Article

Regional Architecture Building Identity: The Mediating Role of Authentic Pride

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Abstract: The impact of regional architecture on residents' identities varies, involving complex emotional aspects. We conducted an in-depth study of the deep connection between regional architecture and identity in China's Huizhou and Minnan regions, highlighting its key role in stimulating authentic pride. Initially, we carried out a survey among 433 residents from both regions using questionnaires to obtain quantitative data, revealing the mediating role of authentic pride. Subsequently, we conducted in-depth interviews with 20 residents from 4 villages of the 2 regions, and the coding results explained the multidimensional reasons behind the quantitative analysis outcomes. This research not only deepened the understanding of how regional architecture impacts identity recognition but also highlighted the urgency of preserving regional culture under the pressures of globalization and modernization. Moreover, this study provided strong reasons for the preservation of architectural heritage, emphasizing its importance as a cornerstone of identity and a means to enhance community cohesion.

Keywords: architectural heritage; regional culture; identity formation; emotional connection; critical regionalism

1. Introduction

The interaction between architectural heritage and identity formation represents a compelling domain of academic inquiry. As a vital conduit for China's rich cultural heritage, traditional architectural art not only reflects regional characteristics but also integrates profound cultural, historical, and social dimensions [1]. This study delved into the differences in the impact of Hui-style and Min-style architectures on residents' identities, revealing that these are not only material manifestations of cultural heritage but also potent forces in shaping the personal and social identities of the people living within them [2,3]. With hundreds of years of history, these traditional regional architectures encapsulate the philosophical foundations of social-cultural evolution, economic development, and the spirit of the times within their structure and aesthetics [4,5]. The narratives contained within the walls, roofs, and spaces of these buildings present a reflection on community values, desires, and collective memories over lengthy periods. These structures are more than just residences or landmarks; they are concrete manifestations of cultural content, demonstrating the continuity and change in regional socio-cultural structures [6].

Previous research has explored the relationship between architecture and identity, often focusing on how architectural environments reflect and impact culture and personal identity [7,8]. Although existing studies have delved into the aesthetics and functionality of architecture, there has been less focus on the deep emotional connections between individuals and communities with architectural heritage [9]. More specifically, there remains a significant gap in understanding the emotional and psychological aspects of this relationship, especially the mediating role of pride between regional architecture and identity. The core question of this study is as follows: "How does regional architecture impact

the formation of personal and social identities from the perspective of authentic pride?" The aim is twofold: first, to assess the impact of these regional architectures on residents' identities, understanding the broader significance of modern cultural preservation and identity construction; second, to explore the relationship between regional architecture and identity formation, focusing on the emotional connections of authentic pride within these cultural landscapes.

This exploration interprets how regional architecture, as a material carrier of cultural narratives, plays a key role in the process of identity formation, affecting how individuals see themselves and are seen within their communities, thereby strengthening the complex connections between architecture, culture, and identity [10]. Employing a mixed-methods approach, this study combines quantitative data from surveys with qualitative insights from in-depth interviews. This method allows for a comprehensive understanding of complex dynamics. Participants from areas featuring Hui-style and Min-style architectures were involved in the study to explore the extent to which these regional architectures impact their sense of identity and evoke authentic pride. Grounded in a multidisciplinary theoretical framework, this research draws from psychology, architecture, and cultural studies, offering a comprehensive perspective on the phenomena under investigation.

Revealing the subtle ways regional architecture impacts personal and social identity, this study advocates for flexible urban planning and architectural design that recognize and integrate the cultural content and emotional significance of architectural heritage. Ultimately, this research opens new pathways for understanding the profound connection between the architectural environment and human identity, emphasizing the role of authentic pride in this impact. The value of this study lies in its innovative exploration of the emotional and psychological connections between architectural heritage and identity, with a special focus on authentic pride. By revealing how Hui-style and Min-style architectures built personal and social identities, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of the cultural identity formation process. Its findings could inform practices in urban planning, architectural design, and cultural preservation, underscoring the importance of considering emotional connections with architectural heritage. This work highlights the necessity of incorporating cultural and emotional dimensions into discussions about architecture and identity, offering valuable insights for scholars and practitioners.

2. Literature Review

Hui-style architecture and Min-style architecture are both among the six major ancient architectural styles in China. Among them, Hui-style architecture is a mature architectural style of ancient Chinese society, which originated in the ancient Huizhou region (Figure 1a). It was widely spread in the upper reaches of the Qiantang River in the Xin'an River basin and is known for its unique style, exquisite carving art, and rigorous structure [3,11]. Hui-style architecture deeply integrates the natural spirit and local customs and culture of Huizhou, showing local characteristics. Its overall layout is designed to be in harmony with the mountains and water, with a general color scheme of black, white, and grey. The ornamental art cleverly combines wood carving, stone carving, and brick carving, with the horse head wall being the most distinctive feature of the building structure [12,13]. The development of Hui-style architecture has been deeply influenced by the traditional Huizhou culture, which, along with Tibetan culture and Dunhuang culture, is one of the three major regional cultures in China [14]. This culture has had a profound impact on all social strata in China, not only in the field of architecture but also in economics, education, and customs [15]. Through the mobility of the Huizhou merchants in history, the uniqueness of Hui-style architecture was spread to the surrounding areas, significantly influencing the nearby architectural styles and becoming one of the most influential folk architectural forms in the history of Chinese architecture [16,17]. In summary, Hui-style architecture is a testament to the society, history, and culture of ancient Huizhou (Figure 1b).
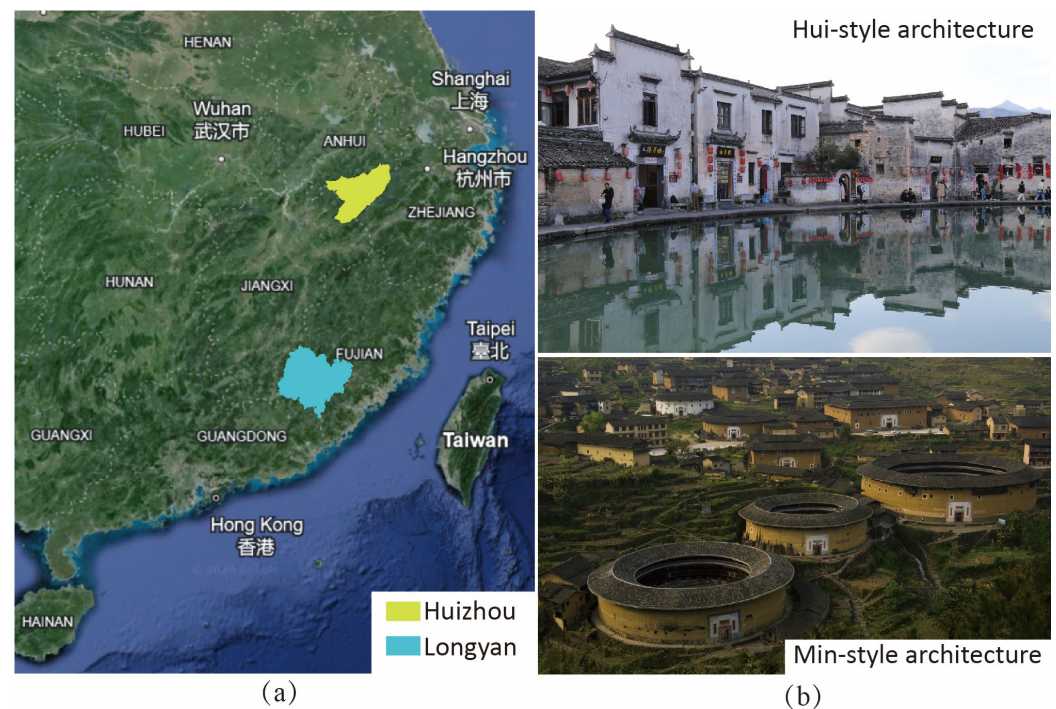
Figure 1. (**a**) Location of Huizhou and Longyan on the map (made by the authors based on Google Maps). (**b**) Comparison of Hui-style architecture in Huizhou and Min-style architecture in Longyan. Photographs taken by the authors.

Min-style architecture is a traditional regional architecture located in southern Fujian Province, China. Unlike Hui-style architecture, Min-style architecture is characterized by a variety of sub-styles, including earth buildings, Central Plains-style buildings, and Hakka enclosed houses [18]. Min-style architecture is also renowned for its unique regional characteristics, rich cultural connotations, and exquisite construction skills, reflecting the rich historical culture and geographical features of the Minnan region [19]. The roofs of Min-style buildings often adopt saddleback, hip-and-gable, or gable-and-hip forms, with uniquely designed ornamental elements on the rooftops, commonly decorated with glazed tiles, forming a distinctive regional feature [20]. Among them, the Hakka enclosed houses, which this study explores, are an important representation within Min-style architecture, mainly distributed in the Hakka regions of Minnan (Southern Fujian) and the mountainous areas in the west, especially in Longyan city (Figure 1a). Hakka enclosed houses are often circular or square, with walls made from the local soil, adapting to the rainy climate of the mountainous areas while also providing strong defensive capabilities, typically housing dozens of families within a single building [21]. Min-style architecture is deeply influenced by Feng Shui concepts in its design and layout, with the positioning, direction, and internal layout of buildings adhering to the principles of Feng Shui, aiming to create an auspicious and harmonious living environment [22] (Figure 1b).

Hui-style and Min-style architectures in ancient times were both products of clan settlements [21,23]. Although each Hui-style building has an independent layout, in the ancient Huizhou area, members of the same clan typically lived within the same village [12]. Each village would have a communal ancestral hall, and through activities such as jointly maintaining the hall and worshiping ancestors, clan cohesion was strengthened, simultaneously preserving and passing down Huizhou's unique culture and traditions [24]. The interior of Hakka enclosed houses usually revolves around one or more courtyards, with living quarters set along the outer walls and a central courtyard for communal activities. As the center of daily life for family members, the courtyard often serves as the venue for various family activities and social ceremonies, such as festival celebrations and clan gatherings, reflecting the deep familial sense and collectivist spirit of the Hakka

people [25]. He et al. pointed out that this layout facilitates communication and cooperation among clan members [26]. For tourists, Hui-style and Min-style architectures are not only windows to appreciate the aesthetics of Chinese traditional architecture but also pathways to deeply understand China's rich history and culture [27]. The design details and construction methods of these buildings reflect the respect for nature, the emphasis on community life, and the importance of cultural inheritance.

Based on critical regionalism, architecture can facilitate the formation and development of identity [4]. Critical regionalism is an architectural concept that emphasizes that architectural forms should not only be physical structures for shelter but should also connect with the local environment, including society, climate, aesthetics, memory, and identity [4,28]. This perspective believes that architecture should reflect and respect the history, culture, climate, and geographical features of its location, creating spatial forms that are both globally aware and rooted in local culture through dialogue with the surrounding environment [29,30]. In this process, architecture becomes a bridge connecting individuals with society, and the past with the present, promoting the formation and development of identity [31,32]. For example, Hui-style architecture and Hakka enclosed houses are not just places of residence; they also serve as visual presentations of Huizhou and Min-nan Hakka cultures, reflecting the history, social structure, and cultural values of these communities [20,23].

Identity refers to an individual's or group's cognition and feelings about their position, role, and attributes in society. It is the process through which individuals understand who they are, which group they belong to, and how they are related to others [33,34]. Measuring identity can provide a more comprehensive and in-depth perspective for understanding an individual's behavior and interactions in society [35]. This is crucial for exploring social dynamics, individual development, and the interaction between the two. Various psychometric questionnaires and measurement tools can be used to assess identity [35–37]. These tools are designed to evaluate different dimensions of identity, such as personal, relational, public, and collective aspects [38]. For example, Johnson et al. measured participants' musical identity using the Musical Identity Measurement (MIM), which consists of four factors: musical calling, musical self-efficacy, emotional attachment, and growth mindset [39]. The study's results showed measurement invariance between male and female participants, supporting the concept of an individual's self-concept related to their musical activities [39].

Personal identity refers to an individual's self-awareness, while social identity refers to the group or category with which a personal identifies. Personal identity emphasizes an individual's awareness of their uniqueness, including personal interests, values, and beliefs [40]. This form of identity helps understand how a person views themselves independently of group influences and how individual choices and actions are driven by personal values and beliefs [41]. Social identity refers to how individuals define themselves based on their social group memberships. This identification is crucial for understanding how individuals see themselves within society and how they interact with different groups [42]. The interaction between social and personal identity is key to understanding individual behavior and decision making, as both can play a role in various contexts, such as organizational identification and job satisfaction [43]. Furthermore, Peterson and Stewart noted that identity can also play a role in behavior [44]. The Social and Personal Identity (SIPI) Scale distinguishes between the interpersonal aspects of the self and the social identity aspects of the self, with the former differentiating the individual from others and the latter identifying the individual through their group membership [45]. The SIPI Scale has been validated in multiple studies, showing good validity [46–48].

Different regional architectures, reflecting varied cultural, social, and folklore aspects, may have distinct impacts on residents' identities. As expressions of regional characteristics, regional architectures can evoke self-perceptions related to specific historical and cultural memories at the individual level [49]. Existing research indicates that regional architecture reflects the cultural values and social customs of their regions. Integrating local traditions, cultural significance, and unique features into architecture helps form a distinctive

identity [5]. Specifically, the regions of Huizhou and Minnan, represented by Hui-style and Min-style architectures, respectively, carry their unique cultural traditions and social histories. Based on this, it is reasonable to infer that regional architecture, reflecting regional differences, would have varying impacts on residents' identities.

Pride is a complex construct, with authentic pride being its positive aspect. Generally, pride is conceptualized into two aspects: authentic pride (AP) and hubristic pride (HP) [50,51]. Authentic pride is a positive emotion stemming from personal achievements, characterized by feelings of accomplishment and self-confidence. However, HP is characterized by feelings and beliefs of arrogance or conceit [52]. The association between AP and HP has been extensively studied, revealing differences in their relationships with personality traits, psychological health outcomes, social status construction, and attribution tendencies [50]. Therefore, AP and HP are distinct constructs, often having opposite associations with other variables. AP, as a positive emotional experience, encourages personal growth, the pursuit of new challenges and opportunities, and typically leads to positive social behaviors, being more beneficial for psychological health [53].

Authentic pride may be a key determinant of identity to some extent. Based on emotional geography, the emotional connections people have with specific places deeply impact their identities [54]. At the individual level, authentic pride is closely associated with enhanced self-esteem, self-efficacy, and positive evaluations of one's abilities [55]. These factors are often influential in promoting the development and consolidation of personal identity [56]. Moreover, research suggests that authentic pride not only affects an individual's self-placement judgments but is also closely related to how they position themselves within social groups [57]. When individuals achieve or exhibit positive personality traits in collective activities, the authentic pride they experience may reinforce their sense of belonging to the group [58]. It is reasonable to speculate that through authentic pride, an individual's positive role and status within social groups can be enhanced, further strengthening social identity.

Based on the literature review above, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: *Regional architecture has a positive significant impact on both personal and social identity.*

H2: *The impact of Hui-style architecture on personal identity is greater than that of Min-style architecture on personal identity.*

H3: *The impact of Hui-style architecture on social identity is greater than that of Min-style architecture on social identity.*

H4: *Authentic pride significantly mediates the relationship between regional architecture and personal identity.*

H5: *Authentic pride significantly mediates the relationship between regional architecture and social identity.*

In the conceptual framework of this study (Figure 2), all variables are identified. We have defined regional architecture as a categorical independent variable, divided into two groups: those living in Hui-style architecture and those living in Min-style architecture. The two dimensions of identity—personal identity and social identity—are identified as ordinal dependent variables. Authentic pride is identified as an ordinal mediating variable. We synthesized theoretical perspectives from different fields, particularly integrating the theory of critical regionalism with the emotional geography of identity, to formulate our hypotheses. Hypothesis H1 (regional architecture has a significant impact on personal and social identity) is based on critical regionalism, which emphasizes how a region's unique regional architecture reflects and shapes the cultural identity of that region. To assess the varying impacts of two regional architectures on identity, we proposed hypotheses H2 and H3. Furthermore, we hypothesized that authentic pride plays a mediating role between

regional architecture and identity formation (H4 and H5), based on emotional geography, which suggests that emotional responses impact an individual's self-perception and sense of belonging to a society.
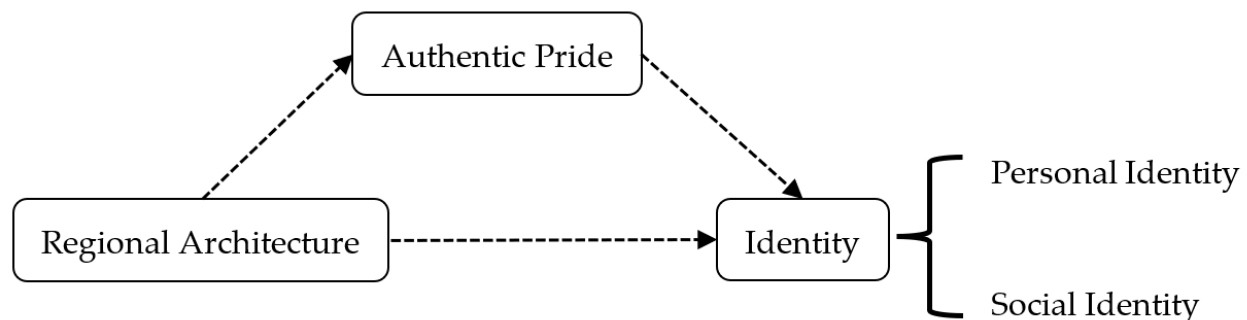

Figure 2. The conceptual framework. Made by the authors based on the literature.

3. Methods

In this study, a two-phase explanatory mixed-methods research design was utilized [59]. Initially, the mediation effect of authentic pride between architecture and identity was tested through a survey. Subsequently, interview data were used to interpret the analysis results of the questionnaire data. With formal approval from the ethics review committee, this research project was initiated. The entire research process spanned from 7 November 2023 to 20 February 2024, encompassing key phases such as participant recruitment, screening, and data collection. All activities during this period aimed to ensure the systematicity of the research and adherence to ethical standards, including precise recruitment from potential participants, selection of suitable individuals through stringent criteria, and the execution of subsequent data collection tasks. This process not only reflected strict compliance with research ethics review requirements but also guaranteed the maximization of research quality and effectiveness.

3.1. Instruments

In the preliminary phase of this research, a structured questionnaire method was employed for data collection. The questionnaire's design followed the principle of informed consent, with participants beginning to fill out the formal questionnaire only after clearly understanding the research content and its purpose. The questionnaire was divided into 4 main sections, totaling 20 questions, aimed at comprehensively assessing the participants' basic personal information, characteristics of their living environment, levels of pride, and sense of identity. Specifically, the first part of the questionnaire collected basic information from participants, including three indicators: gender, age, and educational background. The subsequent section inquired about the regional architecture of the participants' residences, distinguishing between Hui-style and Min-style architectures, presented in the form of one question. Next, the Authentic Pride Scale measured participants' levels of pride through six questions. Finally, the Identity Scale included ten questions designed to assess individuals' identification with their personal and social identities, measured through five questions about personal identity and five questions about social identity, respectively.

The design of the questionnaire referenced established scales in the existing literature—the Authentic Pride Scale and the Identity Scale [45,60]. As these scales were originally in English and this study was conducted in China, with all respondents being native Chinese speakers, the validity of the translated scales was ensured through two approaches: on the one hand, Chinese translations of the scales were found in the CNKI database [61,62]; on the other hand, given the change in the subject matter of this research, we consulted professors specialized in English to assist us with the translation and proofreading.

After the questionnaire's translation, a pilot study was conducted on 2 January 2024, with 63 participants from Huizhou-Hongcun and Longyan-Hongkeng. The reliability

analysis of the questionnaire showed a Cronbach's alpha coefficient as presented in Table 1, indicating good reliability. Additionally, the KMO value was 0.867, and the significance of Bartlett's test of sphericity was 0.000 < 0.01, indicating good validity of the data. After analyzing the data, discussions were held again with professionals and professors about any unclear statements in the questionnaire, and slight modifications were made to the formal questionnaire to ensure more reliable statistical results could be obtained later.

Table 1. Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

Scale	N of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Authentic Pride	6	0.890
Personal Identity	5	0.817
Social Identity	5	0.822

In the second phase, we utilized in-depth interviews. The interviews were conducted one-on-one and face-to-face, with each respondent's personal information kept confidential. To ensure the respondents felt relaxed, the interview locations were arranged in private rooms of commercial cafes or tea houses in the village. To identify the reasons behind these influence relationships, informed consent documents and interview topics were designed based on the analysis results of the questionnaire's data. When drafting potential questions for the interview topics, special attention was paid to the wording of the questions to ensure they were both precise and inclusive. For respondents living in Hui-style or Min-style buildings, we carefully prepared the questioning method to ensure that only topics related to their regional architecture of residence were asked. The interview topics included questions across four dimensions: 1. Motivations for choosing to live in this regional architecture. 2. Memories of emotional connections between the individual and the architecture. 3. Memories of the individual's participation in the local community. 4. Reasons for experiencing authentic pride.

To ensure the ethicality of the research and the preservation of the rights of the interviewees, informed consent forms were designed for both the questionnaire and interviews. The informed consent forms detailed the purpose of the interview, the process, the rights of the interviewees, how the data would be used, and privacy preservation measures. Easy-to-understand language was used in the informed consent forms, and sufficient information was provided to ensure that the interviewees had a comprehensive understanding of this research. We particularly emphasized transparency and the autonomy of the interviewees, ensuring they understood that their participation was entirely voluntary. They had the right to withdraw their consent at any time without needing to provide a reason. It was also emphasized that all collected data would only be used for research purposes and would be kept strictly confidential. After the interview data were transcribed, they were made available for review by each interviewee. After data analysis was completed, the original interview data would be destroyed to protect the privacy of each interview participant.

3.2. Participants

The participants involved in this study were sourced from four villages in the Huizhou and Longyan regions—Hongcun, Xidi, Chuxi, and Hongkeng villages—because the traditional regional architecture of these four villages is representative [3,20]. With the assistance of village leaders, we accessed the WeChat groups of each village and conducted random sampling within these groups. A total of 582 questionnaires were distributed, with 433 valid responses collected. The demographic statistics of the questionnaire, as illustrated in Figure 3, show a relatively balanced gender distribution. There were 208 male participants and 225 female participants, reflecting the gender balance of the study sample. In terms of age structure, the study sample spanned multiple age groups, demonstrating a degree of diversity. Regarding educational levels, the distribution of the sample revealed a wide range of educational attainments. Among them, the largest group was participants with junior college degrees, totaling 138 individuals.
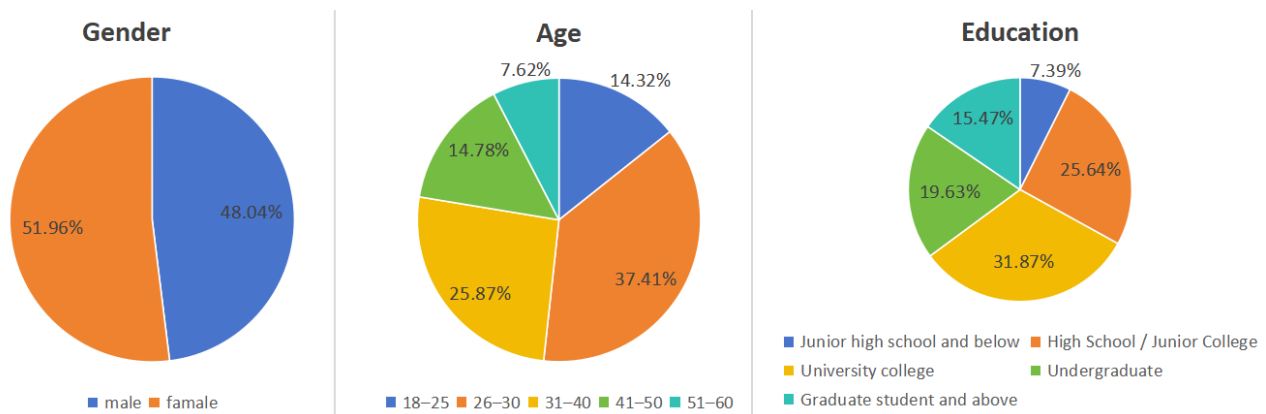
Figure 3. Demographic statistics of questionnaire data. Made by the authors.

The selection of interviewees was based on the group of participants who had previously completed the questionnaire survey. To ensure the representativeness of the sample and the scientific integrity of this study, we employed a simple random sampling method for participants from 4 villages, selecting 5 potential interviewees from each village, totaling 20 people. We ensured that each participant had an equal chance of being selected, thereby avoiding sampling bias and ensuring the randomness and breadth of the sample. After interviewing all the chosen interviewees, no new data emerged, indicating data saturation was reached; hence, no additional interviewees were added.

3.3. Data Collection

To ensure the effectiveness and reliability of the data collection process, we took a series of rigorous steps. First, we actively established contact with the leaders of the four target villages in the region. Through communication with them, we not only gained their support for the research but also ensured their understanding of the research purpose and process. Based on ensuring transparency and building mutual trust, we reached a reciprocal compensation agreement with each leader, agreeing to pay them CNY 100 as a fee for assisting with this research. This compensation was not only a thank you for their time and effort but also aimed at facilitating the smooth progress of this research.

With the assistance of the village leaders, we detailed the purpose, importance, and significance of their participation to potential participants, ensuring each participant signed an informed consent form with a full understanding of the research content and their participation's meaning. This process ensured respect for participant rights and the principle of informed consent, maintaining the ethical standards of the research. At the same time, to further increase the participation rate and express respect for the participants' time and contributions, we offered a CNY 5 financial compensation to each participant who filled out the questionnaire as a participation reward. This compensation mechanism helped to improve the questionnaire response rate, thus ensuring the quality and representativeness of the collected data.

After the preliminary analysis of the questionnaire data, we moved to the next phase of the research—the in-depth interviews, aiming to further explore and understand the motivations and contexts behind the questionnaire results through qualitative methods. First, based on the sampling results of the questionnaire participants, we contacted the leaders of the target village committees again, requesting their support and assistance to effectively establish contact with potential interviewees. We emphasized the importance of the interview phase and ensured that the community leaders fully understood the research purpose and process so they could provide accurate information in the process of obtaining interviewee consent.

After gaining the assistance of the leaders of the neighborhood committees, we meticulously designed and drafted a new informed consent form. This form detailed the purpose

of the interview, the expected time commitment (approximately 30 to 45 min), an overview of the interview content, and measures for participants' rights and privacy preservation. After ensuring that all potential interviewees fully understood the research purpose and their rights, we arranged formal interview times and locations with the interviewees. Before the start of each interview, we reconfirmed the interviewee's informed consent and ensured they understood that the interview would be recorded for research analysis purposes, while reiterating our commitment to confidentiality of their information. During the interviews, we followed the previously prepared topics to ensure that rich qualitative data could be collected while maintaining the flexibility to explore new information provided by the interviewees. As a token of appreciation for the interviewees' time investment and data contribution, we provided a financial incentive of CNY 200 to each participant after each interview was successfully completed.

3.4. Data Analysis

To accurately verify the hypotheses of this study, a series of statistical methods were utilized for in-depth analysis. Specifically, this study first applied correlation analysis to explore the relationships among regional architecture, personal identity, social identity, and authentic pride. Correlation analysis reveals whether there was a statistical association between variables and the direction and strength of this association, providing preliminary evidence for subsequent regression analysis. To compare whether there are significant differences in the impact of Hui-style and Min-style architectures on personal identity and social identity, *t*-test analysis was further employed. By comparing the mean values of two independent samples through the *t*-test, we can intuitively judge the differences in the impact of the two regional architectures on identity. Subsequently, regression analysis was used to further explore and confirm the nature and strength of these relationships, especially the extent to which regional architecture impact personal identity and social identity. By constructing linear regression models, we not only tested the direct effects of Hui-style and Min-style architectures on personal and social identity but also measured whether authentic pride acts as a mediator between regional architecture and identity.

To further interpret the analysis results of the questionnaire data and reasonably analyze the interview data, this study employed thematic analysis. Thematic analysis enables us to understand complex phenomena within the dataset in detail. The implementation process of thematic analysis in this study followed a series of precise steps, including open coding, axial coding, and selective coding, to ensure an in-depth interpretation of the interview data. During the open coding phase, we conducted a preliminary analysis of each interviewee's responses, identifying key concepts and phenomena within the data. This process involved reading through the interview texts line by line, identifying basic elements that reflect the interviewees' perspectives, feelings, and experiences, and categorizing them into preliminary codes. Subsequently, in the axial coding phase, we organized the preliminary codes generated during open coding into more focused themes or categories. In the selective coding phase, we further refined the themes, selecting core themes that best explained the entirety of the data. The aim of this phase was to construct a narrative framework around the core theme, showcasing the relationships between different themes and explaining how they collectively contribute to shaping the interviewees' sense of identity and feelings about regional architecture. We focused on a comparative analysis between interviewees living in Hui-style and Min-style architectures, comparing the discussion content of qualitative data coding results, aiming to reveal potential reasons behind the differences in questionnaire analysis results between residents of the two regions.

4. Results

4.1. Analysis of Model Relationships

As shown in Table 2, in the correlation analysis of variables, the regional architecture of residence, authentic pride, personal identity, and social identity were analyzed for

correlations in pairs. The correlation results show a significant positive relationship among the three main variables.

Table 2. Pearson's correlation coefficient results.

	Regional Architecture	Authentic Pride	Personal Identity	Social Identity
Regional Architecture	1			
Authentic Pride	−0.111 *	1		
Personal Identity	−0.191 **	0.567 **	1	
Social Identity	0.167 **	0.094 *	0.278 **	1

$* p < 0.05$, $** p < 0.01$.

The analysis results regarding the impact of regional architecture on personal identity and social identity are presented in Table 3. In the impact of regional architecture on personal identity, the effect coefficient is −0.191 (t = −4.030, $p < 0.05$); in the impact of regional architecture on social identity, the effect coefficient is 0.314 (t = 3.510, $p < 0.05$). Therefore, regional architecture has a significant impact on both personal identity and social identity, confirming Hypothesis H1.

Table 3. The impact of regional architecture on identity.

	Personal Identity	Social Identity
Independent variable—regional architecture (1 = Hui-style architecture, 2 = Min-style architecture)	−0.191 ** (−4.030)	0.314 ** (3.510)
Sample size	433	433
R^2	0.036	0.028
Adjustment of R^2	0.034	0.026
F value	16.243, $p = 0.000$	12.323, $p = 0.000$

$** p < 0.01$.

According to Table 4, the impact of regional architecture on both personal identity and social identity is significant ($p < 0.05$). The impact of regional architecture on personal identity shows significance at the 0.01 level (t = 4.082, $p = 0.000$), with the average value for Hui-style architecture (3.61) being significantly higher than that for Min-style architecture (3.26). Therefore, Hypothesis H2 is supported. The impact of regional architecture on social identity also shows significance at the 0.01 level (t = −3.510, $p = 0.000$), with the average value for Hui-style architecture (2.95) being significantly lower than that for Min-style architecture (3.27). Therefore, Hypothesis H3 is not supported.

Table 4. Results of *t*-test analysis of the two regional architectures.

Dependent Variable—Regional Architecture (Mean ± Standard Deviation)	Personal Identity	Social Identity
Hui-style architecture ($n = 206$)	3.61 ± 0.76	2.95 ± 0.95
Min-style architecture ($n = 227$)	3.26 ± 0.99	3.27 ± 0.91
t	4.082	−3.510
p	0.000 **	0.000 **

$** p < 0.01$.

Regression analysis was carried out with authentic pride as the independent variable and personal identity as the dependent variable, and the results are shown in Table 5. The model formula is personal identity = 1.374 + 0.578 × authentic pride, and the model R^2 is 0.322, which means that authentic pride explains 32.2% of the variation in personal identity. The model was found to pass the F-test (F = 204.256, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$). The value of the regression coefficient

of authentic pride is 0.567 (t = 14.292, p = 0.000 < 0.01), which implies that authentic pride will have a significant positive impact relationship on personal identity.

Table 5. Results of linear regression analysis of authentic pride on personal identity (n = 433).

	Non-Standardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	t	p	Covariance Diagnostics	
	B	Standard Error	Beta			VIF	Tolerance Level
Constant	1.374	0.148	-	9.281	0.000 **	-	-
Authentic Pride	0.578	0.040	0.567	14.292	0.000 **	1.000	1.000
R^2				0.322			
Adjustment of R^2				0.320			
F				F (1.431) = 204.256, p = 0.000			
D-W value				1.287			

Dependent variable: personal identity. ** p < 0.01.

In the mediation effect model test of authentic pride in the impact of regional architecture on personal identity, regional architecture has a significant impact on personal identity (Table 6). Regional architecture also has a significant impact on authentic pride. In the combined impact of residential style and authentic pride on personal identity, the significance levels of both remain. Therefore, authentic pride plays a partial mediating role in the impact of residential style on personal identity. Hence, Hypothesis H4 is supported.

Table 6. Modelling tests of the mediating effect of authentic pride in regional architecture on personal identity.

	Personal Identity	Authentic Pride	Personal Identity
IV—regional architecture	−0.191 ** (−4.030)	−0.111 * (−2.315)	−0.129 ** (−3.275)
Authentic Pride			0.553 ** (14.000)
Sample size	433	433	433
R^2	0.036	0.012	0.338
Adjustment of R^2	0.034	0.010	0.335
F value	16.243, p = 0.000	5.361, p = 0.021	109.797, p = 0.000

* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, t-values in parentheses.

Using authentic pride as the independent variable and social identity as the dependent variable for linear regression analysis, it can be seen from Table 7 that the model equation is social identity = 2.762 + 0.100 × authentic pride. The model's R-squared value is 0.009, meaning that authentic pride can explain 0.9% of the variation in social identity. When conducting the F-test on the model, it was found that the model passed the F-test (F = 3.878, p = 0.050 < 0.05). The regression coefficient value of authentic pride is 0.094 (t = 1.969, p = 0.050 < 0.05), meaning that authentic pride has a significant positive impact on social identity.

In the mediation effect model examining the role of authentic pride in the impact of residential style on social identity, the residential style had a significant impact on social identity (Table 8). Residential style also had a significant impact on authentic pride. In the combined impact of regional architecture and authentic pride on social identity, the significance levels of both remained. Therefore, it can be concluded that authentic pride plays a partial mediating role in the impact of residential style on social identity. Hence, Hypothesis H5 is supported.

Table 7. Results of linear regression analysis of authentic pride on social identity (*n* = 433).

	Non-Standardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	t	*p*	Covariance Diagnostics	
	B	**Standard Error**	**Beta**			**B**	**Standard Error**
Constant	2.762	0.187	-	14.793	0.000 **	-	-
Authentic Pride	0.100	0.051	0.094	1.969	0.050 *	1.000	1.000
R^2				0.009			
Adjustment of R^2				0.007			
F			F (1.431) = 3.878, *p* = 0.050				
D-W value				0.668			

Dependent variable: social identity. * *p* < 0.05, ** *p* < 0.01.

Table 8. Modelling tests of the mediating effect of authentic pride in regional architecture on social identity.

	Social Identity	Authentic Pride	Social Identity
IV—regional architecture	0.314 ** (3.510)	−0.197 * (−2.315)	0.338 ** (3.775)
Authentic Pride			0.122 * (2.405)
Sample size	433	433	433
R^2	0.028	0.012	0.041
Adjustment of R^2	0.026	0.010	0.036
F	12.323, *p* = 0.000	5.361, *p* = 0.021	9.123, *p* = 0.000

* *p* < 0.05, ** *p* < 0.01, t-values in parentheses.

4.2. Interview Coding Results

4.2.1. Motivations for Choosing Regional Architecture

From the interviewees' feedback on their reasons for residence, we identified four common reasons and three distinct reasons. By meticulously coding the interview content, we extracted key motivations behind the residents' decision making and summarized these motivations in Table 9. Although residents of Hui-style and Min-style regional architecture have common considerations when choosing their place of residence, there are also regional differences. Common reasons reflect the consistency of cultural values and lifestyles across regions, while the differentiated reasons reveal the diversity in residential environment choices impacted by cultural characteristics and personal expectations of different areas.

Table 9. Coding results for respondents' motivations to live in both types of buildings.

Hui-Style Architecture	Min-Style Architecture
Clan heritage	Clan heritage
Historical value	Historical value
Ecological environment	Ecological environment
Aesthetic preference	Aesthetic preference
Tourism economy	Living convenience
Pursuit of individuality	Vintage nostalgia
Spiritual sustenance	

Common Motivations: Interviewees from both locations emphasized the importance of family heritage, inheriting properties passed down through generations, reflecting deep family bonds and respect for ancestral legacy. Furthermore, interviewees expressed a profound identification with the historical value symbolized by both Hui-style and Min-style architectures; residing in these places meant not just living in a space but finding one's place in the flow of history. Additionally, residents of both areas mentioned the impact of the ecological environment on their housing choices, favoring a lifestyle in harmony

with nature. They also shared an aesthetic preference for these two regional architectures, considering it a form of aesthetic enjoyment in their daily lives.

Differential Motivations: In the reasons for choosing to live in Hui-style architecture, several significant region-specific factors were identified. First is the consideration of the tourism economy; residents of Huizhou recognize the developed tourism economy in Huizhou, living in such architecture facilitates their involvement in the tourism industry, thereby bringing them economic benefits. Secondly, the pursuit of individuality is also a key factor in the choice of Hui-style architecture; residents tend to satisfy their individuality and aesthetics through the uniqueness of these buildings. Finally, Hui-style architecture provides residents with a spiritual solace, these buildings are seen as spiritual sanctuaries against the hustle and bustle of modern life. In contrast, residents choosing Min-style architecture emphasized different motivations. Convenience of life was a major consideration, indicating that Min-style architecture is more aligned with the needs of modern living, facilitating closer communication among residents. Additionally, residents mentioned retro nostalgia as a motivation for choosing Min-style architecture, reflecting their nostalgia for past ways of life and respect for traditional values.

4.2.2. Emotional Connections

When analyzing the emotional connections between the interviewees and both Hui-style and Min-style architectures, we discovered several common themes as well as some distinct differences. Through meticulous coding, we revealed the deep motivations behind these connections and summarized them in Table 10. While residents living in these two regional architectures share commonalities in forming emotional connections, they also clearly exhibit regional uniqueness. The shared emotional connections reflect a cultural intersection and the universality of living habits, while the differentiated connections showcase the diversity in emotional formation due to regional cultural characteristics and individual personalities of the residents.

Table 10. Coding results for respondents' personal emotional connections to two styles of architectures.

Hui-Style Architecture	Min-Style Architecture
Ancestral bloodlines	Ancestral bloodlines
Childhood memories	Childhood memories
Cultural habits	Cultural habits
Artistic inspiration	Family harmony
Spiritual sustenance	
Economic benefits	

Shared Emotional Connections: Both residents of Hui-style and Min-style architectures profoundly embody respect for ancestral lineage, valuing these buildings as family heritage and viewing them as an inseparable connection with their ancestors. Additionally, childhood memories hold a significant place in the hearts of residents from both areas, with these buildings witnessing their growth footsteps and inspiring deep emotional resonance. Cultural habits also represent a clear commonality, as residents cultivate a unique cultural lifestyle through daily practices in these traditional buildings.

Differentiated Emotional Connections: Among residents of Hui-style architecture, artistic inspiration is frequently mentioned; the historical ambiance and exquisite craftsmanship of these buildings stimulate residents' creativity and artistic pursuits. The importance of spiritual solace is also very apparent to them, with the role of buildings in their hearts transcending a living space to become a material carrier on a spiritual level. Notably, economic benefits are also an essential consideration; residents of Huizhou recognize the potential of combining traditional architecture with the tourism industry, bringing them additional economic value. For residents of Min-style architecture, family harmony is a unique emotional connection point, emphasizing that living in Min-style buildings is more conducive to enhancing family relationships.

4.2.3. Interaction between Individuals and Communities

In the analysis of community interactions among residents living in Hui-style and Min-style architectures, significant regional differences were noted. Although no common patterns of community interaction were identified, each regional architecture exhibited its unique social communication characteristics, which were detailly coded and summarized in Table 11. These differentiated community interaction patterns highlight the distinctive features of Hui-style and Min-style architecture residents in community culture and social activities. Residents of Hui-style architecture utilize their cultural and tourism resources as bridges for interaction with the outside world, whereas residents of Min-style architecture rely more on traditional community structures and activities to maintain close community ties.

Table 11. Coding results for respondents' community interactions.

Hui-Style Architecture	Min-Style Architecture
Foreign cultural exchange	Clan celebrations
Mutual assistance in tourism resources	Neighborhood assistance
	Participation in traditional activities
	Life skills exchange
	Environmental sharing and conservation
	Common religious beliefs

Residents of Hui-style architecture seem to have less interest in community interactions, or there are fewer local communication activities. Interviewees shared their experiences of cultural exchange with foreign cultures through participation in the tourism industry. They claimed that most local residents in the Huizhou area are involved in the tourism industry, which is the local pillar industry, leading to very frequent interactions with tourists. Additionally, due to the development of the tourism industry in recent years, mutual assistance in tourism resources has become another key aspect of community interactions. Residents promote the prosperity of the tourism industry through resource and information sharing, which also strengthens the connections and cooperation among community members.

In contrast, residents of Min-style architecture have richer community activities, with more diverse experiences appearing in the coding results. Among these, the holding of clan celebrations is particularly important, as interviewees claimed these activities strengthen the connections among clan members and promote cultural heritage. Mutual assistance among neighbors reflects the tradition of close cooperation within the community, where residents support each other in daily life and jointly face life's challenges. Interviewees indicated that residents actively participate in various traditional activities in daily life, maintaining the vitality of community culture. The exchange of life skills reveals the sharing of daily skills and knowledge among residents, strengthening the community's self-sufficiency. Shared and conserved environments are common concerns among residents, reflecting their commitment to sustainable lifestyles. Finally, religious beliefs also hold a place in the hearts of Min-style architecture's residents. Interviewees emphasized that there are common beliefs and worship activities locally, providing them with a unified spiritual pursuit.

4.2.4. The Source of Authentic Pride

In analyzing the reasons behind the pride felt by residents of Hui-style and Min-style architectures, we identified a range of differentiated factors. Although no common causes were recognized, each regional architecture evoked a unique sense of pride among its residents (Table 12). These coding results highlight the profound emotional connection and pride residents feel towards the Hui-style and Min-style regional architectures, which stem not only from the buildings themselves but also from what the architecture represents in terms of economic value, social status, cultural heritage, and community relationships. The pride of residents living in Hui-style architecture is often associated with the guardian-

ship of economic and cultural heritage, whereas residents of Min-style architecture derive their sense of pride more from community life and traditional culture.

Table 12. Coding results for sources of true pride.

Hui-Style Architecture	Min-Style Architecture
Economic income stabilization	Unique living style
Travel policy support	Unity of community
Family honor transmission	Experiencers of traditional culture
Heirs of traditional arts	The collective spirit of the village
Guardian of cultural heritage	The powerful force of belief

Residents of Hui-style architecture experience authentic pride for a variety of reasons. Interviewees expressed that living in the village allows residents not only to enjoy a stable life but also to benefit from a stable economic income derived from the flourishing tourism industry, significantly enhancing their sense of happiness. Additionally, the local government's tourism support policies have helped to further solidify this sense of security and achievement. A profound sense of family honor and legacy makes residents proud to continue their family history. As inheritors of traditional arts, they cherish and continue the craftsmanship passed down through generations, giving them a deep sense of fulfilment. Lastly, residents recognize their role as cultural heritage guardians in preserving and disseminating unique culture, and this sense of responsibility further deepens their pride.

For residents of Min-style architecture, authentic pride stems from several aspects closely related to their lifestyle. The unique lifestyle provides residents with distinctive daily experiences, one source of their pride. Community unity signifies close connections among community members, thereby enhancing their pride in the harmonious development of the community. As experiencers of traditional culture, they participate in and enjoy regional traditions, which reinforce their respect for and pride in their cultural roots. The unity of the village collective reflects residents' commitment to common goals and pursuits, while the strength of their beliefs provides spiritual support and a source of pride.

5. Discussion

5.1. Interpretation with the Previous Literature

Our analysis confirmed Hypothesis H1, demonstrating that regional architecture has a significant impact on the construction of personal and social identities. This finding aligns with the existing literature that views the architectural environment as a factor in the evolution of identity [49]. The regional differences between Hui-style and Min-style architectures, each with its unique historical and cultural connotations, seem to have profound effects on individuals and communities in constructing their narratives. This validates the idea that architecture transcends mere structure to become a symbolic carrier of culture and history [63]. Our results prompt a re-evaluation of the architectural environment, advocating for its recognition as an active participant in shaping identity. This insight encourages further exploration of how the aesthetics and functionality of architecture affect social structures and individual perceptions, highlighting the need for an integrated approach in urban planning and heritage conservation that respects the identity-forming capacity of architectural design.

The motivational factors we identified—Clan heritage, historical value, ecological environment, aesthetic preference, tourism economy, pursuit of individuality, spiritual sustenance, living convenience, and vintage nostalgia—are deeply intertwined with the impact of regional architecture on identity formation. These motivations for choosing specific regional architecture elaborate on the multidimensional factors through which architecture impacts identity. Specifically, clan heritage and historical value relate directly to continuity and a sense of belonging, reinforcing identity rooted in tradition [23]. Similarly, aesthetic preferences and the pursuit of individuality reflect how architectural choices express personal values and tastes, further shaping an individual's self-concept [64,65].

The ecological environment and living convenience highlight practical and ethical considerations aligned with individual lifestyle choices and environmental consciousness, affecting both individual and community identity [66]. The tourism economy and vintage nostalgia emphasize the economic and social dimensions of regional architecture, revealing how community identity evolves with external perceptions and a place's collective memory [67]. In summary, these motivations underscore the complex relationship between regional architecture and identity, indicating that individuals' and communities' choices of their architectural environment profoundly reflect their identity, values, and desires.

Our quantitative analysis confirmed Hypothesis H2, indicating that Hui-style architecture has a greater impact on personal identity than Min-style architecture. The intricate craftsmanship and design associated with Hui-style architecture symbolize the achievements of its ancestors, resonating deeply with the construction of personal identity [12]. This suggests that beyond collective cultural narratives, Hui-style architecture plays a broader role in shaping individual self-concepts, highlighting how regional architecture can facilitate a complex understanding of oneself and tradition in multifaceted ways. The qualitative data analysis underscored the commonalities and differences in emotional connections between Hui-style and Min-style architectures, suggesting that the differences in their impact on personal identity stem from multiple aspects.

In both regional architectures, residents value connections with ancestors and cherish childhood memories, thus forming a foundational layer of personal identity linked to heritage and growth experiences. Cultural customs further solidify this aspect, where daily life within these historical buildings cultivates a lifestyle imbued with traditional values [68]. The distinction lies in the nuanced ways residents interact with these spaces. Hui-style architecture tends to inspire artistic creativity and offer spiritual solace, indicating its role extends beyond mere habitation to becoming a cradle for enriching intellectual and emotional life. The economic benefits from the integration of traditional architecture and tourism underscore its practical contribution to personal identity, merging economic gains with cultural pride [27]. Conversely, Min-style architecture emphasizes familial harmony, highlighting the importance of social relationships and collective wellbeing [3]. The layout design of Min-style architecture may support more community interactions, shaping an identity cantered around family and community networks [21]. The differences in emotional connections across regional architecture illustrate the complex ways architecture impacts personal identity—where functional design and intangible cultural values intertwine, thus constructing unique self-structures.

Contrary to the expected results of Hypothesis H3, the impact of Hui-style architecture on social identity is less than that of Min-style architecture. This might reflect the communal housing arrangements of Min-style architecture, which could foster stronger social connections and a sense of community belonging [2,69]. The design and practicality of Min-style spaces promote shared experiences, such as communal courtyards and public halls, which are crucial for cultivating strong community bonds [18]. These shared experiences are an integral part of Min-style architecture, indicating its significant contribution to collective social identity. This finding illustrates the multifaceted role of architecture in shaping community dynamics, highlighting the complex interplay between the architectural environments and the social structures it accommodates [70].

The greater impact of Min-style architecture on social identity compared to Hui-style architecture is due to multiple factors. The communal housing arrangements of Min-style architecture foster a strong support network and sense of community belonging, with frequent clan celebrations and neighborly mutual aid serving as evidence [71]. These community-oriented practices are crucial for nurturing a collective culture and sense of social identity. Active participation in traditional activities, exchange of life skills, and joint management of the environment further strengthen community ties. Additionally, a common religious belief provides a form of spiritual unity, reinforcing this shared identity [22]. In contrast, residents of Hui-style architecture focus more on tourism and external cultural exchanges, suggesting their social interactions differ from those of Min-

style architecture, which may not transform into community identity as significantly as the community activities associated with Min-style buildings.

According to Hypothesis H4, authentic pride plays a significant mediating role between regional architecture and personal identity. The analysis supports this mediating role, highlighting the psychological interplay between an individual's environment and self-esteem. The positive emotional response to one's living space, as a reflection of personal success, seems to be central to how individuals construct their personal identity. This authentic pride may stem not only from the aesthetics and functionality of the architecture but also from its symbolic value [72]. Consistent with Hypothesis H5, authentic pride also mediates between regional architecture and social identity. This suggests that pride in one's residence, due to its rich cultural connotations and aesthetic appeal, extends into the social realm, enhancing the sense of community belonging [73]. In other words, the sense of pride associated with personal and collective achievements related to regional architecture can enhance an individual's sense of social identity within their community.

Qualitative research results surrounding Hypotheses H4 and H5 reveal the rich sense of pride among residents of Hui-style and Min-style architectures. For Hui-style residents, pride arises from economic stability brought by tourism, support from government policies, and the transmission of family honor and traditional arts through generations [74]. These factors together form a sense of pride rooted in economic prosperity and cultural stewardship. In stark contrast, Min-style residents derive clear pride from their unique lifestyle, which promotes community cohesion and cultural participation [75]. Participation in traditional customs and a collective spirit strengthen a shared identity, while deep-rooted beliefs provide spiritual support. In terms of how regional architecture impact social identity, these community elements are likely to play a crucial mediating role in fostering authentic pride, thereby supporting the findings related to Hypothesis H5. Both architectural styles serve as conduits for pride, albeit through different channels—Hui-style through cultural heritage and economic means, and Min-style through community living and shared experiences. This dual pathway illustrates the complex interplay between architecture and identity, showing how our physical living spaces profoundly affect both the personal pride in individual achievements and the collective pride in shared heritage and beliefs.

5.2. Research Significance

The significance of this study lies in its interdisciplinary contributions, spanning urban sociology, cultural heritage preservation, and the psychological impact of the architectural environment on residents. On the one hand, by exploring the reasons residents take pride in their traditional architectural surroundings, it reveals the key role these buildings play in maintaining cultural continuity and fostering community bonds. Hui-style architecture, as a significant tourism resource, has directly promoted the development of the local economy. According to our survey, residents living in Hui-style buildings, by participating in the tourism industry, have enjoyed a stable source of economic income. This has not only increased the economic stability of the residents but also ignited their enthusiasm for maintaining and preserving this unique regional architecture, thereby fostering personal authentic pride. The deep-rooted connection between Hui-style architecture and economic stability and cultural heritage preservation illustrates how traditional customs and economic vitality are intertwined, becoming sources of individual and collective pride. These findings can guide policy making in cultural tourism and heritage preservation to ensure a balance between the economic benefits of tourism and the integrity and sustainability of cultural heritage. On the other hand, the shared identity and collective pride of Min-style architecture's residents also underscore the importance of community-focused planning in urban development. This suggests that architectural design can and should extend beyond aesthetic and functional considerations to include promoting community interaction and support systems crucial for social welfare. By doing so, the architectural environment can become a catalyst for social cohesion and identity affirmation.

This study paves the way for future research on the impact of regional architecture on residents' identities and highlights the potential of cultural heritage as a sustainable resource for community development. It sets a precedent for using residents' pride in their living environment to strengthen the social structure of the community, thereby enriching a sense of belonging and shared identity. This dual approach acknowledges both the personal aspects of pride related to regional architecture and its collective aspects, offering a more comprehensive understanding of how our material surroundings shape us and our connections with others. The insights into pride—the impact on personal and social identity—emphasize the necessity of a meticulous approach in the preservation and development of living spaces, which are not merely places of residence but also create homes filled with meaning, history, and a sense of belonging.

5.3. Research Limitations and Future Recommendations

This study provides noteworthy insights into how regional architecture impacts personal and social identity, yet it also acknowledges certain limitations, providing pathways for further exploration. This research, being concentrated in the Huizhou and Minnan regions, may not fully reflect the impact of architecture, suggesting the need for broader geographical inclusivity in future studies. Moreover, while efforts were made to ensure the representativeness of the sample, expanding the diversity of the population would offer a more comprehensive understanding of architecture's impact. The quantitative analysis of this study lays a solid foundation; however, integrating qualitative research could provide richer and more detailed insights into the complex relationship between architecture and identity. Based on these limitations, future research could explore the intersections of architecture with socio-economic factors, environmental sustainability, and architectural technological advancements to understand their combined effects on identity formation and community cohesion.

Addressing the identified limitations, future research should broaden its geographical scope to include various urban and rural settings to enhance the universality of the research findings. To gain a more comprehensive understanding of architecture's impact on identity, it is crucial to expand the range of participants to cover individuals from different age groups, professions, and cultural backgrounds. Additionally, employing qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews or case studies would allow a deeper exploration of the emotional and cultural connections with regional architecture. Longitudinal studies could elucidate how changes in the architectural environment over time impact personal and social identity. Finally, cross-cultural comparisons would reveal the role of cultural backgrounds in the architecture–identity relationship, enriching our understanding of how architectural environments shape us.

6. Conclusions

This study focused on the Huizhou and Minnan regions, delving into the intricate interplay between regional architectures and the formation of personal and social identities. Our investigation reveals that regional architecture significantly impacts identity formation, with authentic pride playing a partial mediating role. These emotions are not merely byproducts of architectural aesthetics and historical value but are essential components that link individuals and communities to their architectural surroundings, fostering a sense of belonging and identity. We discovered that these traditional regional buildings, as carriers of culture and history, also profoundly impact residents' economic lives and community cohesion. Through quantitative and qualitative analyses, we demonstrated that residents living in these buildings, rich in cultural heritage, experience a significant positive impact on their personal and social identity.

Architecture is not isolated but is a tangible manifestation of a region's rich culture, behaviors, beliefs, and sacred spaces. The tangible aspects of regional architecture—its physical form, structure, and spatial arrangements—offer a visible lens through which a place's identity can be perceived. However, intangible aspects, including cultural prac-

tices, belief systems, traditional knowledge, and symbolic meanings, equally contribute to shaping a place's identity. These intangible elements inject life into physical structures, endowing them with a sense of purpose, belonging, and continuity. For example, intricate carvings in Hui-style architecture are not just ornamental but encapsulate the stories, beliefs, and aspirations passed down through generations within the community. Similarly, communal spaces in Min-style architecture facilitate traditional social practices, reflecting a collective identity deeply rooted in public life and cooperation. Therefore, when reflecting on the significant impact of regional architecture on identity, it is necessary to consider both its tangible and intangible dimensions.

This holistic approach allows for a more nuanced understanding of how regional architecture, as a material carrier, interacts with cultural, social, and symbolic elements to shape a place's identity. Recognizing this complex interplay can provide valuable insights for urban planning, architectural design, and cultural preservation efforts aimed at fostering a sense of belonging while respecting the diversity and uniqueness of regional cultures. In light of this, future research and practice in architecture and urban planning should strive to integrate these multifaceted impacts, ensuring the development and preservation of our architectural environments not only reflect but enrich the cultural characteristics of the communities they serve. By embracing both the tangible and intangible aspects of regional architecture, we can contribute to creating spaces that resonate physically and hold cultural significance and identity affirmation.

In this process, authentic pride emerges as a key player. This emotion, rooted in the appreciation of architectural heritage, not only enhances self-confidence and self-efficacy but also strengthens social ties and collective communication. This feeling stems not just from the appreciation of architectural aesthetics but more so from how architecture serves as a vessel for the transmission of regional culture. It fosters a deep connection with regional culture and, through lived experiences and community interactions, reinforces the construction of identity. Moreover, authentic pride reflects residents' positive evaluation of their living environment and constructs meaning within a broader cultural and social context. It underscores the significant role of architecture in shaping both the physical landscape and the emotional and psychological aspects of individuals and communities. Our findings indicate that authentic pride can amplify the positive impact of architectural aesthetics on personal identity recognition, followed by a positive impact on social identity, thereby highlighting the subtle role of architectural aesthetics in the dynamics of identity formation.

In summary, this study underscores the vital role of traditional architecture in preserving cultural heritage, promoting economic stability, and enhancing community cohesion. The regional architectures of the Huizhou and Minnan regions are more than just a backdrop for residents' lives; through the mechanism of authentic pride, they become an indispensable component of personal and social identity structures. Through our conclusions, we call for greater attention to the value of traditional regional architecture in modern society and emphasize the importance of preserving traditional cultural heritage against the backdrop of globalization and modernization. This research advocates for a broader understanding of the emotional and psychological impacts of architecture and suggests that future studies should continue to explore these aspects across different cultural and architectural contexts. By deepening our understanding of the emotional connections between people and their architectural environments, we can better appreciate the complex ways in which architecture contributes to our sense of self and community identity. By gaining a deeper understanding of the relationship between these regional architectures and resident identities, we can better recognize the importance of preserving and utilizing these cultural heritages, offering valuable insights for future urban planning and community development. This study provides new insights for urban planning, architectural design, tourism development, and cultural preservation fields, highlighting the importance of considering the relationships between architecture and personal and social identities.

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