Socio-anthropological exploration of Saudi youth identity formation in domestic and social spaces

Maher Trimeche [1, 2, *], Mongi Zidi [1], Turki Al-Shalaki [1], Alnair Mohammed Ali Alnair [1], Elyas Saeed SaadAshwal [1], Mohamed Mohamed Hassan Ibrahim [1, 3], Ashraf Abd El-Hakim Mohamed Megahed [4]

[1]Department of Social Sciences, College of Literature and Arts, University of Ha'il, Ha'il, Saudi Arabia
[2]Department of Anthropology, College of Letters and Human Sciences, University of Sousse, Sousse, Tunisia
[3]Department of Social Work Methods, College of Social Work, Fayoum University, Fayoum, Egypt
[4]Department of Sociology and Social Work, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

A B S T R A C T

This comprehensive research examines the formation of social identity among Saudi youth within the domains of bedrooms, homes, and Istiraha, a traditional communal gathering space. Drawing inspiration from Western studies on room culture and societal dynamics, the primary objective of this research is to scrutinize the socio-cultural transformations occurring within Saudi society, as reflected in the interactions of its youth in these distinct spaces. Departing from the conventional functional and moralistic framing of Saudi youth as social issues, this study adopts a socio-anthropological perspective. It perceives young individuals as active agents in the process of shaping their identities within a unique cultural milieu, employing a descriptive-analytical methodology. Fieldwork was conducted in late 2022, involving the administration of questionnaires to a randomly selected sample of 384 students at the University of Hail, Saudi Arabia, in addition to focus group discussions with 37 students. These methods were utilized to explore students' perceptions, activities, and attitudes within the specific social environments under investigation. The study's findings reveal that Saudi youth employ their bedrooms, homes, and Istiraha spaces to delineate their identities through three distinct social strategies: Autonomy, Reproduction, and Integration. Additionally, this research uncovers a gender-based distinction in the prevalence of room culture among the youth, contrary to Western findings. Istiraha, as an ancient cultural tradition, assumes a significant role as a gathering space for Saudi youth, affording them an opportunity to distance themselves from societal and familial constraints. In light of these discoveries, this research recommends an expansion of studies concerning the anthropology of spaces and social milieus in relation to the ongoing social transformations in Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, it suggests an examination of room culture and Istiraha culture among Saudi youth from the perspective of their parents to gain insights into how these phenomena are perceived, their attitudes towards them, and the resulting behaviors. This exploration can illuminate aspects of generational continuity and disruption within the Saudi social fabric.

1. Introduction

The research on "youth" continues to generate debate regarding the concept's definition and the traits that separate youth from other age groups,

such as children and the elderly. The distinction between the theories lies in the temporal level of selection employed in juvenile research (Threadgold, 2019). The sequential temporal hypothesis presupposes that age-related demographic and biological factors determine young people's identity. Institutional temporality relates to youth via social institutions and their position within them (family, school, work, law, class). The everyday temporal emphasizes life and experience (Dubet and de Linarès, 2008) and "ethnomethodology" (Widiastuti, 2020).

It is based on the cultural studies of youth, which were launched by the Birmingham Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) in the 1970s when the concept of subculture was created to analyze the social phenomenon that is manifested in the delinquent behaviors of youth (Bennett, 1999; Bennett and Kahn-Harris, 2004) and the values and standards they hold. Other studies attempted to refine the concept while keeping in mind that it stems from Marxist thought. It is frequently suggested or hypothesized that youth "subculture" reflects a class culture that opposes the prevailing bourgeois culture in capitalist societies (Clarke et al., 1976; Cohen, 1997). Therefore, the studies recommended approving the psychological and cultural characteristics by referencing the works of Parsons (1942), the characteristics of marginal culture (Becker, 1963), and the concept of the outsider proceeding from a functional perspective as opposed to the Marxist perspective, which is based on the principle of contradiction between the bourgeois and workers' cultures.

The objective of marginal culture is to represent the young culture that rejects mainstream and prevalent ideals, standards, and rules in society and refuses to acknowledge them. Hence, it depicts a group culture characterized by age, beliefs, and lifestyle homogeneity. This essentialist approach is bolstered by the psychological and ethical discourse about youth, which attributes to them both negative and positive psychological traits, some of which are negative, such as lack of maturity (Parsons, 1942) and rebellion, while others are positive, such as innovation and creativity. The second method is closely related to constructivist theory (Galland, 2003; Threadgold, 2019). It is founded on the premise that youth is a social and cultural reality developed through experience and practice within a certain structure. It is not a social value that is determined by age, but rather a culture that is formed in daily living and in special and distinguished contexts, despite the similarity of its tools (social media, rooms, and entertainment and consumption activities) and the similarity of its values (autonomy, self-expression, and adventure), in which the culture of youth is similar to 'Spider Web' (Geertz, 1973).

White and Wyn (2012) argued against classifying youth as a single group. Smolík (2014), Bennett (1999), and Bennett and Kahn-Harris (2004) assumed that the upbringing of youth is not done according to ready-made social models. Still, rather, it is an experience lived by the youth in which the cultural patterns of the society to which they belong are involved, or they receive them from media and communication means and the culture of their peers in the neighborhood (Shildrick, 2006) or from the school and self-cultural options that they choose that express their taste, fancies, and preferences.

Youth are the outcome of a social upbringing in a common and homogeneous culture, regardless of whether it is a subculture or a marginal culture. A methodological stance is inappropriate for analyzing youth practices in the wake of the world's major social transformations (Bessant et al., 2020) (the spread of education and the internet, and the globalization of economic and cultural goods These modifications enlarged the domains of juvenile employment and the free spaces beyond the social control of social institutions. The changes expanded the youth's options for their relationships, consumptions, standard references, and personal traits, leading to the conclusion that his capabilities and practices define the youth of today and individual strategies to construct his identity in the digital and other social spaces he inhabits (Lahire, 2003; 2008). The identities of young people have begun to be shaped by settings, choices, and experiences rather than by social patterns (Dubet and de Linarès, 2008). In addition, it flows across virtual, social, special, and General places whose borders are defined to define its autonomy and brand its identity (Lincoln, 2014a; 2015; Ashton and Patel, 2020). In addition, Lincoln (2004) uses the term 'zoning' to describe the process of delineating the areas in which a youth moves, belongs, and moves between them until it becomes difficult to recognize his moving social identity (Robards, 2014). Bennett (1999) proposed the notion of tribes based on Maffesoli's (1995) work to examine the youth as a category whose boundaries are fluid and whose members are on a continual trip and do not settle down. He refuses the concept of subculture to define young people. This point of view is not shared by Perasović et al. (2023). They considered that youth convey a specific subculture. Dubet and de Linarès (2008) proposed the idea of 'experience' to analyze the self-construction techniques of contemporary individuals. If the identity of a child is determined to a certain extent by an upbringing in the family and then school, and the identity of the elderly is determined by professional upbringing (Fitzgerald, 2020), then the identity of the youth has been extended to various spaces in which he strives to contribute to its reshaping by furnishing it with his behavior. For this reason, youth is regarded as a "thermometer" for measuring changes in the social infrastructure and its functioning.

Identifying social identities is seen as one of the social system's roles and one of the criteria necessary for its replication. Cultures have evolved several rituals to generate identities and their transformations, such as initiation rites, institutional rites, and rites of passage, which define the qualities of social identities and the borders of their difference. However, in contemporary civilizations, these rituals are no longer social ones that the community's institutions secure to give the individual his social identity. Instead, these rituals have become ordinary (Kišjuhas, 2023), representing the individual's culture and social changes (Lan, 2018). It is acquired more than inherited.

The socialization of their youth distinguishes modern societies, and intergenerational relations are no longer governed solely by the mechanism of

reproduction of the social and cultural system but also by the mechanism of integration into the "generational culture," characterized by its values, standards, and symbols (Threadgold, 2019). The notion of 'autonomy' has become 'iconic' among young people, reflecting their aspirations, and interpreting their behavior as it allows them to develop their selves with their choices and features (Glevarec, 2010; Carvalho and Nogueira, 2020). In this context, Bennett (1999) argued that the identities of the youth manifested in the contemporary lifestyle are 'based identities' and not 'given identities, and that they are also liquid and not solid.

These social transformations, particularly in bringing up youth, have resulted in the emergence of a culture characterized by a type of homogeneity and similarity despite many differences between them (social, class, and culture). This is a consequence of the emergence of the nuclear family, the rise of individualism, the expansion of the consumer economy, and the globalization of communication technologies and their penetration into all segments of society. Young people have unquestionably invented many initiation, establishment, and passage rites. The rituals reflect their perspectives on the world, society, and themselves. These new rituals have successfully located the venues in which they are practiced and replicated (physical spaces such as streets, rooms, and clubs, as well as virtual spaces such as social media).

But what separates virtual spaces the most is social networking, which has become the primary source of young culture, absorbed a significant portion of the power of traditional social organizations, and begun to define the borders of youth culture as they adopt its norms and standards. In addition, this is what determines his identity and age group, which sociologically distinguishes him from other groups. In this context, some scholars refer to the youth as "Generation Z," that is, the generation born after 1995 (Özkan and Solmaz, 2017), whose upbringing is related to the use of the internet and "social media," despite cultural variations and significant cultural traits. Hence, the room has been transformed into a place where the youth can experience independence from their parents and society. This space provides for the possibility of experience (Craft, 2013) and, thanks to the virtual space, enables the expansion of the spaces to an indefinite extent. This expansion represented a 'critical moment' in the life of youth (Thomson et al., 2002) because the room and the internet are two spaces that have given youth 'autonomy, which is greater than spatial and social space, to form their identities, express them, and exhibit them (Lincoln, 2014a; 2015; Robards, 2014; Steinsbekk et al., 2021).

Hence, the room has attained its culture in which the youth move across "online" and "offline," which is the room, due to social media (Hodkinson and Lincoln, 2008). In this instance (Marwick and Boyd, 2014), the distinctions between the particular and the general are less distinct than they once were. The unique has acquired a new meaning, and the close buddy has joined the general virtual space.

Social media has narrowed the gap between the biographical and social, as well as between the particular and the universal, yet it has become hazy and unclear (Vitak, 2012). In these distances, the extraordinary life acquires new meanings that are not necessarily antithetical to the general life but overlap with it. General life has become a source for constructing and enhancing the youth's autobiography (Marwick and Boyd, 2014). Addressing this point, Pearson (2009) proposed the metaphor of a glass room to describe this overlap between inner space and exterior space, or between the private and public spheres.

The significance of the culture of 'room' reveals a new kind of social parenting and the fact that an individual's social upbringing has become significantly constrained by its subjects and routines. In addition, social raising has evolved into a process that transcends the limitations of traditional social institutions and represents the youth's efforts to attain "autonomy."

If the youth seek 'autonomy' from their parents' generation so that they can make their own consumption decisions and choose their friends, this autonomy is not 'independence' from the family and detachment from society; rather, it is providing meaning to the new identity and the world to which the youth belong (Ceslik and Pollock, 2017), which will be determined by the youth themselves. So, a young person's identity is not established in isolation from others but at the dynamic intersections of biological, relational, and social trajectories (Glevarec, 2010).

This research's continuity regarding the new identity's significance makes it impossible to determine the fixed core of youth identity (McLeod and Yates, 2012). Consequently, both studies conclude that identity formation in youth is a gradual and cumulative process. The borders of autonomy shift according to the abilities of the young, the influence of the family, and the culture of society (McLeod and Yates, 2012). Consequently, both studies conclude that identity formation in youth is a gradual and cumulative process. The borders of autonomy shift according to the abilities of the young, the influence of the family, and the culture of society. Constant negotiations with them led to this result. If the room represents the first place where a young man gains autonomy and searches for his individuality as well as shared characteristics with his peers, it is also a space that may be subject to family surveillance (Heath, 2008; Heath et al., 2017). Otherwise, autonomy will be diminished, and integration with peers will be challenging. The room is shaped by social elements interconnected with the structure of the family, its capacities, and the nature of the interactions between its members. When the bounds of autonomy are reduced, the youth seek out other places inside or outside the home, parallel to the

room space, where they can establish their identities as distinct selves and integrate into the particular culture of their peers (Arnett, 2016).

The youth attempts to go to different areas outside the classroom to increase his autonomy, experience things he cannot participate in, and strengthen his relationships with his classmates. All this manifests the dynamism of rituals in contemporary cultures and the youth's insistence that these rituals should be the ones that determine them. Some authors (Ilan, 2015; Ross, 2020; Campos, 2020) have referred to the street as a venue that fostered the development of youth's standards and values. Given the negative connotations that were attached to street culture due to its marginal and sometimes violent expressions, which partially explains the transition of the youth from street culture to room culture (de Almeida et al., 2015), the youth replaced the street as symbolizing a departure from the control of family and society with other closed spaces. Still, they are outside the room and the house, such as in clubs with various sports, artistic, cultural, or recreational activities.

Saudi student youth are not exempt from adopting the globalized traits of youth in other nations, and they develop their identity through traveling between diverse areas. Social media (Alosaimi et al., 2016; Alobaid et al., 2018; Aljehani et al., 2019) and consumption patterns (Alosaimi et al., 2016; Alobaid et al., 2018; Aljehani et al., 2019) are examples of how Saudi youth have gotten involved in a worldwide society. The culture of youth and the beliefs and norms that guide their conduct have grown extremely similar, even though their experiences, practices, and modes of expressing this culture vary.

The Saudi family has facilitated a sort of autonomy for the children by equipping the room with current communication technology to regulate and supervise the kids' upbringing within its gate and to make the room a safer option than the street. Consequently, in a contradictory manner, the Saudi family helped to make the room a space for private life and the expression of individualism (Bovill and Livingstone, 2001; Livingstone, 2007; Pearson, 2009). The youth make their own decisions, form their own friendships (Livingston, 2008), and build their own culture apart from parental and societal influence (Hodkinson and Lincoln, 2008; Hodkinson, 2017).

The economic and social growth in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has had numerous effects on Saudi youth, as the improvement in the economic and educational level of the Saudi family was reflected in the level of empowerment of their children with the internet, the spread of the culture of consumption (CITC, 2021), the improvement in living conditions (private car or family car), and the financial capabilities (scholarships, family support). This has given the students wider options for selecting their frequent hangouts and increased behavioral flexibility.

The research hypothesizes that the most frequented spaces by Saudi student youth are those in which they practice rituals passed down from one generation to the next and define the boundaries of their autonomy (zoning) (Lincoln, 2004; 2014a, 2014b, 2015), but an autonomy that remains governed by a relationship of negotiation and influence between the generations of youth and parents (Abbott-Chapman and Robertson, 2009).

This notion of zoning illustrates how students manage their physical and virtual areas as they contract or grow and how these spaces differ. However, the autonomy that we aspire to is constantly susceptible to intrusion or restriction (Lincoln and Robards, 2016; Lincoln, 2015; 2020). It is subject to protection and expansion negotiations. The notion of "zoning" enables us to understand how student youth negotiate their relationships with the public sphere (Lincoln and Robards, 2016), how they transform the spaces they frequent with their practices, and how they culturally furnish them.

Saudi student youth extend these boundaries into the space outside the room, which is *Istiraha*, which is private rental housing consisting of a living room, a kitchen, and a bathroom that is typically equipped, in which the student youth gather for fun and entertainment and to experience an upbringing that they define for themselves and practice a distinct culture. Suppose the phenomenon of *Istiraha* is an ancient cultural practice in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia that serves the functions of hospitality and receiving strangers. In that case, the use of *Istiraha* by Saudi youth is relatively recent.

The proliferation of the *Istiraha* phenomenon in many forms (in the shape of a constructed house or a tent), particularly at the end of the 20th century, forced the Saudi government to legalize it in 2011 and establish technical and geographical requirements for it. From a location that welcomes the other, the guest, and the outsider, to a space where young people enclose their world, protect their privacy, and establish more independence It demonstrates the persistence of an old cultural tradition among the youth, but one with altered rites and connotations, from a space open to the other, the visitor, and the stranger, to a space where the youth secure their privacy and establish more autonomous boundaries.

These spaces are not just places but sociological spaces where three cultures intersect: inherited social culture, the culture of peers and friends, and a self-culture that subjectivizes the young person through their practices, orientations, and tastes (Glevarec, 2010; Carvalho and Nogueira, 2020). They are spaces in which young people experience the process of maturation (Lincoln and Robards, 2016).

The research objective is to know how the Saudi student youth draw the boundaries of their autonomy (zoning) by moving between the spaces of the room, family house, and *Istiraha*. Achieving the objective requires answering the following questions:

- How do the students use the space in the room?
- How do the students use the space at home?
- How do the students use the space of *Istiraha*?
- What strategies do Saudi students depend on to draw the boundaries of their autonomy (zoning)?

2. Methodology and tools of the study

A descriptive-analytical technique was utilized, given the study's topic and questions. The study population consists of male and female students from the College of Literature and Arts at the University of Hail in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. There were 9,788 pupils, representing the population from whom the study sample was drawn. The sample size was calculated using the table and formula of Krejcie and Morgan (1970). The target sample size was 624 at a confidence level of 99 percent and an accuracy level expressed by the error margin of 0.05. With the aid of randomization tables in Krejcie and Morgan (1970), a random sample of students (male and female) was drawn at random for the study. The sample was divided into two groups, the first of which consisted of 400 pupils and the second of which included 224 students.

The researchers administered the questionnaire to the first group, and after discarding 26 questionnaires with incomplete data or unanswered questions, the number of approved and accurate questionnaires was 384.

For statistical processing, the researchers employed the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS-V26) and the statistical procedures of frequencies, percentages, and arithmetic means.

In addition to the questionnaire, the researchers utilized "focus groups," with 37 students participating across three focus groups. The focus group explored from their perspectives the significance of the research's target community's practices in their living environments.

3. Results of the study

3.1. Students and room culture

Students spend their time in their rooms, with 51.8% of the 500 participants in the study spending 3 hours daily and 28.1% spending around 6 hours in their rooms. Additionally, 20.1% spend more than six hours in their rooms. However, the study found that the time students spend in their rooms differs according to gender. Further analysis revealed that males spent an average of 4 hours per day in their rooms, while females spent an average of 5 hours per day.

The statistical analyses in Table 1 indicate that there are statistically significant differences between male and female students at a significance level of 0.01 regarding time spent in their room. The calculated value of 17.55 (df = 2) is statistically significant. The data shows that male students spend more time in their rooms than female students, except when the number of hours exceeds 9 hours, where the percentage is higher for females at 4.2% compared to males at 2.6%.

Table 1: Number of waking hours spent in the room

			Male	Female	Total
Waking hours spent in the room	Less than 3	Frequency	153	46	199
		%	39.8%	12.0%	51.8%
	from 3 to less than 6	Frequency	81	27	108
		%	21.1%	7.0%	28.1%
	From 6 to less than 9	Frequency	37	14	51
		%	9.6%	3.6%	13.3%
	More than 9	Frequency	10	16	26
		%	2.6%	4.2%	6.8%
Total		Frequency	281	103	384
		%	73.2%	26.8%	100.0%
Differences at significance level (0.01)			Chi-Square	df	Sign
			17.55	3	.001

Furthermore, the emergence of the culture of the room as a social phenomenon in the West has been linked to the upbringing of females (Ashton and Patel, 2020). However, in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, this phenomenon is more related to males. Three factors explain this phenomenon: First, cultural norms dictate that household tasks are mainly assigned to women, which may require them to spend more time outside of their rooms. Second, children are often prevented from playing outside at an early age, as illustrated in Table 2, which may lead them to seek entertainment within the confines of their rooms. The third decisive factor in the phenomenon of spending time in the room is the accessibility of electronic devices at an early age, considering the ages of respondents. The introduction of the internet to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1999 has facilitated this. Results of the study revealed that 45.3% of sample members (between 18 and 25 years of age) received their first electronic device before the age of 10, while 37.5% received it between the ages of 10 and 15. The results indicate a correlation between the introduction of electronic devices into homes and the decrease in outdoor play among student youth. Additionally, the study found that 17.8% of respondents owned an electronic gaming device, 23.9% had televisions in their rooms, and 31.9% had laptops. Furthermore, all respondents had mobile phones for personal use.

The statistical analyses in Table 3 indicate that there are statistically significant differences in the

time student youth spend in their personal rooms based on the age at which they received their personal rooms. The calculated value of 43.6 (df = 2) is statistically significant at a significant level of 0.01. The data reveals two general trends. The first trend shows an inverse relationship between the age at which the student youth received their personal room and the number of hours spent in it. It was observed that, on average, those who received their personal room at an older age spent less time in it, except for those aged between 15 and 20, which is a period of significant physiological and psychological transformation. The second trend indicates that those who have a personal room tend to spend more time in it than those who received their personal room at an earlier or later age. Furthermore, the study found that 44% of respondents did not have a personal room, and most of those who did receive their personal room at the beginning of adolescence (21.1%). This is due to the size of Saudi families,

where only 12.5% of sample members have 1 to 3 siblings, while 64.6% have 4 to 8 siblings. It becomes challenging for families to provide a separate room for each member when the number of children in a family is high. The transformation of the play and entertainment space from outside the house to inside as an indicator of the children's shift from street culture to room culture appears to be a trend adopted by the Saudi family in the upbringing of its children since childhood. If the variable of the number of rooms (Table 4) relatively delays the age of prevention of playing outside the home, it is not considered a decisive factor, as shown in Table 5.

Table 2: Age restrictions for children playing in the street

		Frequency	%
Variables	Before 5 years	112	29.2
	From 5 to less than 10 years	134	34.9
	From 10 to less than 15 years	138	35.9
	Total	384	100.0

Table 3: Number of daily waking hours spent in a personal room

			Since when do you have your personal room?					
			No personal room	Less than 10 years	From 10 to less than 15 years	From 15 to less than 20 years	From 20 years and more	Total
How many waking hours do individuals typically spend daily in their room?	Less than 3	Frequency	99	28	17	39	16	199
		%	25.8%	7.3%	4.4%	10.2%	4.2%	51.8%
	From 3 to less than 6	Frequency	45	24	11	21	7	108
		%	11.7%	6.3%	2.9%	5.5%	1.8%	28.1%
	From 6 to less than 9	Frequency	13	8	15	15	0	51
		%	3.4%	2.1%	3.9%	3.9%	0.0%	13.3%
	9 and more	Frequency	12	2	0	6	6	26
		%	3.1%	0.5%	0.0%	1.6%	1.6%	6.8%
Total		Frequency	169	62	43	81	29	384
		%	44.0%	16.1%	11.2%	21.1%	7.6%	100.0%
Differences at Significance Level (0.01)			Chi-square 43.60			df 12		Sign .000

Table 4: Number of rooms in the house

		Frequency	%
Variables	From 1 to 3	69	18.0
	From 4 to 6	202	52.6
	7 and more	113	29.4
	Total	384	100.0

The statistical analyses in Table 5 indicate that there are no statistically significant differences between the age at which students are prevented

from playing outside and the number of rooms in their house. The calculated value of 8.14 (df = 2) is not statistically significant at a significant level of 0.086. Additionally, the study discovered that students now prefer to spend their time in their personal rooms rather than playing street games due to the availability of new forms of entertainment on social media.

Table 5: Age at which outdoor play stopped and number of rooms in the house

			How many rooms do you have in your house?			
			From 1 to 3	From 4 to 6	7 and more	Total
At which age did you stop playing outside? (In the street or alley)	Before 5 years	Frequency	29	55	28	112
		%	7.6%	14.3%	7.3%	29.2%
	From 5 to less than 10	Frequency	22	68	44	134
		%	5.7%	17.7%	11.5%	34.9%
	From 10 to less than 15	Frequency	18	79	41	138
		%	4.7%	20.6%	10.7%	35.9%
Total		Frequency	69	202	113	384
		%	18.0%	52.6%	29.4%	100.0%
Differences at significance level: No			Chi-square 8.14		df 4	Sign .086

Table 6 highlights the importance of social media as a space that is nested within almost all places that students frequent. With a relative weight of 0.87, personal space is a student's favorite, nestled within almost all places that students frequent. With a

relative weight of 0.87, personal space is a student's favorite. The house comes in second with a relative weight of 0.8, and *Istiraha* comes in third with a relative weight of 0.52.

Table 6: Arrangement of spaces in which social media is used

Variables	Frequency and percentage	First arrangement	Second arrangement	Third arrangement	Fourth arrangement	Fifth arrangement	Relative weight	Order
Room	Frequency	234	95	28	14	13	4.36	1
	%	60.9	24.7	7.3	3.6	3.4	0.87	
House	Frequency	109	209	31	25	10	3.99	2
	%	28.4	54.4	8.1	6.5	2.6	0.80	
University	Frequency	2	15	166	59	142	2.16	4
	%	.5	3.9	43.2	15.4	37.0	0.43	
Istiraha	Frequency	33	37	106	162	46	2.61	3
	%	8.6	9.6	27.6	42.2	12.0	0.52	
Cafes	Frequency	6	28	53	124	173	1.88	5
	%	1.6	7.3	13.8	32.3	45.1	0.38	

Furthermore, the results indicate an overlap between personal room use and social media use. In response to the question of the arrangement of daily activities carried out in their rooms, social media use ranked first with a relative weight of 0.85. Table 7 illustrates that the personal room is not only a virtual space but also a physical space where students carry out various activities. The room is allocated for specific activities, such as prayer (with a relative weight of 0.69), revision (0.57), gaming (0.48), and physical exercise (0.42).

Table 7: Arrangement of activities that you carry out daily in the room as per their frequency

Variables	Frequency and percentage	First arrangement	Second arrangement	Third arrangement	Fourth arrangement	Fifth arrangement	Relative weight	Order
Exercise	Frequency	30	39	45	95	175	2.10	5
	%	7.8	10.2	11.7	24.7	45.6	0.42	
Game	Frequency	22	47	78	152	85	2.40	4
	%	5.7	12.2	20.3	39.6	22.1	0.48	
Revision	Frequency	18	80	161	71	54	2.84	3
	%	4.7	20.8	41.9	18.5	14.1	0.57	
Prayer	Frequency	64	159	76	48	37	3.43	2
	%	16.7	41.4	19.8	12.5	9.6	0.69	
Use of social media	Frequency	250	59	24	18	33	4.24	1
	%	65.1	15.4	6.3	4.7	8.6	0.85	

Furnishing the room for special activities and marking it with cultural and social signs that reflect the student's youth is a way of defining its boundaries and making it a special space. All the activities mentioned by the respondents are individual activities, some are related to projects like revision and exercise, others to faith like prayer, and others to relationships like using social media. The intensity of the relationship with the room reflects not only the time that students spend in it but also their lifestyle and how they use it for their activities. Despite the fact that some students disclosed during their interactions with focus groups that they did not select all the items in their room and that very few decorate it with pictures, drawings, or fetishes for reasons related to religious traditions, a large percentage of respondents (75%) believe that the furniture and contents of the room are very special and take care of them so that no one can interfere with their world. 14.6% of the study sample responded that the maid takes care of all items, and 10.5% said that one of their family members arranges the room.

3.2. Students and space of house

The disclosures of the students during their interaction with the focus groups revealed that their relationships with their families are natural and that they are happy with them. However, the study found that 48.7% of children receive a warning from their parent or guardian for using social media excessively. Additionally, only 25% of the sample's parents reprimanded their children because of the isolation in the room.

The participants in the focus groups disclosed that parents encourage their children to revise in their personal rooms and view social media as a distraction. When comparing the number of hours spent by students in their rooms to the number of hours spent at home with family members, the personal room tends to be favored for time periods of 1-3 hours, while the home with family members tends to be favored for time periods of 6 hours or more.

Considering the cultural considerations related to females' roles in the household, which lead to them spending less time in their rooms than males, we can interpret the differences in time spent in the room and the house by referring to the number of hours spent therein. Regardless of the time spent in their homes, statistics show that the house is the second space after personal rooms where students use social media. Irrespective of the number of hours that are spent by females at home, it does not reduce the number of hours they spend with family members at home talking (76.1%), watching TV (45.4%), or having lunch or dinner (76.1%), especially in the living room (55.5%) and in the guest room (27.9%), as shown in Table 8.

3.3. Students and culture of Istiraha

The *Istiraha* occupies the third position in the list of spaces used by students for social media, following personal rooms and houses. However,

Istiraha holds significance as they are the first spaces that allow students to gather with their friends outside their homes in a closed space. It is considered unusual for Saudi student youth to receive their friends in their personal rooms due to cultural conservatism and space limitations in family homes. The family house symbolizes the institution of the family and is closely monitored. In contrast, *Istiraha* allows for space zoning and is not just virtual but also physical. Males use *Istiraha* primarily, with 99.2% of male students regularly visiting them. Youth typically begin visiting *Istiraha*at the age of 17, during their secondary school years, which marks their institutional transition from school to university. This age group represents a time when youth feel the most senior, as they are on the cusp of entering college. This transition from one educational level to another intensifies the symbolic shift from one stage of life to the next. Most sample members reside in urban areas (87.3%), with a majority living in villas (67.3%), while 21.4% live in flats.

Table 8: What activities do you do with family members? (Multiple choice)

		Frequency	%
	Prayer	191	49.7
	Breakfast	207	54
	Lunch or Dinner	292	76.1
Variables	Watching Television	174	45.4
	Following up on an event on social media	87	22.7
	Chatting	292	76.1

The type of residence does not affect the percentage of students who visit *Istiraha* or the percentage of students who use *Istiraha*. The results showed that most of the sample members (56.3%) visited the *Istiraha* daily, and 42.7% visited it on the weekend or on a long vacation.

As for the number of hours spent in the *Istiraha*, it is varied, but the respondents made it clear that it is rare to spend less than 3 hours, even if they go daily (Table 9).

Table 9: Number of hours spent daily in the Istiraha

Variable by hours	Frequency	%
Less than 3	18	4.68%
From 3 to less than 6	103	26.82%
From 6 to less than 9	161	41.92%
From 9 to less than 12	74	19.27%
12 and more	25	6.51%
Total	384	100%

On the other hand, the respondents asserted that the time they spend in the *Istiraha* doesn't exceed 24 hours as they must return to their houses at night or at dawn. Some respondents said that this commitment is either to evade the negative reactions from their parents and guardians or to respect the limits set by their parents so that they can protect the tacit agreement of respecting the limits of freedom of using the space of "*Istiraha*" according to the specific conditions, which include informing the family, not being absent from the house for more than one day, and avoiding behaviors that are contrary to the general value. In fact, *Istiraha* provides such a space that enables the student youth to form their identities through interaction with each other or by comparison with each other. Also, because experiences and tastes are exchanged in *Istiraha*, friendships get stronger there, as well as helping to make new friends. Focus group discussions with students revealed that common rituals that delineate social and geographic boundaries and strengthen independence govern meetings in *Istiraha*. The selection of group members is based on family kinship (87.7%) and the tribal factor (19%), with a low percentage of brothers present (8%) indicating a desire for privacy and independence. A main group member may suggest strangers (4.3%), subject to the group's approval (Table 10).

Table 10: Type of social relationships between the students in the Istiraha (multiple choice)

Type of Relationship	Frequency	%
Brother	31	8%
Cousin	337	87.7%
Friend (Student)	68	17.8%
Schoolboy	52	13.5%
Relative (belong to the same tribe)	73	19%
Neighbor	31	8%
Outsider	16	4.3%

Istiraha is a male phenomenon; hence, 99.2% of students (males) frequent the *Istiraha* continually. The students begin visiting the *Istiraha* at age 17 when they enroll in secondary schools. This age represents the institutional transition from high school to college. Youth at this age believe they are the most senior because they are preparing to enroll in college. The transition from secondary school to university is when the signs of transitioning from one age stage to the next intensify

If the emergence and spread of the "culture of the room," starting in the 1980s, were driven by the fear of children, especially girls, of the dangers in public spaces (Lincoln, 2015; Bovill and Livingstone, 2001), then the globalization of the internet and modern communication technologies, which created the virtual space as an intertwined space with the natural space, made the phenomenon of the "culture of the room" a widespread phenomenon in most countries and among most social groups, contrary to what Bovill and Livingstone (2001) concluded.

They believed that room culture is unique to European and North American countries, and they justified their position by citing the wealth and progress that characterize these nations and cause them to share similar cultural traits despite their varying degrees of technological advancement. They propelled the United States of America and the United Kingdom to the forefront of those nations. As a result, the room culture grew there more and faster than in countries like Spain, Italy, and Ceslik and Pollock (2017), which did not reach the level of the United States, for example, in the expansion of the World Wide Web, which is defined by more traditional family relationships.

If the rise of room culture as a social phenomenon is linked to the raising of girls in the West (Ashton and Patel, 2020), there is a phenomenon in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia that is more connected to males. Three variables explain this phenomenon: the first is cultural, in that most home-related tasks are assigned to women, which causes men to spend a portion of their time performing housekeeping outside the home. The second aspect is restricting children from playing outside the home at a young age, as shown in Table 3, which has caused them to replace the space of the street with the space of the home for play and recreation.

Considering the respondents' ages, the third determining factor is the student's early access to electronic gadgets. Since 1999, Internet access in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has facilitated this. The results showed that 45.3% of sample members (aged 18 to 25) received their first electronic device before the age of 10 and 37.5% received it between the ages of 10 and 15, indicating that there is a correlation between the date when electronic devices entered homes and rooms and the date when students stopped playing outside.

In addition, the data revealed that 17.8% of respondents had an electronic gaming device, 23.9% of them chose rooms with a television, and 31.9% had a laptop computer. In contrast, all respondents have mobile phones for various personal applications.

As for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which has witnessed the rapid spread of the internet and modern communication technologies since the turn of the 21st century, the family room has become a safe space in which children spend extended periods with the consent of their parents, who do not see any problem in this. Saudi families went one step further and encouraged the culture of the family room by providing the internet and modern entertainment and communication technologies. The conservative culture of Saudi society contributed to the rise of room culture in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia since, on the one hand, Saudi culture revolves around the family and, on the other hand, there is no street culture, i.e., play and amusement space for children.

In terms of self-expression and having a sense of self-identity (Hjetland et al., 2022), social media has allowed Saudi youth to catch up to the rest of Generation Z's youth (Robards, 2014; Hällgren and Björk, 2022). The chamber symbolized a private and secure environment where the experience might be had (Steele and Brown, 1995). The research confirms the findings of multiple studies (Lincoln and Robards, 2016) that the room is the first space in which students use social media (Table 4). Still, the value of the room for Saudi student youth is not in personalizing the physical space of the room by selecting decor and furniture, as is the case in Western countries (Livingstone, 2008; Glevarec, 2010; Lincoln, 2014a). In contrast, this chamber serves as a venue for his chosen activities, including recreation, sports, study, and worship (Table 5). The

space of choice is of tremendous significance since it permits the young person to express his or her "authentic self" (Lincoln, 2014; 2020) or so-called "possible self" (Steele and Brown, 1995), particularly regarding the freedom to use and choose social media.

According to Hodkinson and Lincoln (2008), the metaphor of room space permits the examination of the diversity of cultural practices among young people (Lincoln, 2004). It is not the location itself that is significant, but rather the employment opportunities it affords young people as they construct their identities. The room's layout allows adolescents to determine their connections, consumptions, and habits. Social media enhances this independence.

Marking the room's limits (zoning) as a particular place by furnishing it for special activities with cultural and social signifiers reflects student identity. The activities indicated by respondents are individual, as some are project-related, such as studying and exercising. In contrast, others are faith-related, such as prayer, and others are relationship-related, such as utilizing social media. The depth of the interaction with the space represents the time the students spend in the room and indicates their lifestyle and how they use it for their activities.

Even though many students disclosed during their interactions with "focus groups" that they were not responsible for selecting the room's contents and very few of them decorate the room with religiously motivated pictures, drawings, or fetishes, the room is still decorated with a variety of objects. A large percentage of respondents (75%) think that the furniture of the room and its contents are very special. They take care of them so that no one can interfere in their world, while 14.6% of the study sample responded that the maid takes care of all items and 10.5% said that one of the family members arranges the room.

However, the space in the room is frequently insufficient to give this independence (Tables 2 and 3). According to the statistics, 44 percent of respondents do not have their rooms, and most adolescents do not receive them until the beginning of adolescence (21.1%). This is due to the size of Saudi families. Just 12.5% of sample members had one to three brothers or sisters, while 64.6% had four to eight siblings. When the number of boys or girls in a family exceeds a certain threshold, it becomes difficult for the family to offer a separate bed for everyone.

The student youth attempt to find it in the confines of their home, armed with their smart phones and social media, of course.

The results indicated that, after the room, the family home is the second location where students access social networking sites. Yet, the student's usage of home spaces, particularly communal areas such as the inside guest room or the outdoor sitting area (majlis), serves other purposes, as the home space is the family space with its interactions, relationships, and services. (Table 6) It is the space

from which the student youth acquire social culture, as identity development does not occur apart from the family's influence as a social raising space that the student youth goes through (Graph 1).

According to the students' descriptions, their relationships with their families are natural, and they are content with them, as evidenced by their disclosures during 'focus group' interactions. The study revealed that 48.7% of students are scolded by their parents for excessive social media use. It also revealed that just 25% of the sample is exposed to parental scolding when isolated in a room.

The participants' disclosures in 'focus groups' indicate that parents are interested in requiring their children to revise. Because of this, they believe that the room's size is acceptable for this purpose and that social media is a distraction.

Student youth typically seek autonomy not for its own sake but as a signifier of their passage from childhood and dependence on the stage of social maturity. According to the interviewees, it does not signify the termination of relationships with or separation from the family. In addition to the symbolic and cultural significance of the family, as evidenced in the responses of the survey participants, the family remains a cultural reference and an economic support.

In this context, autonomy does not refer to the family as an affiliation but rather to the status within the family. It is the kid's status, including the responsibilities of reliance, care, and decision-making authority. Hence, family membership and the reproduction of the family's cultural history are not antithetical to autonomy but quite the opposite.

Frequently, a strategy of caring for the family bond, acknowledging its status, and reproducing the family culture is employed to attain a high degree of autonomy. In this perspective, the growth of the *Istiraha* culture can be understood as the continuation of a family cultural tradition, as parents have no objections to their children renting *Istiraha* and gathering with their peers there. Likewise, the youngster had no issues with his family members (his father or older brother) monitoring his *Istiraha* participation. This relationship between the family space and the *Istriraha* is ensured by the student's acknowledgment of the family's minimal right to surveillance and the parents' recognition of the children's right to integrate into the peer group. This mutual acceptance makes the transition from childhood to adulthood seamless and non-violent (Reifman et al., 2007; Skulborstad and Hermann, 2016; Arnett, 2016).

The *Istiraha* is a space that amplifies the culture of student youth, as the rituals they follow there help to establish the boundaries of their autonomy, allowing them to both form their identities and integrate into a shared culture that fosters a sense of belonging and social cohesion (Bennett and Kahn-Harris, 2004). The fact that members of *Istiraha* groups frequently come from the same family or tribe further strengthens this integration (Table 8). As a result, students spend a significant amount of time in *Istiraha* (Graph 3) and may even spend more time there than in their dormitories.

In *Istiraha*, the students experience the values of solidarity, secrecy, and unity. They establish rituals that manifest in choosing the location for *Istiraha* and dividing the work within *Istiraha*, such as cooking, organizing, and cleaning, as well as engaging in various forms of entertainment. In it, they also cultivate their friendships and seek out their shared interests. The *Istiraha* is the most frequented venue for students because it allows them to freely express themselves and assimilate into social groups with similar orientations, values, attitudes, and behaviors. In addition, it is the third place where they replicate the culture of family and community heritage and protect and perpetuate the blood, familial, and tribal ties that form the foundation of Saudi society.

The students rent the *Istiraha* on a weekly, monthly, or annual basis, and the group members pay the costs equally, which is a principle that ensures dedication, understanding, and unity among the group members. A member of the group is tasked with collecting everyone's portion. The authorized principle for giving cash for other expenditures is the principle of equal contribution values (food, electricity, and, when needed, furnishing the *Istiraha* with the stuff that the group needs).

In addition, as a prerequisite for joining the group, each new member must adhere to the idea of contribution parity concerning rental and housing expenses. If a member of the organization drops out, the expenditures are redistributed among the remaining members. The principle of solidarity among the group's members is the positive psychological and sociological reinforcement that strengthens their relationship and maintains the league's bond.

Furthermore, solidarity is reflected in the distribution of labor in the *Istiraha*, as the respondents disclosed that they frequently cook in the *Istiraha*, particularly on weekends. Although the respondents accepted that it is a role assigned to the woman in the home, in the *Istiraha* it becomes an obligatory activity, along with amusement, playing, social media use, and even studying during test periods. The students divide tasks such as purchasing, cooking, cleaning, washing, and arranging.

In addition to the values of equality, solidarity, and consultation, which are among the rituals of drawing sociological boundaries for student youth, students mentioned during focus group sessions that confidentiality as a moral value protects the group from intrusions in the students' efforts to build their independence.

In the *Istiraha*, students not only define the bounds of their private areas through rituals and cultural practices but also the spatial boundaries for that privacy. The criteria for selecting an *Istiraha* are its amenities and rental cost, as well as its geographical location, which should be far from the homes of the group members so they can enjoy the

feeling of independence and be away from their families, but close enough so they can return to their homes quickly and easily (if an emergency arises).

The advantage of Istiraha is that it allows youth greater independence than the room. They decide who enters it, choose its location, and carry out activities that they are not allowed to practice in the room. The feelings of youth that they are in the house of their parents represent a psychological and social barrier to practicing what they desire, in addition to the factor of sharing a single room. This advantage significantly explains the number of hours a young person spends in the room compared to Istiraha. However, it does not mean that Istiraha leads to the end of the relationship with the family or to isolation from the family.

The students' responses during the focus group discussions showed that participating in the *Istiraha* is a cultural tradition and a continuation of a family and societal legacy. It also showed their refusal to understand the widespread occurrence of *Istiraha*, particularly among young people, as a rejection of and protest against the family. In contrast, 97.2% of respondents claimed that they inform their parents about the *Istiraha*; 81.6% said that their parents are aware of other friends who gather in the *Istiraha*; and 83.9% said that the father or one of the brothers occasionally pays an unannounced visit to the *Istiraha.*

However, its significance rests in that it is the first area outside the home that allows male students to gather with their friends in a private setting. It is considered uncommon for Saudi youth to have their friends in their rooms due to the conservative culture of Saudi families and the lack of space in their homes. Also, the family home represents the institution of the family and its supervision. Hence, the space of *Istiraha* is the exact opposite of the family's space, as it allows zoning of both virtual and physical spaces.

The value of *Istiraha* is not in gaining independence from the family, which is difficult in all cases due to the economic dependence of the family, but rather in allowing the students to leave behind childhood, experience "self-government," and express themselves (Abbott-Chapman and Robertson, 2009; Reifman et al., 2007).

The tension between the high level of autonomy that students aspire to, and the margin given to them can explain this shift between the space of the room, the space of the house, and the *Istiraha*. The students adopt the strategies of autonomy as an autonomous self, exchange, integration within a generational culture, and reproduction of the social culture that the family as a guardian institution represents.

4. Conclusion

The phenomenon of room culture is not unique to Western countries, as previously believed. With the rise of modern communication technologies and the internet, it has become widespread in most countries and among most social groups. In Saudi Arabia, the culture of the family room is predominantly male-dominated, as cultural and social factors, such as the assignment of home-related tasks to women and the restriction of children from playing outside at a young age, have contributed to this trend. Electronic gadgets and internet access have also played a role in the rise of room culture in the country. The conservative nature of Saudi society has further encouraged the culture of the family room, which serves as a safe space for children to spend extended periods of time with the consent of their parents. However, further research is needed to examine the implications of this phenomenon on social behavior and identity formation among Saudi student youth.

Social media has also played a significant role in allowing Saudi student youth to express themselves and construct their identities, catching up with the rest of Generation Z's youth. The room serves as a private and secure environment where students engage in various activities, including recreation, sports, study, and worship. This space of choice allows adolescents to express their authentic and possible selves, particularly with the freedom to use and choose social media. The layout of the room permits adolescents to determine their connections, consumption, and habits, enhancing their independence. The decorations and furniture in the room serve as cultural and social signifiers that reflect student identity. However, the limited space in the room poses a challenge, as the size of Saudi families makes it challenging to offer a separate bed for everyone. The family home serves as a second location where students access social networking sites, but it also serves other purposes, including acquiring social culture and identity development. Further research is needed to examine the implications of social media on student youth behavior and identity construction in Saudi Arabia.

A recent study sheds light on the culture of the room and *Istiraha* in Saudi Arabia and their significance in the identity formation and socialization of student youth. The study reveals that the culture of the room is more common among males in Saudi Arabia and serves as a space for various activities, including studying, sports, and recreation. The *Istiraha*, on the other hand, fosters a sense of belonging, social cohesion, and autonomy. It is a private space where students experience the values of solidarity, secrecy, and unity and establish rituals that manifest in choosing the location for *Istiraha*, dividing the work within *Istiraha*, and engaging in various forms of entertainment. The study also reveals that the family remains a cultural reference and economic support and that autonomy does not refer to the family as an affiliation but rather to the status within the family. The findings suggest that future research should compare the results with other regions in Saudi Arabia where women have greater freedom and traditional culture has a lesser impact.

The study also highlights the significance of physical and virtual spaces in shaping the identity and autonomy of Saudi student youth. The room and

social media have allowed Saudi student youth to catch up to the rest of Generation Z's youth in terms of self-expression and identity development. The *Istiraha* offers male students the opportunity to gather with friends in a private setting, experience self-government, and express themselves. However, *Istiraha* does not signify the termination of familial relationships or isolation from the family but rather represents the continuation of a family and societal legacy and a cultural tradition. The tension between the high level of autonomy that students aspire to and the margin given to them explains the shift between the space of the room, the space of the house, and the *Istiraha*. Therefore, understanding the cultural and social context in which young people in Saudi Arabia construct their identities and autonomy is crucial.

It is worth mentioning that this study has added value because studies addressing room culture in Western societies analyze it within the cultural privacy of their societies. Despite the abundance of such studies, they did not explore room culture in different cultural patterns. Researchers in Western countries have neglected the emergence of this phenomenon in non-Western societies. Similarly, researchers in Arab countries, and specifically in Saudi Arabia, have generally overlooked the phenomenon of room culture and its connection to the emergence of Istiraha culture as a sociological and anthropological indicator of the profound transformations experienced by these societies and the formation of new social identities, particularly among youth.

This research did not identify any single study conducted on room culture, either in Arab or Saudi societies. Therefore, this study aimed to bridge the gap between Western and Arab studies on room culture. It is the first study to analyze social and cultural change through room culture and Istiraha culture as spaces in and through which Saudi youth identities are formed. This opens horizons for comparisons between forms of social change, room culture, and the dynamics of identity formation in different cultural patterns.

Based on the main results of the study, the following recommendations can be made:

1. Awareness campaigns and educational programs can be initiated to address the gender-based differences in rooms and *Istiraha.* The campaigns can promote healthy and safe interactions and socialization practices among youth, irrespective of gender.
2. Further studies can be conducted in other regions of Saudi Arabia, particularly in major cities such as Riyadh, Jeddah, and Dammam, to compare the results of this study and determine the extent to which traditional culture affects student youth behavior and identity construction.
3. It is important to involve parents in the process of shaping the identities of student youth. This can be done through the organization of workshops and seminars that facilitate discussions between

parents and youth on the importance of identity formation and the role of family in this process.
4. Efforts can be made to bridge the gap between different generations in Saudi Arabia, particularly in the context of the negotiation of different perspectives, attitudes, and assessments. This can be done through inter-generational dialogue programs that facilitate communication and mutual understanding between youth and their parents and grandparents.

The implications of this study can be summarized as follows:

1. The study suggests that the culture of the family room is not unique to certain regions or cultures, as it has become a widespread phenomenon in most countries and among most social groups thanks to modern communication technologies and the internet. This implies that further research is needed to explore the implications of this phenomenon on social behavior and identity formation among young people in various contexts, including Saudi Arabia.
2. The study highlights the significant role of social media in allowing Saudi student youth to express themselves and construct their identities, which is crucial for catching up with the rest of their peers in the Generation Z cohort. The findings suggest that future research should examine how social media use impacts student youth behavior and identity construction in Saudi Arabia, considering the challenges associated with insufficient space in the family room due to the size of Saudi families.
3. The study sheds light on the culture of the room and *Istiraha* in Saudi Arabia, indicating that the family room is largely male-dominated due to cultural and social factors. The findings reveal the importance of the *Istiraha* in amplifying the culture of student youth and fostering a sense of belonging, social cohesion, and autonomy. This implies that policymakers and educators should recognize the significance of private spaces like the *Istiraha* in facilitating youth development in Saudi Arabia and other contexts.
4. The study emphasizes the importance of understanding the significance of physical and virtual spaces in shaping the identity and autonomy of Saudi youth. The findings suggest that the Internet and social media have allowed Saudi youth to catch up with their peers in other parts of the world in terms of self-expression and identity development. However, the study also reveals the tension between the high level of autonomy that students aspire to and the margin given to them. This implies that policymakers and educators should create a conducive environment that balances the need for autonomy with the importance of cultural and societal traditions in shaping youth identity and behavior in Saudi Arabia.

One limitation of this study is that it focused only on male students in Saudi Arabia, and thus the findings may not be generalizable to female students or to other cultural contexts. Another limitation is that the study relied on self-reported measures, which may be subject to social desirability bias and may not accurately reflect participants' actual behaviors or experiences. Finally, the study did not examine the long-term effects of room culture and *Istiraha* on social behavior and identity formation, which would be an important area for future research. Future research could explore the experiences and perspectives of female students in Saudi Arabia regarding room culture and *Istiraha*, as well as the experiences of youth in other cultural contexts. Additionally, future research could use more objective measures, such as behavioral observations or physiological measures, to supplement self-reported measures. Longitudinal studies could be conducted to examine the long-term effects of room culture and *Istiraha* on social behavior and identity formation among Saudi youth. Finally, future research could investigate the potential implications of room culture and Istriraha for mental health outcomes as well as potential interventions that could promote positive outcomes for youth.

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Compliance with ethical standards

Conflict of interest

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