



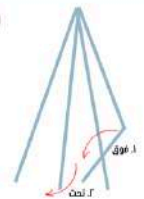
١. حرك خيطين إلى يسار المحدة.
٢. مرر الكحوك فوق الخيطين ثم تحت الخيطين التاليين ثم مرر الكحوك على اليمين.

٦



يجب أن تظهر الخيوط بهذا الشكل قبل أن تقوم بشدتها.

٥



الخيط الموجود على اليمين يمر:
١. فوق الخيط الذي بجانبه
٢. تحت الخيط التالي له.

Website



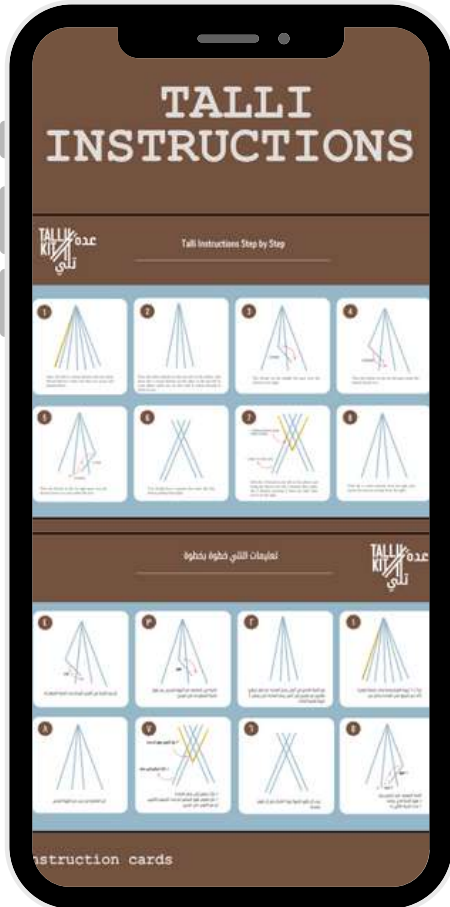
The Talli Kit includes a scannable QR code that directs users to a dedicated website designed to provide additional support and information. The landing page offers a brief overview of the Talli Kit and its purpose, serving as an accessible entry point for users of all experience levels.

The website is structured into three main sections:

About Talli – This section provides a concise introduction to the traditional Emirati craft of Talli, highlighting its cultural significance and historical context.

Talli Instructions – A practical, beginner-friendly guide featuring a digital version of the instruction card included in the kit. It also includes a close-up image of the Bu Khoosa weave and a step-by-step video tutorial to assist users in learning the technique visually.

The Talli Kit – A detailed showcase of the kit itself, including images and descriptions of each component, emphasizing its features, material choices, and the user-focused design.



User Feedback & Final Development

This section highlights the role of user engagement in refining the Talli Kit, focusing on the valuable insights gathered from both experienced Emirati artisans and younger participants. Their feedback informed key adjustments in the design, shaping everything from the structure of the Kajouja to the instructional tools included in the kit. By testing prototypes in real-world settings, the project was able to respond directly to user needs, ensuring the product is not only functional but culturally respectful and relevant. The section also outlines the final development decisions made in response to this input, demonstrating how co-design and community involvement played a central role in shaping the final direction of the Talli Kit.

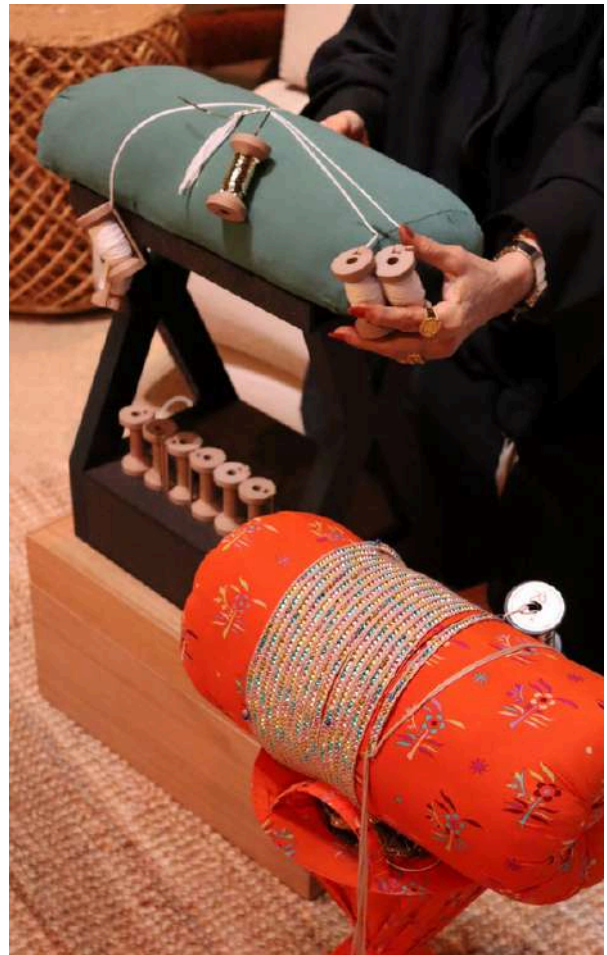


Artisan Feedback

To gather user feedback, a visit was conducted to the House of Artisans, located in Qasr Al Hosn, Abu Dhabi, the same place where my Talli journey initially began. This visit provided the opportunity to test the Talli Kit with four experienced Emirati artisans who have practiced the craft for many years.

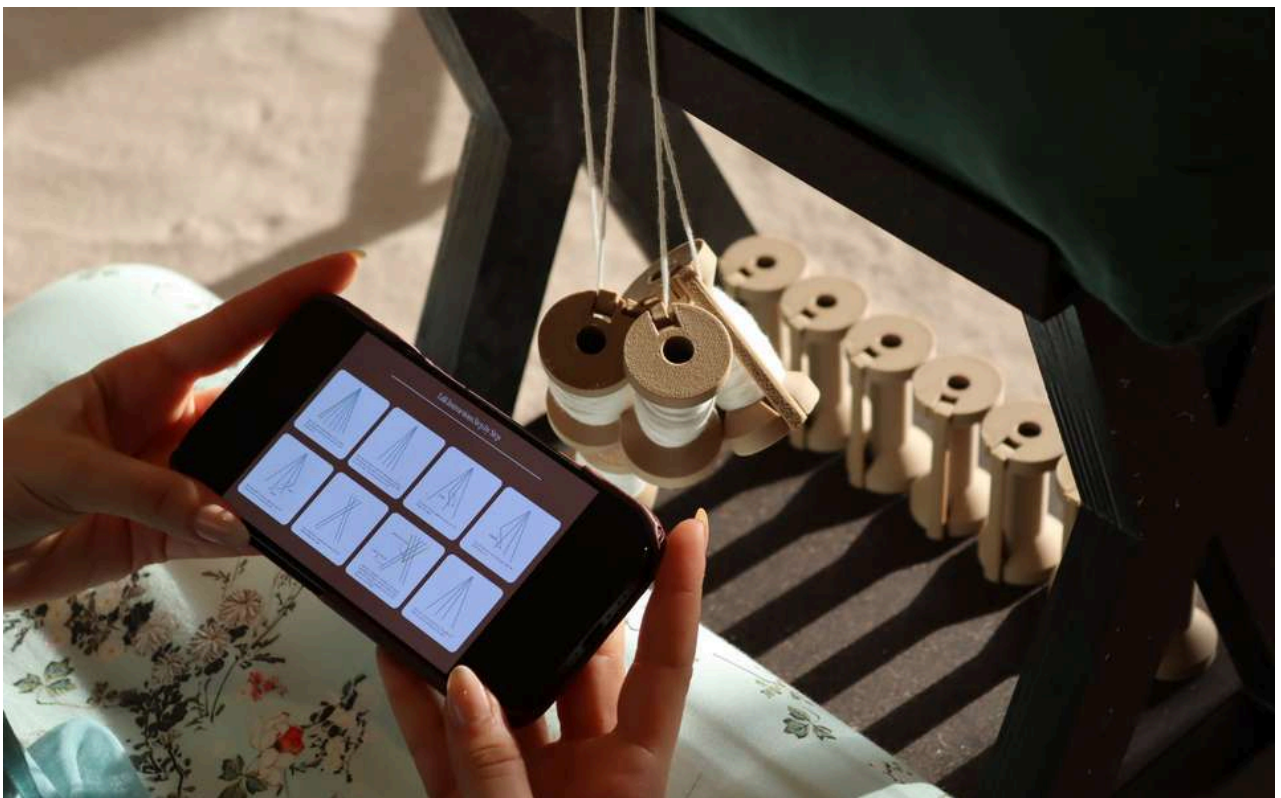
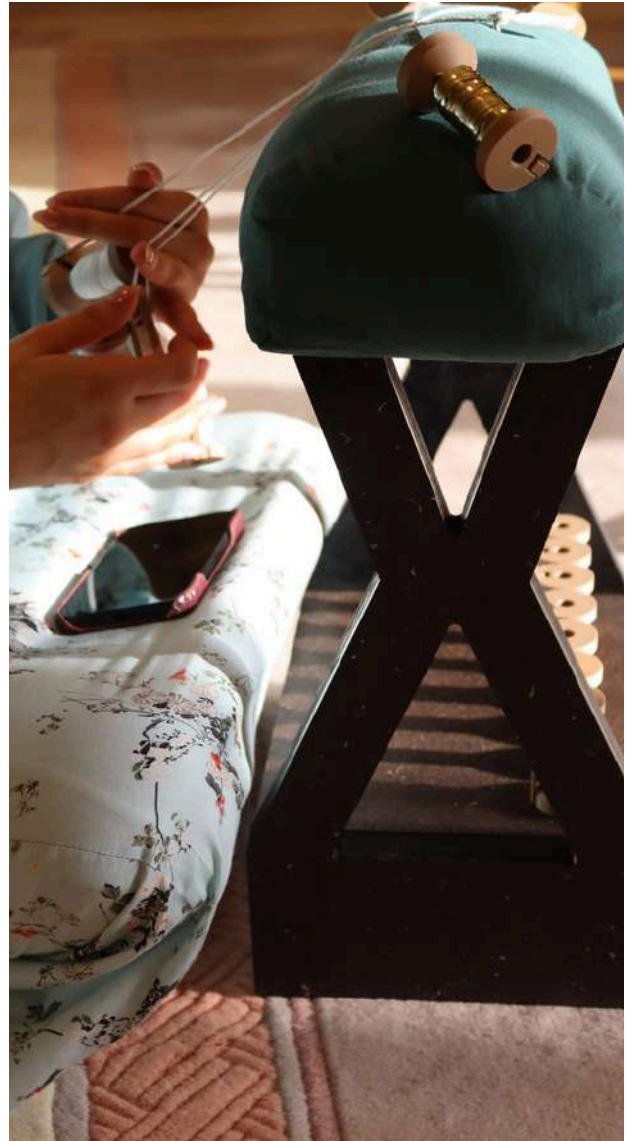
The overall feedback was highly positive. The artisans expressed enthusiasm for the modernized design and even inquired whether they could obtain a kit themselves, stating that it appeared more practical and refined than the traditional Kajouja currently in use. They particularly appreciated the inclusion of the integrated drawer, noting that previous versions lacked sufficient storage for tools and threads. The structural design, spool holders, and built-in storage were all well-received.





(Images by author)

However, the artisans also offered constructive feedback for improvement. They recommended changing the pillow shape to a fully circular form (this can be seen in the image where they switched the kit's pillow with the traditional one), as the current version includes a flat edge that, over time, could bend or damage the woven Talli due to the wrapping tension. Additionally, they proposed exposing the bottom part of the pillow through a central opening and incorporating a winding rod. This rod would allow the woven Talli, often produced in meters for garment application, to be wound neatly and securely from both sides. This suggestion arose from observing the existing Kajouja design, where completed Talli is often stuffed into the upper cone, increasing the risk of tangling or damage. These recommendations were greatly valuable and will inform the next stage of iterations, ensuring the product continues to honor tradition while meeting the functional needs of artisans today.



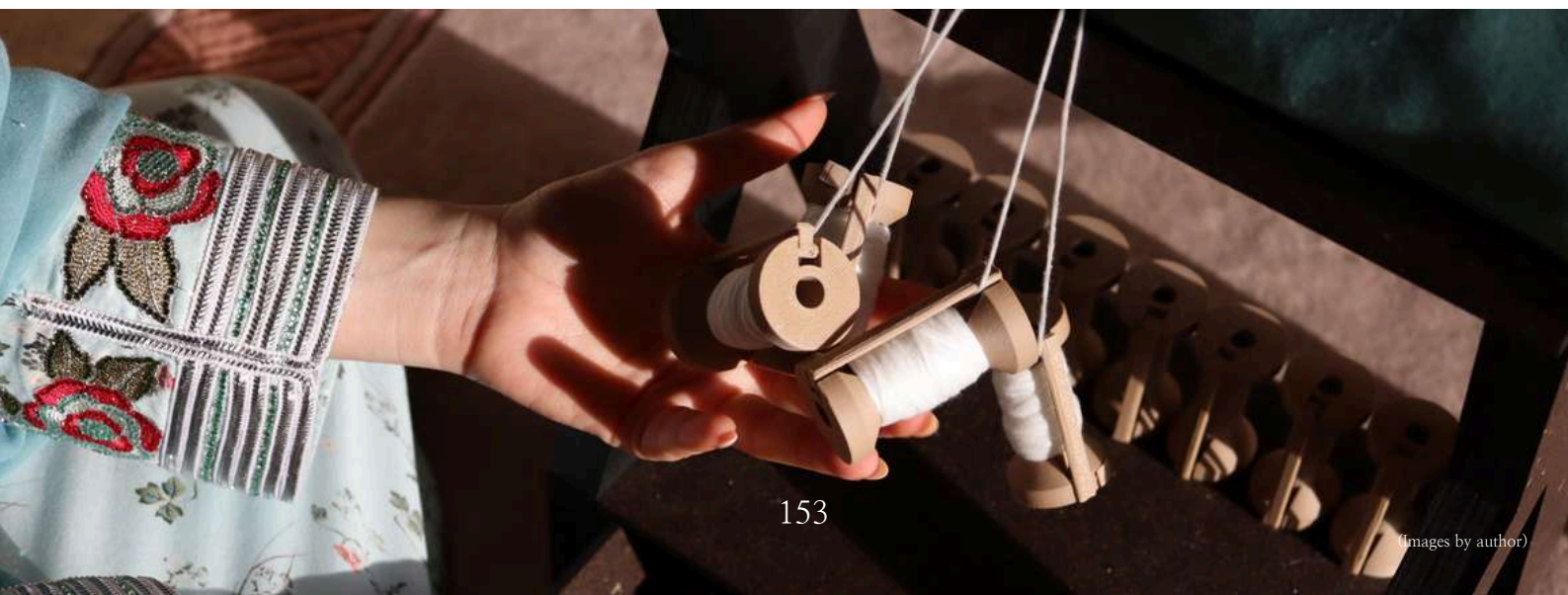
Youth Feedback

In addition to receiving feedback from experienced artisans, the Talli Kit was also tested with four young Emirati women aged between 16 and 22. This session aimed to assess the accessibility, clarity, and appeal of the product for a younger generation, one of the key target audiences of the project.

The participants responded positively to the overall design of the kit, highlighting that it felt modern, well-structured, and visually appealing. They appreciated the inclusion of the built-in drawer and magnetic pin holder, which helped keep the workspace organized. The spool holders were also noted as a useful and intuitive feature that supported the weaving process.

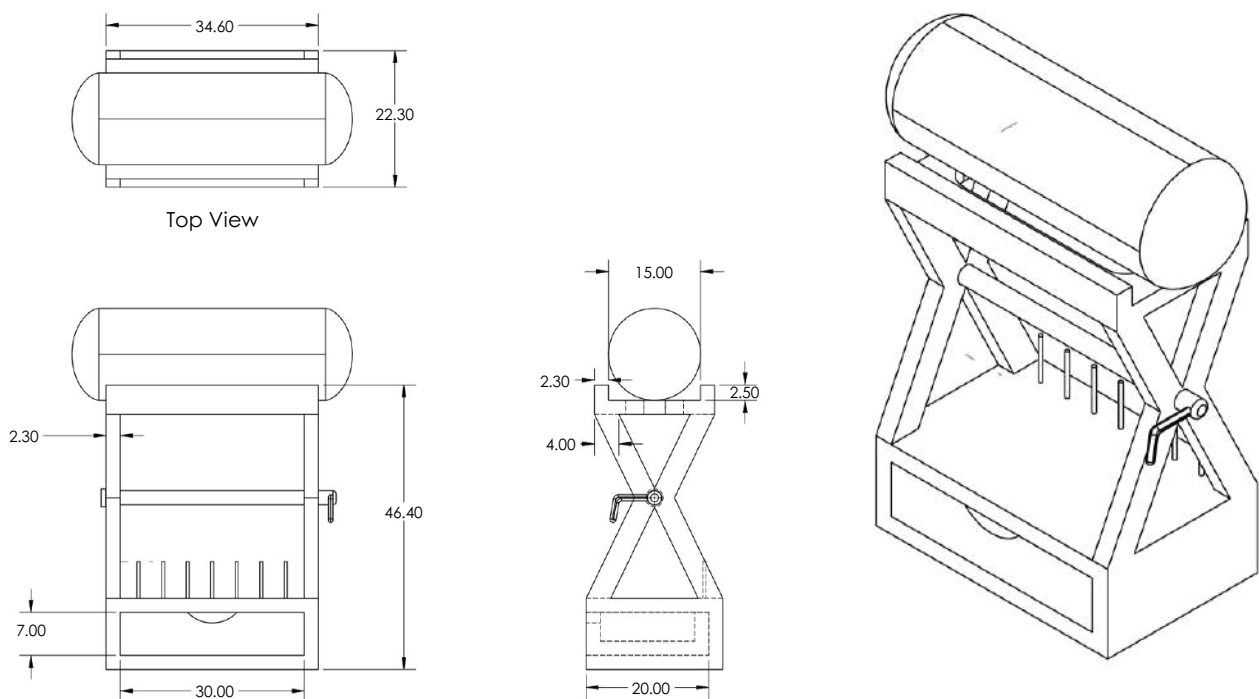
Regarding usability, the young participants found the bilingual instruction card helpful. Most were able to understand the Bu Khoosa weaving steps quickly and begin weaving with minimal guidance. The clear illustrations and step-by-step format, paired with the QR code linking to further resources, contributed to a smooth learning experience.

While the feedback was generally enthusiastic, some participants expressed that the beginning stages of the weave felt slightly confusing at first, particularly when setting up the threads. However, once they understood the rhythm and movement, they felt more confident and engaged. This highlighted the importance of continued refinement of instructional materials, especially for complete beginners. Overall, the session demonstrated that the Talli Kit successfully bridges tradition and innovation, engaging younger users and offering them an accessible entry point into the heritage craft of Talli.



Design Development & Future Improvements

Based on the feedback received from both experienced artisans and younger participants, a revised 3D model of the Talli Kit was developed to visualize the proposed improvements. This updated model incorporates a circular pillow to prevent damage to the woven Talli, addressing concerns raised about the previous flat-edged version. Additionally, a central opening on the top of the Kajouja stand was added to expose the bottom of the pillow, allowing for smoother wrapping of the threads around its surface. A key feature introduced in this iteration is the winding mechanism, integrated into the base structure, enabling users to neatly collect and store the completed Talli as it is woven, minimizing the risk of tangling or damage.





To further enhance the user experience and make the kit feel more complete, future plans include the development of a custom carrying bag. Ideally crafted from sustainably sourced leather, the bag will reflect the project's commitment to quality and environmental responsibility while providing a practical solution for storing and transporting the kit with ease.



These are AI-generated images that represent my envisioned carry bag design. The final version would include the Talli Kit logo embossed onto the surface.

Final Elements and Future Vision



Cultural Impact & Future Potential

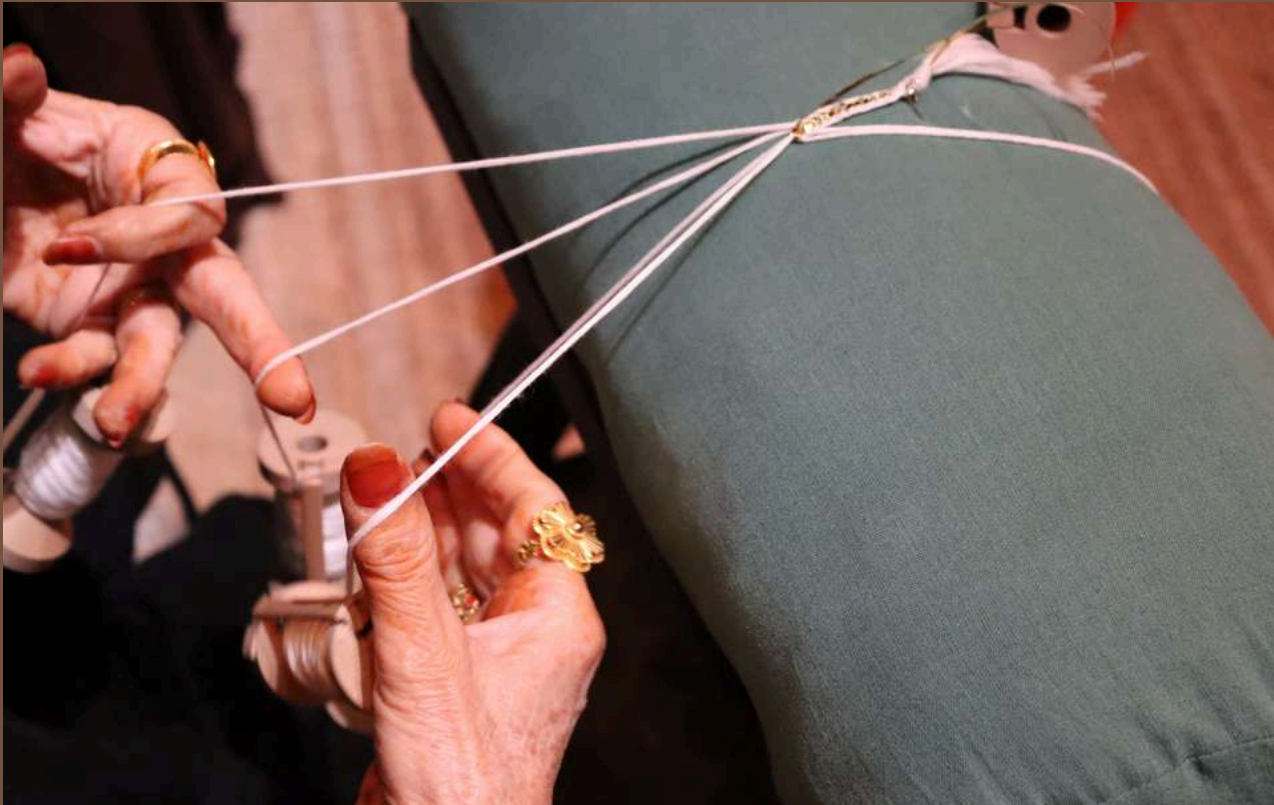


The Talli Kit holds strong cultural significance and presents far-reaching potential in both heritage preservation and educational innovation. By reimagining the traditional Emirati craft of Talli into a contemporary, accessible format, the kit bridges generational gaps and invites younger audiences to engage with their cultural roots in a hands-on, meaningful way. It not only preserves an important aspect of intangible heritage but also revitalizes it, positioning Talli as a relevant, evolving practice in modern life.

The kit's format and purpose make it highly scalable as a creative business model, with potential for widespread distribution across the UAE. It could be sold in targeted cultural spaces such as museums, heritage centers, tourism shops, and design markets. The approachable format also makes it suitable for use in schools, universities, and extracurricular programs, where it can support cultural education, creative exploration, and identity-building among Emirati youth.

Beyond national borders, the Talli Kit presents opportunities for cross-cultural exchange, enabling international learners, designers, and educators to explore Emirati craftsmanship through workshops, and heritage exhibitions. This opens pathways for cultural diplomacy and strengthens appreciation of traditional practices in global contexts. The accompanying website also holds rich potential for future development. It could be expanded into a comprehensive digital hub that offers multiple Talli weave variations, advanced tutorials, and interactive learning modules. Additionally, it could include a traditional garment archive, documenting Emirati garments, and the use of Talli, preserving cultural knowledge and serving as a valuable resource for researchers, designers, educators, and anyone seeking to explore the richness of Emirati heritage.





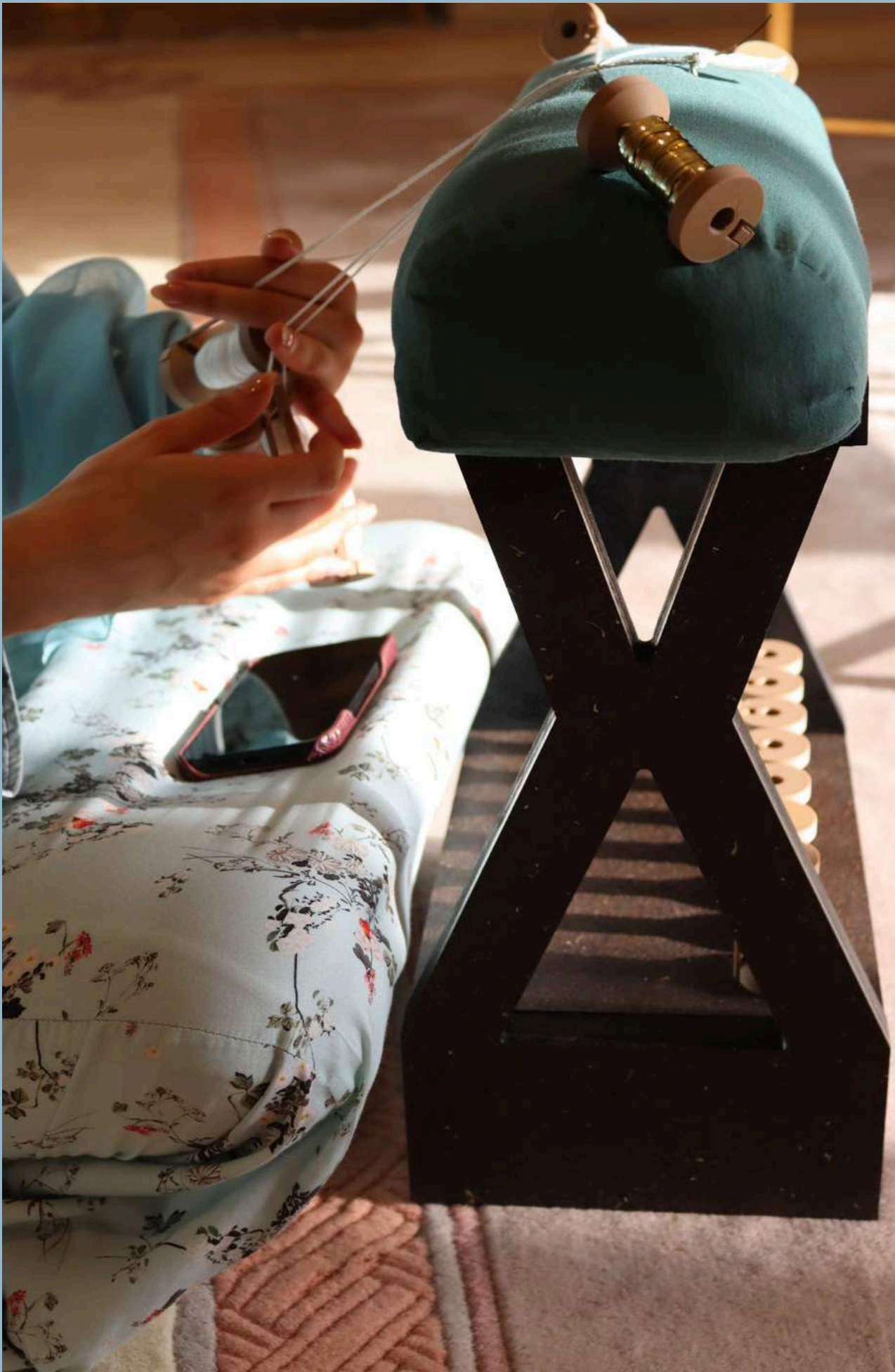




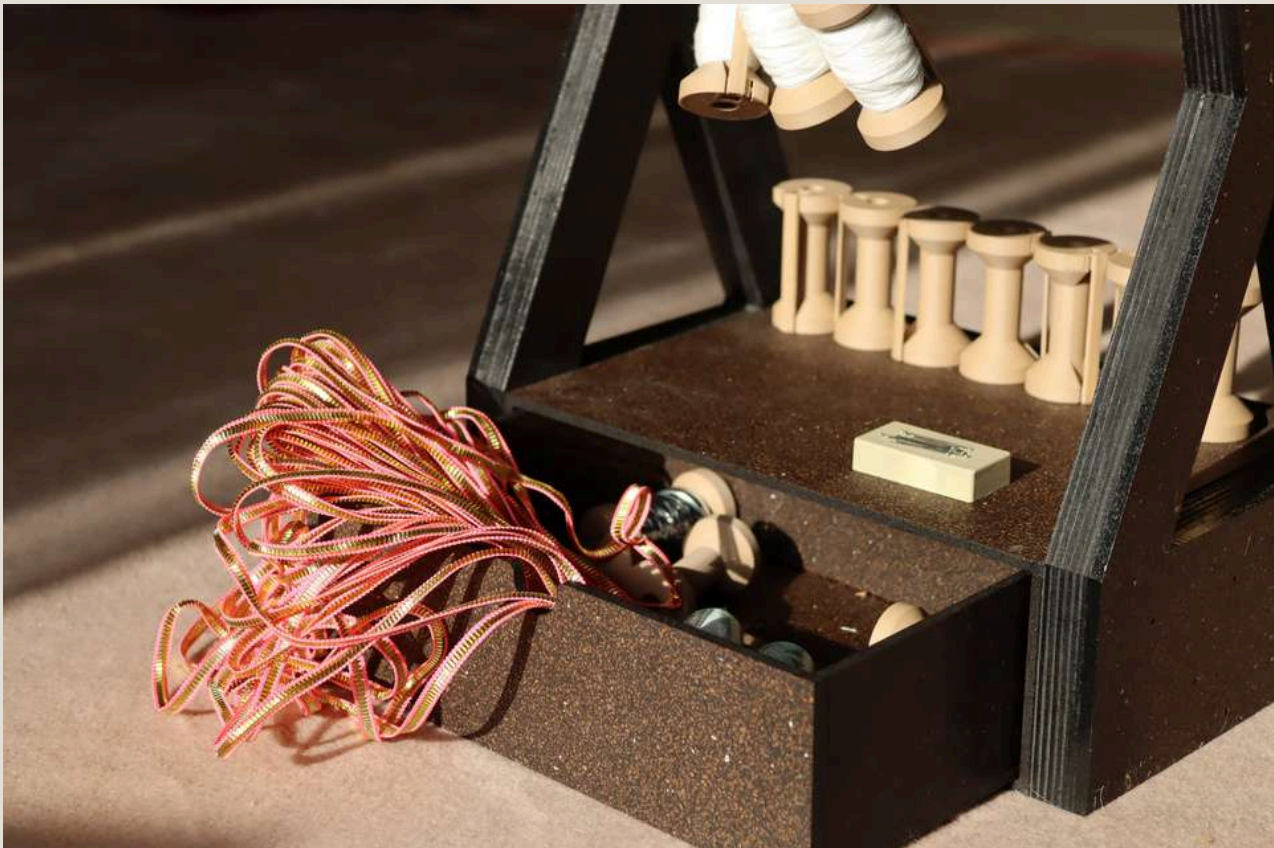
















Conclusion

This project began with a simple yet powerful intention: to preserve the traditional Emirati craft of Talli while making it relevant and accessible for future generations. As a cultural practice deeply rooted in the heritage of the UAE, Talli weaving holds historical, emotional, and artistic value. Yet like many traditional crafts, it faces the risk of fading from everyday life as modern lifestyles and global influences shape younger generations. This thesis project, through the development of the Talli Kit, addresses that challenge by offering a tool that both honors tradition and embraces innovation. Guided by a human-centered design process, the project involved direct collaboration with Emirati artisans and youth through interviews, a survey, and focus groups. These interactions revealed critical insights about the physical and functional limitations of the traditional Kajouja and the learning curve required to master Talli weaving. Responding to these insights, the design of the Talli Kit evolved through multiple stages of iteration, integrating feedback and cultural sensitivity at every step. The final prototype features a modernized Kajouja, with a linen-covered pillow, 3D-printed spools, integrated thread storage, and a magnetic pin holder. The use of sustainable, locally made Dateform material, created from date seed waste, reinforces the kit's environmental responsibility and connection to the region.

In addition to physical improvements, the project focused on accessibility and education. A bilingual instructional card and a scannable QR code guide users to an online platform offering tutorials and cultural context, making the learning experience easier for beginners while inviting deeper exploration. The kit not only teaches a specific technique (the Bu Khoosa weave using seven threads), but it also builds an appreciation for the time, skill, and beauty embedded in traditional Emirati textiles.

Beyond its current form, the Talli Kit has the potential to grow into a scalable and culturally impactful initiative. With future development, the accompanying website could expand to include an archive of traditional garments and Talli weaves, offering researchers, designers, and craft enthusiasts a deeper understanding of how Talli can be used. More variations of the weave, instructional videos, and educational resources could also be added to support schools, museums, and cultural institutions interested in preserving Emirati heritage.



Additionally, the product holds commercial potential. Kits could be produced and distributed across the UAE, particularly in schools, workshops, and tourism centers. There is also strong potential for cross-cultural exchange, introducing international audiences to Emirati craftsmanship in a hands-on, engaging way. To enhance portability and functionality, future iterations may include a sustainably sourced leather carrying bag to store and transport the Talli Kit, further elevating the product as a design object.

Ultimately, the Talli Kit is not just a tool, it is a platform for cultural continuity, education, and innovation. It empowers users to become active participants in preserving heritage through making, storytelling, and creativity. In doing so, it ensures that Talli weaving, while rooted in the past, continues to live on in the hands of a new generation, relevant, respected, and reimagined for the future.



(images by author)

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