

**ADDRESSING THE GAP IN THE ARTS AND CULTURE INDUSTRY IN DUBAI:
PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS**

BY

SALEM MOHAMMAD HUMAID ALRIYAMI

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Chapter 6: Presentation of Cultural Issues in the UAE and Dubai

1. Introduction

The culture of Middle East is vibrant. It is mixed with classic Arab Islamic flavour and western modern thoughts. Many experts believe that the culture of the Arabs and UAE in particular, is pretty dynamic. Every decade shows a new social trend, like 1970s UAE showed a reckless social activity, and the 1980s showed different characteristics. Nowadays, Islamic fundamentalism is knocking the door. Different phases of the UAE's culture have not changed the intellectual sphere of the society. One can really say that the UAE is facing an intellectual bankruptcy. Apart from poetic advancement, UAE's cultural activities are null. There are, of course, cultural activities like seminars, lectures, and fairs, but there are no audiences for them. People do not seem to be interested in cultural activities or preserving ancient traditions. There are, of course, a lot of stories, political analyses, and historical books written, but any new philosophy is not promoted in the society. To evolve, any society needs not only economic progress, but intellectual growth and free society, too. Every civilization has evolved remarkably, not only because of economic and military power, but also by contributions to art, music, literature, and architecture, for example. The culture of the UAE is not getting a motivation or support for a cultural revolution. Education and exposure to different activities is one way to move ahead. Cultural foundations in Dubai are working in this direction very appreciably. There are a lot of foundations whose main work is to reward and promote new thinkers and writers. Cultural foundations in different cities of the UAE are also enthusiastic about their work, but budgetary concerns are a big drawback. Government in the UAE needs to plan their cultural policy proactively. A cultural revolution in the UAE must go hand-in-hand with business development in the country; otherwise, the energizer of a human society, i.e., culture, may go missing from the UAE's fast-changing society.



2. The Cultural Issues

The UAE modern society is one of the fastest changing societies in the world, and the same can be said about the UAE culture. However, there are different misleading and contradicting analyses about the cultural issue in the UAE. There exist three interrelated theories that provide a realistic reading of the cultural issue in the UAE. The first theory stresses that the modern UAE culture, though a young one, has observed two historic phases. The second theory claims that the cultural issue in the UAE overcame a state of idleness since the 1980s, and is currently observing a state of revival. The third theory says that the current cultural process in the UAE is a newly born and fragile one that is prone to recession, if not properly supported by domestic and official institutions.¹

The first theory regarding the cultural issue in the UAE emanates from the mere fact that there are two distinguished phases in the modern UAE cultural movement. The first started with the inception of the UAE Federation at the end of the 1970s, observing a huge oil wealth, which led to deep social changes and new intellectual trends amid an atmosphere of individualism and carelessness. Such changes left a negative impact on cultural, artistic, literary, and social activities. They also obstructed the road toward a cultural, literary, and intellectual movement. The main trait of that phase was idleness, paralysis, comprehensive cultural frustration, a popular and official lack of interest in cultural activities, and a common anti-culture attitude, fighting and cornering the intellectuals. That phase has passed, and a new phase started since 1980s. Contrary to the oil wealth phase, the new phase observed several developments that revived the cultural movement in the UAE. The most prominent feature was the increase in the number of university students, educated people, and graduates. Knowledge among the public grew in general, and exceeded the phase of indulgence in commercial enterprises and self-

¹ ‘abd Al-Khaleq ‘abdullah, *Al-ḥaraka Althaqafiya fi Al Emarat (The Cultural Movement in the UAE)*, 1st ed, The Cultural Foundation, Abu Dhabi, UAE, 2000, p. 13.

richness, and new immaterial interests started to appear.¹ Furthermore, the 1980s phase observed the longest economic recession in the UAE, related to the downtrend in oil demand and the decrease in oil production, prices, and revenues. That led to a similar decrease in government expenditure and individual consumption. Such factors helped the cultural movement to mature, and there was a relative cultural revival that was accompanied by an official interest in building cultural institutions, supporting cultural activities, and enhancing literary and artistic works, leading to regular cultural festivals and activities. Thus, the cultural recession is now overcome in the UAE, and there is currently cultural revival. Now, one can say that there is a cultural movement in the UAE that is still in process. This movement is currently reflected in more cultural activities and more literary and cultural personalities and mature dialogue.

The cultural movement has several features, namely the pioneering position occupied by poetry and poets. Thus, poetry is the most rich and prominent cultural product in the UAE society. The UAE poetic movement has realized a distinguished presence in the Arab and Gulf region. There are different types of poetry, including rhythmic and prosaic types. However, there is a big gap between poetry and other cultural activities, as the latter cannot compete with poetic works. Literary, artistic, and intellectual activities are still unable to compete with poetry in the UAE. Even those interested in such activities do not yet have the position occupied by the poets. The UAE audience is poetry-oriented, and lacks interest in story, arts, and intellectual works. So if poetry occupies the top rank, then intellect and academic research comes at the bottom of the list of the UAE cultural movement. Until now, there are no

¹ Ibid., p. 14.

distinguished intellectuals on the local cultural platform, at a time when intellectual, theoretical, and academic works are still meagre.¹

The cultural movement in the UAE is a real fact, having its own institutions and developing itself in a way that allows talking for the first time about the culture's role in the UAE social development process. It is difficult to say now that the UAE culture is a disintegrated one, however, UAE nationals have to admit that they lack a realistic and an integrated strategy. The UAE culture needs a free environment, as the UAE intellectuals suffer frustration and personal conflicts. Therefore, the new cultural movement is still threatened, and to revive it, the following conditions must be fulfilled:

- There should be a clear vision towards a cultural strategy, i.e., there should be a national cultural policy made up by domestic and official institutions.
- Intellectual freedom and tolerance should dominate, while extremism should be avoided.
- The intellectuals should give up frustration and work for a mature cultural environment.

3. The Cultural Reality in the UAE

There is urgency for further writings and discussions about the relationship of culture and educated people in the UAE. There is also a similar need for a new study focusing on the intellectual, literary, and artistic life in the UAE society, which is described as a fast-changing society, giving up all conventional and outdated attitudes and adopting modern life. It is to be noted that the cultural issues and concerns remain neglected and not documented, unlike those issues related to economy and social life. The impact of the latter issues on the cultural life is not addressed, either. The cultural life needs further anthropological, sociological, and analytical studies. Other issues, like cultural changes, cultural environment, and cultural institutions, have also to be addressed. Cultural changes include those issues

¹ Ibid., p. 15.

that affect the society's conventions, traditions, and concepts. Thus, the most important topic is to make a comparison between the current cultural life and the past one. The main question is whether the domestic culture remained intact despite the changes observed by the UAE society.¹ Cultural activities are the façade of the society's cultural life, and include publishing and translation within the literary, artistic, and intellectual fields. They also include seminars, lectures, and fairs. The common impression about UAE cultural activities is that they are seasonal and unpublicized, and perhaps ineffective in social life. Such an impression should be addressed in order to know what is wrong and what is right. The questions now are about the reasons behind staggering cultural activities, such as why are they termed seasonal?; why do they not attract audiences,?; does the mistake lie in the nature of these activities or in the audience and arrangements?; how can such activities be made more effective and more public in the UAE society?; and, how can they play a leading role in positive social changes?²

The issue of cultural institutions should be reconsidered, as they constitute a new social phenomenon in the UAE, starting to build the human character and cultural activities. The Emirates Association of Writers and Men of Letters is considered the leading cultural institution in the UAE. There are other important cultural institutions and non-profit commissions. There is the Dubai Cultural Council and the Cultural and Science Seminar in Dubai, the Cultural Department in Sharjah, the Authority of Culture and Heritage in Abu Dhabi, and other institutions belonging to the Ministry of Culture and the UAE University. There are many questions about the performance of such institutions and coordination among them. What are the difficulties before them? did they succeed in establishing a joint cultural vision?; and lastly, if such cultural vision is not available, how can a new one be developed that covers all cultural aspects in the UAE?

¹ Ibid., p. 21.

² Ibid., p. 23.

Another issue is related to the UAE intelligentsia, taking into consideration the following points:

- There are an increasing number of educated people who are concerned with thought, literature, and arts.
- There are new trends of specialization.
- The new intelligentsias have new visions and modern thinking, so they have to overcome all differences and make national issues the core of their cultural works.

We have to admit that the current cultural movement is still under formation. We have to admit also that the cultural life in the UAE is diversified, and not conventional. Undoubtedly, there is a conflict between conventional and modern cultures, and though the battle is still continuing, the modern culture seems to be the winning party. Modernity needs first modern culture, modern concepts and conducts as well as modern writers and artists. We have to reiterate that modern culture cannot flourish unless there is freedom in all aspects. We have also to admit that Arab culture will not be creative if it continues to be a satellite to the Western culture.

Every age has a culture, and every society has a peculiar culture. Nowadays, the prevailing culture is the Western and capitalist culture. The culture of the UAE society is the Arab Islamic culture. Some believe that there is a contradiction between the culture of this age and that of the UAE society. If this contradiction is an existing fact, the question is whether we have to be content with our culture and refuse the modern age culture, or whether we have to choose the latter at the expense of our particular culture, in other words, have we to preserve this peculiarity and shun away, or we have to choose modern culture whether good or bad and build on it to obtain a more creative civilization, we have two options, globalization or peculiarity, modern culture or old culture and present culture or old culture.

In the end, it is to opt between mind and emotion and between backwardness and development.¹ We have the right in the UAE and in the Arab world to discuss such intellectual and cultural matters, and we have to take a definite attitude towards the proposed options. The UAE Society has chosen modernization in everything, and if it continues in this direction, it will turn shortly into a modern society in par with advanced countries like Japan, the European countries, and the United States. The UAE society has defined its target, and it is difficult or perhaps impossible to recede or give up this target. However, despite the ongoing changes and modernization process, and though the prevailing cultural project is modernity, some intellectuals, researchers, and writers are still far away from discussing such developments in their works.

There are three different ideological trends that can be found in the current society. The first believes that we have to retain old traditions, even if they contradict science and modernism. This trend sometimes has influence on the society and can impose its concepts in several fields including education. The second trend is the belief that there should be a moderate attitude, combining globalization with peculiarity. This category represents the majority and represents the official ideology that tries to meld traditions with modern concepts, provided there will be no contradiction between them. The third category believes that there is no need to wait, and one has to adopt global culture even at the expense of local culture.²

The majority of the society believes that there should be a mediatory ideology which does not ignore neither globalization nor peculiarity. However, this ideology lacks freedom and therefore hampers real development, and can only achieve incomplete development. This ideology tries to be global and peculiar at the same time, and therefore it finds itself obliged to flatter the category favouring

¹ Ibid., p. 31.

² Ibid., p. 32.

the past and sometimes to seek the help of those supporting global culture, without adopting a symmetrical identity. These intellectual contradictions are the natural by-product of openness and the outcome of the changes observed by the UAE society. Such trends and ideologies affect individual conducts and concepts, and the question is how the men of letters should deal with such conflicting concepts and how such concepts are to be displayed in their works.

Some men of letters lack knowledge about such trends, others are not able to express them, and they choose to stop discussing such subjects in light of their sensitivity or in fear of consequences. Writers, researchers, and artists should define their attitudes towards the modern age and history, as these topics require certain commitment to enlighten the society and chalk out a futuristic vision for life. If the audience has to remain silent, the educated people should speak out; otherwise there is no point in their life.

4. The Cultural Elements

The elements of culture in any society include literature, art, and intellect; each of these has subordinate branches that form the essence of cultural life in any society. Literature is closely linked to sentiment, and usually includes poetry, story, novel, theatre, and translation. Arts are related to passion and conscience, including acting, singing, drawing, and photographing. Intellect emanates from the human mind and is embodied in social, political, religious, and philosophic thinking. These three elements can work individually. For example, literature can turn into a literary movement; art can bring about a theatrics movement; and scientific research can turn into a scientific movement. However, we cannot achieve that without the availability of certain objective conditions. If poetry initiates certain

activities, including competing poetry schools, periodicals, and institutions, then we can say that there is a poetry movement.¹

Sometimes, cultural life is influenced by a certain cultural category, while other categories remain subordinate and marginal. Societies have different cultural categories and history has the same. The question now where does literature stand in the UAE, what is the position of intellect in the modern UAE cultural life, which element of the social life is in the lead, is there any distinguished literary, artistic or intellectual movement in the UAE, literature and no art are the most prominent cultural elements in the UAE cultural life. Poetry is in the lead, while literature goes forth and back. The same can be said about intellect, as there is a lack of books as well as intellectual and scientific institutions and activities.

There are two points related to art and intellect: First, art is related to theatre and plastic arts, and both are still looking for audiences in the UAE. Though the theatre has achieved some progress at its outset in the country, it suffered severe setbacks due to hard-line mentalities that governed education, and damned to hell everything beautiful in life like music, singing, and acting. Second, even though there is no active intellectual movement in the UAE, we have to mention several published books by UAE authors dealing with historic, social, economic, and intellectual topics. In fine, poetry is the leader in modern UAE cultural life. The question is why literature does precede art and intellect and why the UAE culture is a poetic culture not a literary one, how can we rehabilitate acting, singing, music and other arts and how can we cultivate cultural taste and feeling, how can art take the lead in our cultural life, how are we going to develop intellect in our cultural life, how long the UAE cultural movement will

¹ Ibid., p. 49.

remain cross-legged lacking art and intellect. These factors should be addressed and answered by those concerned with the UAE culture and those watching its development.¹

5. The Cultural Life

The successive changes witnessed during recent years have led to several cultural, behavioural, and intellectual changes in the UAE society. The process of change from a primitive society to a modern one has brought several modern concepts and convictions that were strange to the traditional society. This society has started to approach modern lifestyles and conducts, and one's commitment to Islamic values stopped to be the criteria to draw appreciation, while wealth and academic degrees and competency have started to become the new criteria giving respect to those distinguished of a special social status. The importance of business has risen among the various new categories in the society; especially among the scientific-oriented strata, which were impressed by the new technology even it was contradicting to some conventional concepts.

Life concerns and daily living have become the top issue in the modern UAE society, which started to gradually ignore certain social traditions, namely the attitude towards women, their work, their role in society and family, and life in general. These changes have become facts known to each individual in the UAE and became part of the social life in the UAE. Modernization has left an evident impact on cultural, social, and religious values, and has brought new values and trends that could be considered as meeting the requirements of modernization and falling in line with logic. However, they were in fact a group of tools that helped to secure materialistic gains that became the values of modern

¹ Ibid., p. 57.

times. Modernization has led to some changes in cultural, social, and religious values that have prevailed in the UAE Society.

Within this atmosphere, the religious tide has become apparent in the UAE society during recent years, and has impacted the whole educational and cultural life. Religious tide was not confined to the UAE society, but swept most of the Arab countries. That tide included several schools mastered by Fundamentalists, *Sufis*,¹ and members of the Muslim Brotherhood. Such trends made their presence in the UAE society, which only knew moderate Islam. In spite of the various religious trends, they were all reactions to the cultural and social changes witnessed by the UAE society over the past thirty-four years that came at the expense of old concepts. Therefore, the religious trends were all dedicated in principle to protect the society from what some people call un-Islamic concepts, and to spread Islam in a society whose basic nature is Islamic.² Furthermore, the Islamic tide in the UAE and other Arab countries has maintained a conviction that considered that all the setbacks and defeats suffered by the Arab nation were the outcome of negligence of religious commitments, and that the Arabs would not achieve victory unless they resort to religious teachings that are capable of bringing about development and power. It was easy to spread such religious concepts in society in light of the speedy and consecutive changes, and therefore the Islamic tide was present in various fields and institutions. The question now is, what was the impact of the Islamic tide on cultural life, artistic taste, cultural audience, and the cultural innovation movement?; did that tide produce new literary, scientific, and intellectual works and did it produce Islamic artists, men of letters, poets, and intellectuals?; did the religious tide contribute in developing

¹ Sufism (Arabic *Tasawwuf*) is a name which probably has its origin in the wearing of undyed wool (*suf*) as a mark of personal penitence. The Sufis are also known as *fakirs* and *dervishes*, both words originally denoting that these were people who believed in being poor (in spirit).

² ‘abd Al-Khaleq ‘abdullah, *Al-ḥaraka Althaqafiya fi Al Emarat (The Cultural Movement in the UAE)*, p. 61.

cultural activity and enhancing the role of creative and free culture in the society, or did it neglect creative works in a way that reached in some cases to combating art, theatre, singing, music, and all artistic and literary works?; did that tide succeed in stopping the cultural, social, and intellectual movement in the UAE?; and did it succeed in stemming the spread of modern concepts and values that sometimes contradict the taken for granted conventional and traditional concepts.¹

Of course, there are no direct and easy answers to the above questions; however, we cannot consider the positive and negative results now and in the future as the outcome of religious impacts on cultural life. We, therefore, will try to raise the concerns of those interested in cultural issues in the UAE and go deeper into the discussions about the impact of religious tide on modern culture. The first remark is related to the impact of this tide on the prevalent concepts in the UAE. This tide has first tried to confront the cultural changes that swept the UAE, but it did not succeed in stopping the society's march towards modernity, and it did not succeed in preventing the people from adopting modern concepts. The society continued despite the religious tide to emphasize the importance of intellectual and scientific culture, which contradicted some traditions. That trend also did not succeed in directing the interest of the individuals from material purposes to religious thinking. The only proven fact was that the Islamic tide deepened ideological confrontations and deepened the gap between traditional and modern attitudes.² The second remark is the impact of the religious trend on the literary, artistic, and intellectual works. That trend left a negative impact on creative and free culture in view of its educational fundamentals, so it was not strange that such a trend opposed creative culture, negatively affecting the artistic activities in the society, particularly the theatre, singing, and folklore activities, which suffered a

¹ Ibid., p. 62.

² Ibid., p. 63.

plunge in recent years.¹ The third remark is related to the success of the religious tide in enhancing religious culture when the number of mosques rose dramatically and the religious impact was clear on TV and radio programmes, and in newspapers and publishing. *Al-Eslah* Society was founded in 1974 and established many branches in other Emirates. One of the most important successes achieved by the religious trend was its functional role in education, especially among university students.² The fourth remark is that despite all the successes attained by that trend in the society, it failed in producing any literature, poetry, story, theatre, or religious novels, and did not bring about a local writer, poet, intellectual, or thinker. Therefore, the religious tide imported a culture that did not suit the local cultural and social environment.³

6. Intellectual Activity and its Place in Cultural Life

Literature is presently the most flourishing cultural element in the UAE society, which produced its own literature and men of letters, produced poetry and poets, and produced stories and story-makers. This society has also produced art and artists. The men of letters and artists have proven their presence and have founded certain associations and festivals. Therefore, they have an audience and occupy a position in the society. However, the modern UAE society has not yet produced thought and thinkers, philosophy and philosophers, science and scientists, or theories and theorists. Thought, which is the backbone of any culture, is the most absent part of the UAE cultural life. The absence of intellectual works is almost total. Therefore, culture in the UAE is a culture without thought. As thought, literature,

¹ Ibid., p. 64.

² Ibid., p. 65.

³ Ibid., p. 66.

and art are the heart of culture, then such culture in the UAE is an imperfect one, so how can a culture exist without thought and thinkers?¹

Cultural life in the UAE is badly in need of thoughtful products. It needs intellectual products, institutions, seminars, and lectures. Even academic curricula are void of any intellectual and philosophical subjects. The UAE University was not able until now to inculcate free thinking or to communicate with international human thinking. We have a poor intellectual life in the UAE. This poor situation is not confined to the absence of intellectual, philosophic, and scientific activities, but it is even related to poor literature and thought. What has been written as story or poetry lacks thought. Poetry can contain philosophy, story can have philosophic and intellectual implications, and literature in general can communicate with thought. Regrettably, the current literary produce lacks intellectual content and the same can be said about all the activities of official and local cultural institutions. Their products are far from thought. Furthermore, the whole activities of local and official institutions are literary ones and far away from intellectual fields. These institutions have totally ignored thought, as if the latter is confined only to literature, poetry, and theatre. For example, the UAE Association of Writers and Men of Letters did not until now hold any intellectual seminars and did not give it priority as it did to literature and poetry. This is an indication of the misconception of comprehensive culture and the Association's cultural role. The same can be said about other cultural institutions that ignored thought.

In other words, the absence of thought from cultural life is not confined to cultural institutions and activities; this absence mainly appears in neglecting the society's individuals and educated people. Few educated people and writers pursue the latest in the fields of thought and philosophy, and a fewer

¹ Ibid., p. 77.

number is acquainted with the crisis of Arab intellect. The fewest are those concerned with contemporary intellectual trends. This disruption from modern trends is brought by fear of imported thoughts, and such fear reflects a state of backwardness and seclusion, which does cope with modernity. The question now is why there is a complete absence of cultural life, is the social environment responsible for this, is it because of the process of development, does such absence is related to ignoring the importance of thinking and does the secret lie in the absence of freedom and the fear to write about thought and philosophy. What are the hardships and barriers that obstruct the road of intellectual prosperity, how can we overcome them, and how can we develop an intellectual life and establish an active and effective intellectual movement.¹

The absence of thought and intellectual creativity is an Arab phenomenon not related only to the UAE or the Gulf region. Except some distinguished intellectual works in the Arab Maghreb, intellectual creativity did not occupy in the Arab cultural life the position it deserves, unlike literary works. Arab thinkers in common are importers of thought and it seems that no one of them did bring any distinguished theory or philosophy in any field of thought. The reason behind this could be the absence of a comprehensive social and political vision, something that the Arab society should undertake, and the absence of a common Arab action to revive thought and philosophy. Thought, unlike literature, requires courage to confront challenges and criticize shortcomings. It is related to daily life, vital issues, and decision-making. Intellectual creativity usually confronts intellectual terrorism, and in the UAE and other Arab societies, it confronts the same. Intellectual terrorism suffocates thought and uses some ideas

¹ Ibid., p. 80.

to fight others, thus thought could be used as weapons against others. And if such terrorism is being practiced openly, it could turn into a malignant disease killing all intellectual activities.¹

In brief, intellectual activity and philosophic creativity are confronted by a number of social, cultural, religious, and institutional barriers that are responsible for the absence of thought. If we want to revive thought in the society we have to commit ourselves to civilized conciliation and discard extremism. Freedom is the best environment for any intellectual revival and thus official and local institutions should continuously support freethinking. Such support is represented in establishing public libraries, and organizing scientific seminars and conferences. If we want to catch up with modernity, we have to give priority to scientific thinking and philosophic thought. Now, we need a new thought coping with modernity and capable of confronting future challenges.

7. Audience Turning Away from Cultural Activities

Cultural life in the United Arab Emirates is facing many challenges, basically related to social circumstances and the situation of the UAE cultural movement. The current challenges, undoubtedly, reflect the contradictions that accompany the rapid and successive social, moral, and lifestyle changes like those observed by the UAE society since the foundation of the UAE Federation and the flow of oil wealth. The difficulties that face cultural activities and events reflect the foundational and new-born phase, which distinguishes the UAE cultural life. This structural phase is perhaps the most difficult one, as it is a slow and turbulent phase observing the change of culture from its traditional and local form to modernity and internationalism. This movement involves an abrupt cultural and social conflict among

¹ Ibid., p. 81.

those people who look for modernism and cultural revival and others refusing such trend. This conflict really affects cultural activities and events in general.¹

Therefore, any argument about the difficulties and problems that face cultural life and obstruct literary, artistic, and intellectual activities should take into consideration all these social and historical indications. Moreover, any argument about the difficulties and challenges should consider the relativity and periodicity of such problems. Difficulties differ in their intensity, presence, and influence from one cultural time to another. Beyond any doubt, some of these difficulties will remain unchanged and will accompany most activities at a time when other problems will turn into chronic problems whose intensity will increase along the development of the UAE cultural movement. The phenomenon of the audience turning away from cultural activities from one time to another comes to be one of the unchanged problems that hamper cultural life, which is related to social and historic circumstances that form cultural reality in the UAE. This phenomenon raises concerns among domestic and official cultural institutions, and therefore it needs a discerning attitude from those concerned with cultural affairs to understand the dimensions of this problem.²

Why is the discussion of this issue so important? The answer is that the positive interaction of the audience and its regular attendance of literary, intellectual, and artistic seminars and lectures is an important indication of cultural revival in the society. At the same time, the audience's good welcome or turning away is an important gauge of the success or the failure of cultural activities and events, though it is not the only gauge and should not be the principal standard. The phenomenon of the audience

¹ Ibid., p. 173.

² Ibid., p. 174.

turning away from cultural activities includes three intertwined elements, which should be defined. The first is the public turning away from cultural activities. The question is, what does “turning away” mean: is it relative or infinite? Is it related to the cultural state in the UAE? Is the turning away something new or will remain sticking to the cultural activity? The second element is the audience, and the question is, who is the audience? Is it the public audience or the educated one? Who is the public and who are the educated? Is there an unchanged and definite audience of cultural activities? What is the volume of such an audience and what does move it to participate or abstain? What are the characteristics of a cultural audience? The third element is the cultural activity. The question is what is the definition of cultural activity? Do all cultural activities face a rebuff from the audience and the educated people? What are the cultural activities and events that receive an interactive attitude from the public and private audience?¹

From these questions, it becomes clear that the discussion of the phenomenon of the audience turning away from cultural activities shall be made through three intertwined levels. The first level is the volume of such a phenomenon, its nature, and its indications. The second level is the reasons and the factors behind this. The third level involves the methods for dealing with this problem, suggesting practical steps to increase the interest of the public and private audience in cultural activities and in the culture in general. However, following this an illustrative introduction, we have to mention these remarks to clarify the dimensions of this phenomenon. The first remark is that the phenomenon of the audience turning away from cultural activities is a common one and it occurs in the majority of all societies, consequently, it is not confined to one society and it is not a problem only related to the cultural activities in the UAE. We do not exaggerate when we say that the audience’s interest in cultural

¹ Ibid., p. 175.

activities is weak, even in the most advanced countries. All parties at every place are searching for ways to increase audiences in the hope that the scope of cultural activities will expand to reach all people.¹

The second remark is that the phenomenon of the audience turning away from cultural activities is a kind of a proportional absence and this has many indications, among which are:

- Some cultural activities receive a wide audience from other cultural activities. The absence, if any, is stick to certain activities and therefore we should not generalize this on all cultural activities and functions.²
- The absence of audience is a proportional in terms of the anticipated attendance and the non-availability of an agreement on a definite number which forms the minimum or maximum level of attendance as to judge the success or the failure of cultural activities. The difference in estimation from one person to another emphasises the need to stop saying there is a total absence.³

The third remark is that we have to differentiate between the absence of the public audience and that of the educated audience. The absence of the public audience is not new; as such an audience has never been interested in cultural activities. It seems difficult that the cultural arena will witness a wide presence in the present or in the near future. However, the absence of the educated audience is a noticeable phenomenon that concerns now the cultural institutions. Besides these remarks, we can say that the interest of the audience in cultural activities is increasing and not receding, as per the below figures:

¹ Ibid., p. 176.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., p. 177.

- In the *Dar Al Nadwa* at *Al Bastakiyah* District,¹ the total number of seminars held in the past year was one thousand, as per the authorities in Dar Al Nadwa. It becomes clear that scientific and academic seminars have also started witnessing an encouraging and regular attendance. Such presence is also clear in other cultural events like book fairs, cultural festivals, and other functions at the time of national occasions. There is an increasing interest in cultural events, however such interest is still behind the aspired target and can be better. There are many factors that stand behind the audience's failure to attend cultural activities, and they range from organizational factors to social factors.² The organizational factors include the selection of the venue, time, the lecturer, the right subject, the proper advertising, as well as coordination among cultural institutions. The social factors include the following:
 - The cultural seminars, lectures, and activities are something new to the UAE society and therefore, the inculcation of such new social practices needs enough time and further education to overcome all detriments and have a positive participation in such cultural functions.³
 - The attendance of cultural functions is closely related to the margin of freedom in the society. So if this margin is a narrow one, then there will be a negative response and vice versa.⁴
 - Television and other entertainments, including shopping, form a real challenge to cultural activities.¹

¹ *Al Bastakiyah* Area in Bur Dubai dates back to the early 1900s, and occupies the eastern section of the old town along the Creek. The area has always fascinated visitors to Dubai and artists, who are enamoured by its elegant wind-towers, gypsum decorations and woodwork, and the lanes that meander through the district.

² Dr. Ihsan Al-Roubaei, Head of Dar Al-Nadwa Cultural Centre.

³ 'abd Al-Khaleq 'abdullah, *Al-ḥaraka Althaqafiya fi Al Emarat (The Cultural Movement in the UAE)*, p. 178.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 179.

- The present educational system is partly responsible for the audience's lack of interest in cultural activities. This system does not create a generation fond of culture, intellect, and creative works, and does not enhance the individual's interest in attending literary, artistic, and scientific seminars and lectures. This educational system, particularly in the recent years, was a factor that affected the interest of some wide social sectors in modern and creative cultural activities, including artistic and theatrical activities.²

These factors have boosted certain egoistic traits and encouraged seclusion among the educated people. If we want to find a solution to the audience's absence, we have to deal openly with these factors that harm the cultural movement and the audience's positive interaction.

8. Cultural Foundations and its Lack of Official Support

Cultural Foundations in Dubai, in their present state, function on a single mandate in the sense that they have a single objective. A quick review of these establishments will support this statement. Since its inception the Culture and Sciences Symposium has been focusing on sciences more than on art and literature. One good reason was to avoid repetition of creating organizations with the same goals and targets, such as the Emirates' Writers Union and the Cultural Academy in Abu Dhabi, in addition to the Department of Culture and Information in Sharjah. The Sultan Bin Ali Al Owais Cultural Foundation came into existence with the single aim to award and honor writers and thinkers, and had no agenda for cultural activities. The Juma Al Majed Heritage and Arts Centre were established to collect and maintain manuscripts and make them accessible to the audience of researchers, but also had no cultural program

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid., p. 180.

under its wings. Previous attempts by Sports Clubs to host and organize cultural programs did not last long either and their initiative ran out of steam. (see Appendix 2)

The capital owners and philanthropists in Dubai should carve a niche in the cultural life and play a greater role in its formation. To fill this gap, the Dubai Cultural Council was established as a government body under the initiative of His Highness General Sheikh Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Ruler of Dubai and UAE's Prime Minister. Its mandate was develop the cultural agenda of the Emirate of Dubai and help advance national identity and also create awareness among all citizens to cultural values. In general, the cultural foundations in Dubai perform in low profile and do not utilize the media as platform to showcase their activities and reach out to the masses through television and other media. Unfortunately, most of what they do remains within the walls of these foundations. Local media have also failed to provide momentum to cultural activities in the Dubai.

The cultural scene is livelier in Sharjah, where culture is the spirit of the Emirate. The Sharjah Television Channel, a government owned and managed TV station, reflects the government's point of views on cultural and social issues. Having the government's total support and blessing, it gives extensive coverage to all activities of the Department of Culture and Information, or other organizations, and produces programs with cultural topics in focus. In a nutshell, when you secure a decent budget and have the official backing, you can produce brilliant programs that can debut on prime time of TV channels, and send the message across to the masses. In Dubai, the cultural agenda has two major problems; one is the lack of coordination between media and cultural foundations and the need for more liaisons between them.

The other problem is the budgetary constraints that curb enthusiasm and affect performance of cultural foundations. The budget of The Association for Culture and Sciences is just to one-and-a-half

million dirhams. The Association does not have its own permanent headquarters and facilities to perform better. In an honest attempt to put a positive gloss on its activities, the Association has developed an ambitious plan that focuses on the education and well being of women and children. It is also bent on developing publications, and has exerted faithful efforts towards scientific studies. Over the years, Dubai has built its image as a regional and international business centre. It embarked on massive construction plans and laid down great infrastructure projects. And with vision of its leaders it managed to attract huge investments that put Dubai on the international map as a destination for business and investment. Regrettably, culture, at this point, did not get the adequate attention.

In business capitals, art and culture have their “share in the pie.” In most vibrant cities and business capitals of the world, art and culture have their fair share of attention and are part of public face of these cities and capitals. They became industries with huge assets through cinema, theatre, TV and music productions. The cultural and art movements go parallel with other aspects of development. In the Arab world, the picture is different. Art and culture do not take centre stage both on the government and private levels. Business people refrain from investing in cultural projects, leaving the floor to government institutions as an area of interest. In the civilized world, art and culture became lucrative business for the private sector.

What you present depends on what your perspective is. The cultural movement in Dubai should form an inseparable part of economic agenda of both the public and private sectors. Lessons should be learned from experiences of multinational organizations that made heavy investments in art and culture projects. With long term planning, they succeeded in transforming culture into an industry and bring returns on their investments. Strategies should be drawn by both the government and business people to

support and encourage cultural and artistic output, and policies should be implemented to activate the role of culture in the society.

The cultural and intellectual construction of a society is highly associated with nobleness, but unfortunately in our society, the rich and the wealthy are not all that noble. The contribution of the business community to culture in Dubai was just to foster an impression that they support cultural activities and to refute accusations that they are tight fisted towards the cause. Some of them were only concerned to see their names decorating trophies and awards. The rich and the wealthy should be involved in turning culture into an industry. In the absence of real involvement of the private sector in the cultural life, it was all left to the government to assume this responsibility, to communicate to other cultures that we belong to a homeland and raise a flag that we exist on the world's cultural map, especially when most of the writers, poets and playwrights originate from Dubai. There is an urgent need for grand cultural projects that go hand in hand and with the same rhythm of other huge projects currently underway in business, economy, and tourism. The cultural foundations, on their part, have to set long-term policies and provide an environment for coming generations to create and innovate. Achievements of past generations should be a source of inspiration for young and new talents. The ground should be ready for merited and talented people to rise. There is a natural tendency to adore and respect the past, but we find ourselves more tied and oriented to the present.

Culture is a major energizer in the human life. It is about time that culture is regarded as a major energizer in the human life of the Emirate. Its existence should not be limited to festivals, awards, and seasonal events and should break this circle of monotony. The dynamism of change on the international arena, in culture, education, business, and social life should be an eye opener for our cultural foundations to interact with and identify benefits suitable for our society. The urgency is not to host

debates and symposiums with the same people reading from the old script and who are not major players in cultural development in Dubai and other emirates. The urgency is to activate the cultural role by nurturing local human resources, which will positively affect their output and enrich the cultural fabric. It also lies in supporting theatrical movement, social clubs, and libraries and in bringing up new generations with cultural vision, and not just employees listed on the payroll. High hopes are pinned on the new building of the Association of Culture and Sciences. With its new theatre and highly equipped auditoriums, it should be able to present a new concept in cultural activity different from the traditional way. This will add colour to Dubai, which spent countless efforts to build an image as a regional and international vibrant city for business and finance. The cultural dimension should be highly visible in picture of Dubai with the collaboration of all institutions to add value to life in Dubai.

9. Art and Art Galleries

While it may be true that no Emirati artist has yet attained worldwide fame, it is probably only a matter of time. Significantly, new and young Emirati artists are quickly making their mark on the international scene. The federation of the Emirates was established on the 2nd of December 1971. This date became the start line for an endless race to develop the country and its people on economic, social and educational levels. In 1975, Ministry of education delegated students to Egypt, Iraq, UK, and the US to study fine arts. They became the pioneers of fine arts movement in the country.¹

The Dubai Art Society was established in 1976, but only became widely known when it reinvented itself in 1980 by moving to newer premises and, later, in the mid-1980s, renaming itself as the Dubai Art Centre. Today, it is prominent in the thriving local art scene. At the same time, Ras Al-Khaima's Fine Art Association Centre is active in promoting the artistic skill of young artists in the

¹ Cultural Horizons Magazine , *An Overview of fine arts in the UAE*, Issue No. 13, Dubai Cultural Council, Dubai, UAE, May 2006, p. 34. (see Appendix 1)

northern emirate. Individual emirates are actively promoting art and the fostering of artistic talent. In particular, Sharjah, as part of its concerted efforts to advance culture in all its guises, has opened the first dedicated national art gallery in the UAE in 1980. The Emirates Fine Arts Society was established in that emirate also. Arguably the most important date on the UAE's artistic calendar is the Sharjah Art Biennial where artists from other Gulf states, the Middle East and the rest of the world are invited to Sharjah to display their art. Awards are presented for various categories and the event is doing much towards formalizing art in the UAE and its perception abroad. Encouraged by the work of local artists, the Government of Sharjah established the Sharjah College of Fine Arts in 2001.¹

Abu Dhabi, too, is active in art with the Abu Dhabi Cultural Foundation providing an excellent focus for artistic activities. The Foundation provides a home for art and artists, for creation and display. From its quiet beginning in the early 1980s, it has now become a major source for promoting and encouraging art and knowledge in all its forms. Various arts ateliers and institutes were established in the UAE, in the last two decades:

1981 – Artists Atelier, Ras Al Khaima.

1982 – Artists Atelier, Al Ain University.

1986 – Artists Atelier, Cultural Foundation, Abu Dhabi.

1987 – Cultural Centre, Sharjah.

1987 – Artists Atelier, The Youth Theatre and Arts, Dubai.

1993 – Artists Atelier, Khorfakkan.

1995 – Sharjah Art Museum.

1996 – Sharjah Art Institute.

¹ Ibid. (see Appendix 1)

1997 – Artists Atelier, Sharjah.

1997 – Khorfakkan Art Centre.

2000 – Sharjah Art Centre for Arabic Calligraphy and Ornament.

The UAE is an ideal environment for artists. With a rich cultural heritage, today's artists are part of an ongoing tradition that has gained inspiration from a harsh, but stunningly beautiful environment. Creativity is nurtured from a young age and many works of art reflect the innate spirituality of the Emiratis.

10. Drama and Theatre

The journey of theatres in the UAE and Dubai has complete more than thirty years, but it is still suffering from many deterrents that interrupt the progress and the interconnection to the public. We probably do have some good actors, actresses, authors, and directors in the UAE, but we do not have the body that may support the theatre activities. An example of that: a drama called "A boil of Sand" produced by Al Ahli Theatre in Dubai in 1991. This drama has achieved lots of success and renowned the Arab World. This drama received many invitations from Europe to perform it, but Al Ahli Theatre could not perform it in Europe because they did not find someone in the UAE who may sponsor them, or someone to pay for their travel tickets and hotel reservations. They did not find someone in the UAE who may support them to perform this Emirati drama in an international festival of dramas for the first time in the history of the UAE.

The people in the dramatic sector are wondering about the accomplishments of Dubai and why Dubai does not add the theatre to those accomplishments. Surely, we have to create a dramatic and cinema activity in the UAE to convey the growth building, evolution, and technology nowadays in the

UAE. But this activity of art needs a motivation and sponsorship from a body who would undertake setting up theatres, establishing a corporation of arts production, financing and subvention the production of movies and presenting incentive awards to the talents. It is time now to start by setting up an institute which offers different programs of arts studies like drama, TV, and movies direction, the art of writing continuity, and the art acting. This start will participate in upbringing a new academic generation to face our huge gap in this field. (see Appendix 1)

The activity of arts needs a fundamental components and it cannot be depended on the singleness precessions forever. One of these components for example: the necessary of watching over from the beginning at the schools theatre which is consider as a kitchen to discover the talents, and then rehearse them. Also, the necessary of providing the subvention regarding TV and cinema especially on drama by providing the stages and studios. But the beginning still has to start by setting up the basic structure which is an institute of arts. One of our worries also, the lack of trust to the national in this sector and the condensation on other people from outside. This matter is a mischief to the local arts except the dramatic production which has been done outside the UAE by local dramatic corporation like the miniseries of the famous Syrian director *Najdat Anzor*. Also, we have some superiors who are not open-minded to the TV production or do not have the enough knowledge about the mechanism of this field, and if you notice the texts in our miniseries, you will find that most of them are weak or do look like the same.

The UAE nationals do need the support and the motivation and the incentive awards. They also need experts from outside to make use of their experience. So, why don't they get the chance to approve themselves, why don't the local arts production corporations support the local arts production specially the local arts directors, why do the local media departments depends on the "packager" miniseries from

the Arab countries and do not give the chance to the local series. We need to make a colloquiums and lectures and create competitions inside the educational institutions to increase the knowledge about the arts, so there may be in the future someone who can taste the arts.

11. Final Conclusion

The cultural scenario of the UAE is ever-evolving. It is a fast changing country with very dynamic changes. There are various theories stating different interpretations for the cultural developments of UAE. Some theories state the different economic scenario of UAE since 1970s influence the cultural preferences of people here. However one point is clear that UAE needs more intellectual freedom if it wants its culture to grow. The studies and inferences on culture show that the UAE's cultural activities are ineffective in social life, they simply don't attract audience. There are a lot of cultural councils in UAE who are delivering mediocre performances. The rise of new intelligentsia is under formation with a growing conflict between conventional and modern cultures. That can also be called a conflict between western capitalist culture and the Islamic culture of Middle East. The modern intellectuals of UAE are in a dilemma.

The three element of culture are literature, art and intellect. In UAE only poetic literature has a stronghold with modern intellects writing about history, politics too. But Theatre and plastic art has no buyers in UAE. That is a deep cause for concern since the music, acting, singing has not gained ground in modern UAE society. There are however a lot of behavioural and intellectual changes in UAE society. The approaches to modern thoughts instead of one's commitment to Islamic values are gaining appreciations in society. Wealth, academic degrees and competence is now a barometer for respect in day to day life. But in recent years there is a huge impact of religious fundamentalism has taken over our

society. This issue of extended Muslim Brotherhood is new to once moderate UAE. But the society continues to emphasize on the intellectual growth. That is certain that religious thought are not succeeding in diverting attention from material purposes of a man. The religious tide has also failed to create any kind of Cultural Revolution in society.

Literature of modern intellect is gaining ground in our country slowly, which is mostly poets. However it lacks any philosophy or philosophers which are considered as a backbone of any culture. These is an absence of intellect in the society concludes that the culture of UAE is a culture without thoughts. The universities have also failed to induce any free thinking. There is a crisis of new thinker in the Arab world. Very few intellectual people are pursuing in the field of latest thoughts and philosophy. This also reflects a state of backwardness to cope with modernity. The whole of Arab thinkers have a track record of importing thoughts and theories instead of producing any distinguished theory. The phenomenon of intellectual terrorism is however gaining ground.

There is also a class of audiences turning away from cultural activities; however this can be case for all the modern societies in the world. Also this turn-off can be relative, considering the number of educated people involved. Also the point that cultural activities in UEA are new phenomenon and modern education make people more alienated to their culture.

There is however various cultural councils flourishing in UAE which are making substantial efforts to remove the cultural dark age of state. They are novice and low profile mostly because of the budgetary concerns. For the proper 360 degree development of any society one financial development is not important. The role of cultural activity is equally important. History has shown all the great societies

of the world have a strong intellectual base to support it. Our country must make substantial effort to create another Renaissance.

Chapter 7: Culture Sub-sector Situation Analysis

1. Introduction

1.1 Summary

A rich culture and heritage exists in Dubai; however, it is at risk of being lost if it is not actively promoted and passed on to the next generation. The existing public education system provides minimal cultural content and does not develop young talents. Music, art and library classes are limited to around two classes per week out of on average thirty-five, for grades four to nine, and are not taught at all in grades ten and above and insufficient focus is given to reading and Arabic literature. Programmes at Universities for studying literature and arts are very limited and there are no scholarships for UAE students to study the arts abroad.

In Dubai, there is no single local entity with the mandate to regulate, enforce, and coordinate the currently fragmented cultural activities. The Dubai Cultural Council¹ actively supports the various cultural and art activities; however, it does not have the authority to enforce, regulate, and monitor the performance of the sector. Services are therefore scattered, and do not cover a comprehensive set of art and cultural activities. The regulations governing this sector are unclear and outdated. Lengthy licensing procedures are hindering the development of the sector and they are discouraging service providers from setting up non-commercial art, and cultural institutes.

The local culture and heritage are not well promoted and not passed on to the new generation. Local content is low priority in media and there are few local productions and very few local cultural

¹ On 20th March 2003, His Highness Sheikh Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, in his capacity as a Crown Prince of Dubai issued a law for establishing Dubai Cultural Council, which will take on the role of developing the cultural movement in Dubai.

programmes on national television and radio. Local plays are often of low quality and do not attract Nationals nor non-Nationals. Language is a barrier in creating more coordination between the various community cultural groups. There is a need for providers of Folkloric performances, because the majority of the workforce (folk dancers) is imported from neighbouring countries. There are not enough training centres for local folklore dancing and local handcrafts. Folklore is poorly transferred to the younger generation, because there are not enough schools that teach children about folklore and heritage. Heritage venues such as the heritage village are not heavily promoted for tourist attractions. In summary, there is a general consensus among people dealing with cultural issues in Dubai that local culture and heritage are in danger of disappearing.

1.2 Approach

For the purposes of this situation analysis, the Culture and Heritage sub-sector has been divided into the following sub-areas:

Performing arts: Relates to those art forms where individual performers are involved using their bodies as instruments and includes theatre, dance and musicals. (see Appendix 1)

Fine arts: Includes a range of art mediums including drawing, painting, sculpture, glass work, calligraphy, ceramics, pottery, handcrafts, photography, and architecture where there is a combination of technique, original design and creativity. These cultural forms are generated and preserved through art school programs, art galleries, public displays and collections, private collectors, and private galleries. (see Appendix 1)

Music: Covers a wide range of genres where there is melody from songs, singing, individual instruments, bands, symphony orchestras, opera with music types such as alternative, contemporary jazz, contemporary cultural, and classical. (see Appendix 1)

Movies: Covers specifically film productions that are initially showed to paying movie audiences, and, if successful in that area or seen to have commercial potential, are recorded onto DVDs/ videos for distribution to wider audiences and over a longer time period. (see Appendix 1)

Literature: Involves the use of written language and covers poetry, prose, published articles, short stories, play and script writing, and books. (see Appendix 1, 2)

Folklore and festivals: Covers all of the above – performing arts (particularly theatre and dance), arts and crafts, music and literature but the difference is that it usually contains a deliberate element of repetition as one of their aims is to communicate and perpetuate cultural traditions by engaging audiences through the arts activity. (see Appendix 1, 3)

Archaeology and Heritage: Covers those aspects of a population's expression, represented by architecture, artefacts, historic buildings and other antiquities that have gained prominence. This may be because of features that represent the basis of that culture's progress or have continuing classical or iconic value. It is represented in museums, archaeological sites, heritage sites, and archives. (see Appendix 4)

Media: Covers programs broadcasted on radios, televisions, films or other communication media, either over the broadcasting spectrum, over the Internet, or over other digital media. (see Appendix 5)

Religion: Covers religious activities playing an important role in reinforcing the values of a culture, through the dissemination of knowledge about culture, its promotion and protection. (see Appendix 6)

The boundaries between these areas are not entirely distinct, as they could be regarded as, and should be, a continuum of services. The Ministry of Social Affairs, the Department of Tourism, the

Dubai Culture Council, as well as other government and private sector entities, are involved in different services provision and where possible each has been separately considered in this analysis.

This situation analysis examines the following factors for all the aforementioned areas:

- Services – including Availability, Quality and Accessibility (location, cost).
- Infrastructure & Institutions– Capacity, Capacity Distribution, Facilities, Accreditation.
- Workforce/Talents – Quantity, Capabilities (education, experience, training), Compensation and incentives.
- Service Users – Habits and Preferences, Patterns of service usage.

In addition, the following factors have been considered across the culture and heritage sector:

- Technology - Availability, Usage.
- Education and Research - Quantity, Quality.
- Shared Services - Physical assets sharing, Knowledge sharing, Institutes of collaboration.
- Role of Government - Regulation (institutions, individuals), Planning and integration, Enforcement of regulation, Transparency and continuous improvement, Investment, and Incentives.

2. Performing Arts, Fine Arts, Music & Movies

2.1 Performing Arts

Historically, theatre activity in the UAE started after the Independence in 1971 and benefited from famous Arab directors of that time. Theatres continued to develop in the 1990's with great new talents appearing in acting, production, and play writing. Since there is an apparent interest in drama,

drama schools and academies have limited spaces available. Drama classes and studios have begun to be introduced in some schools. There is only one school of theatre in Dubai, the Indian Theatre academy (*RangManch*)¹, which provides theatrical teaching and training in an academic way. Performing arts are driven by ethnicity and are mainly provided by each community. The quality of the theatrical services that are available in Dubai tends to be low; however, it has benefited from the support of the UAE government in finding new material (space, walls, lights, and sound systems), and the audiences.

Limited providers in the area of theatrical activities exist, and therefore, the ability to be involved in theatres is low. Theatrical activities in Dubai are mainly set up in four theatre groups: The National Youth Arts Theatre, Dubai Popular Art Theatre, Dubai Al Ahli Theatre and Dubai Drama Group. More stages are under construction (e.g. the Dubai Community Theatre Stage), which will provide additional services in the area of theatrical activities. To be accessible for all communities and cultures, it has been conceived for large capacity in that it comprises 550-seat, two-level theatre, a 150-flexible-seat studio theatre, rehearsal space for ballet, and other services. In addition, it is important to mention the new Opera project that is being executed in Dubai. This project will alleviate the capacity issues for theatrical activities in Dubai. (see Appendix 1)

The UAE theatre movement has been influenced by the theatre movements of other Arab countries, like Egypt and Kuwait, and the UAE directors, actors and play writes have been regularly winning awards in various GCC and Arab festivals. Still, National workforce remains limited in this area and is mostly comprised of amateurs. As such, no proper training is provided and courses at

¹ *Rangmanch* Theatre Academy, an initiative of Indian cinema and theatre actor Kader Khan, has signed an agreement with Knowledge Village in Dubai to establish its operations in Dubai in 2003.

universities are very limited and not designed to develop professionals in this field. Moreover, there are no scholarships for art studies and a very limited capacity for local production.

In recent times, the content of plays has undergone further changes to reflect contemporary issues that are of more interest to the constituents, such as political issues, environmental problems, and loss of cohesiveness in the family structure. Despite this fact, Nationals' interest in theatre and in performing arts at large is perceived to be limited. The support of tourists and expatriates is not enough to sustain local production; language being the major barrier, and the low quality of the plays.

2.1.1. The Theatre Situation

To discuss the reasons of weakness of Theatre in Dubai, we should review the performance of the major three theatre groups, The Dubai Al Ahli Theatre, The Dubai Popular Arts and Theatre, and Dubai National Youth Theatre. As mentioned previously, these groups live in a closed circle of problems, impediments and disappointments that led to a state of despair.

- Dubai Al Ahli Theatre:

The Dubai Al Ahli Theatre was established on the 15th of July 1981 as part of the Al Ahli Club. It is considered the most active and productive of the theatre groups in Dubai and has won many awards in theatre festivals. Its famous play "*Bab Al Baraha*" (The Baraha Door) was granted three major awards in the Seventh Theatre Festival of the GCC countries in 2001. It won the award for best work, the award for best script, and the award for best acting. Unfortunately, this theatre group is thrown in a "wooden box" at the Ahli club.

Dubai Al Ahli Theatre Group suffers from shortages of financial resources. Al Ahli club provided the location or "the wooden box" with water and electricity and the group were left to face

other financial expenses for computers, a secretary, office boy, etc. There is no budget for salaries for employees or members of the group and their work is considered to be on a volunteer basis. The financial support they receive comes from the former Ministry of Information, which allocates an annual amount of Dhs.85000 to the group's activities and an annual reward of Dhs.60000 from His Highness Sheikh Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qassimi, Ruler of Sharjah for its participation the Sharjah Theatre Days Festival. These two financial channels are the life cord that prevents this group from total collapse.¹ Mr. *Yousif Gharib*, Chairman of Al Ahli theatre, once said, "We don't get even one dirham from the Government of Dubai which gives an amount of seven million dirhams to each of Dubai's sports clubs. We want only one percent of this amount so that we can survive. Sometimes we pay from our own pockets when and as necessary. We need to renovate the stage, furniture and accessories. We would have been pushed out from the club, without the support of *Qassim Sultan*" (Former Director General of Dubai Municipality). Gharib added "We do not have a minibus for members of the group to take the show to other emirates. We use our own cars. But we need a minibus for children who participate in the show and for students who join us during the summer training activities".²

"The total cost for our famous show '*Bab Al Baraha*' reached Dhs.170000 which left us in a deficit of Dhs.85000. We had to wait for the next year's budget from the Ministry of Information to cover this deficit. During activities of Dubai Shopping Festival, we participated in a play titled '*Antar and Abla*' we spent an amount of Dhs.70000 to prepare this show, and we were ignored any compensation or a reward from the organizing committee of the festival. But the festival pays an amount of Dhs.300,000 or 400,000 when it brings any outside group, from Kuwait for example. So our group

¹ Interview with Mr. Yousif Gharib, Chairman of AL Ahli theatre.

² Ibid.

cannot produce more than one play in a year and over the last 20 years we produced 24 plays only because of the limited financial support”.¹

Mr. *Omar Ghubash*, Director of Dubai Arts Centre and the Theatre society said he suggested to the organizing committee of Dubai Shopping Festival the idea of holding a special Theatre Festival for Arab Children with the participation of Arab countries. But members of the committee turned a deaf ear to his suggestion, and did not reply to his letters in this regard. Dubai Shopping Festival invites foreign institutions to participate in its activities in spite of the fact that similar national and local institutions exist. This happens in the absence of legislation that regulates and governs cultural activities.²

Furthermore, Dubai Al Ahli Theatre created a marketing committee to collect donations from government and private institutions to support its financial standing, but its attempt was doomed to failure. The absence of a theatre arts academy made Dubai Al Ahli Theatre act as a training centre for future generations who have the talent and the passion to learn theatre arts. It offers free training to students during the summer holidays under the supervision of a local group of nationals. Dubai Al Ahli Theatre Group has always requested from the government a piece of land with a decent theatre building on it, or at least give them a location at Dubai Media City. Their current location is made of wood and not appropriate facilities for training and rehearsals. The female members of the group are embarrassed to come to it through the sports club. There are many female artists who are paid more than Dhs.100,000 from Kuwaiti Theatre, while in Dubai she is only paid around Dhs. 15,000.³

¹ Ibid.

² Interview with Mr. Omar Ghubash, Director of Dubai Arts Centre and the Theatre society.

³ Mr. Yousif Gharib, Chairman of AL Ahli theatre.

- Dubai Popular Arts and Theatre Group:

The Dubai Popular Arts and Theatre group was established in 1976, and by 1977, it presented its first play (Poor Boy Suddenly in Richness). The show was presented on a poor wooden stage and in the open air. The late *Sheikh Rashid Bin Saeed Al Maktoum* ordered the construction of theatre and a location for the group's activities. Dubai Theatre Group was established by a number of theatre art lovers and amateurs. In 1978, the famous Kuwaiti actor and director *Saqer Al Rushoud* visited the Dubai Theatre and after his death in a tragic accident the group was renamed (*Saqer Al Rushoud Popular Theatre*) to commemorate the memory of the late artist who provided many services to the theatre movement in Dubai. In 1981, the group was again renamed as (The Dubai Popular Arts Community Theatre). It is the most active theatre group in Dubai and presented around 40 plays since 1977.¹

Again, the limited financial resources negatively affect the productions of this theatre. Additionally, in spite of the fact that an annual amount of Dhs.150,000 is given by the government, much of this amount goes to the popular art activities and there is no fixed amount for theatre activities. The theatre could not even participate in the activities of the Sharjah Theatre Days festival for five consecutive years due to a financial shortage for preparation and production of a play. Many members are also deserting for good, as the theatre cannot even pay the amount of Dhs.3000 to one actor for all the performances. For comparison, a Kuwait actor is paid the amount of Dh.6000 for one show only. Consequently, the financial shortages and the absence of media support are factors that push members to leave the theatre.² Officials at the theatre say that they need an annual amount of at least Dhs.300,000 as an annual budget to survive and produce plays. The location of the theatre was built some 34 years ago

¹ Habib Ghulūm, *Alḥayah Althaqafiya fi Al Emarat (The Cultural Life in the UAE)*, special edition for Frankfurt Book Fair 2004, Ministry of Information and Culture, Abu Dhabi, UAE, 2004, pp. 31-42.

² Interview with Mr. Abdullah Saleh, famous UAE actor and board member of Dubai Theatre Group.

and is not safe anymore, especially since a piece of cement fell from the roof two years ago. The building does not meet the minimum of today's standards for theatre performances in respect of the construction itself and all other technical details.¹

- Dubai National Theatre for Youth

The Dubai National Theatre for Youth was established in 1972 in Al Qusais area and came under the supervision of Ministry of Education and Youth in 1980. It is the first theatre group in the United Arab Emirates and includes a number of distinct talents. It has presented around 40 plays since its birth. This theatre was dedicated to training and preparing youth skills through summer training on acting and popular arts. The Ministry of Education and Youth supports this group with a monthly amount of Dhs.30000. It was also given vehicles from Dubai Ruler's office. But the group faced a location problem as its former location was demolished and the new building was given to the Disabled Club. The Ministry rented a traditional house in Al Hamria area as a new location for the theatre group for an annual rent of Dhs.70000, but the new location is not fit for the group's training and other activities. The Ministry of Education has prepared designs for building a new national theatre and the government has allocated a piece of land, but the budget for the new project has not yet been decided.²

2.1.2. Solutions to help develop the theatrical activities in Dubai

Theatre in UAE, and in particular, in Dubai, has achieved a high standing on both the GCC and Arab levels. Many of the UAE plays and performances were highly recognized in terms of writing, acting and directing, and received numerous awards during the Gulf theatre festivals. In addition, there are many playwrights in the UAE, more than in any of the neighbouring Gulf countries, and this reflects

¹ Ibid.

² Interview with Mr. Naji Al Hai, Chairman of Dubai National Theatre for Youth.

positively on the theatre movement in the country. The following solutions could push the theatre movement forward:

- Set mechanisms to develop the relationship between theatre and audience; when a play touches on the core issues and concerns of the people with good advertisements through the media, definitely we will have a good audience turnout. When we have a large audience and media attention, theatre artists will be enthusiastic to persevere and develop new ideas for plays that tackle people's problems and issues.
- Provide Media support and coverage to the activities of local artists so that they become known on a large scale and their work can easily be sponsored by the private sector. Sponsorship can also start from a Sheikh or a high-ranking government official. This will encourage private institutions and business people to do likewise and forge sort of a trend that sponsoring local artists is a good social work.
- Most of the theatre artists are not devoted full-time to theatre work; artists here should have full time jobs at the theatre. We have three local theatre groups in Dubai with different levels of performance and output, and most of the members have their own professions and jobs. The Ministry of Culture and Dubai Cultural Council should form a committee comprised of cultural and media organizations in the UAE to study a proposal for creating full time jobs for theatre artists.
- Kuwait ranks first among GCC states in its support of Theatre and over the years has accumulated a remarkable experience and has an honourable record of achievements in terms of producing plays and developing the theatre movement in the country. The Kuwaiti theatre presents between sixty and one hundred plays every year and has created a loyal audience that is increasing in numbers especially when all these plays deal with social and economic

problems of the Kuwaiti society. Other GCC states should benefit from the Kuwaiti experience and expertise in this respect, by organizing a cultural Gulf week that can showcase all talents in the gulf in terms of actors, scriptwriters and directors.

- Dubai should organize and host an Arab Theatre Festival for the participation of all Arab countries. The Emirate of Dubai has a worldwide reputation in organizing major international and regional events (such as Dubai Shopping Festival). Such an Arab Theatre Festival can even expand and develop into an international one in the future. The Sharjah Theatre Days is still classified as a local and regional event.¹
- Promoting a culture that supports the theatre among all local communities through carefully set plans and developing a concept that theatre is the reflection of society and can be a national unifying element through presenting works derived from the history and heritage of the country.
- Boosting the role of the private sector and encouraging it to organize and host public theatre shows, which reflect issues such as unemployment, new imported concepts, and promote love and loyalty to work. The private sector previously succeeded in contracting with famous world singers. *Emaar* Real Estate Co. launched a competition for fine arts to promote their new projects "*Burj Dubai*".
- Establishing a national theatre with state-of-the-art equipment and according to international standards. This theatre can also include a Theatre Arts Institute or Academy.
- Enlisting theatre and arts academic degrees on government scholarships granted to students who wish to specialize in these studies at foreign universities.

¹ The initiation of Sharjah Theatre Days was set by Sheikh Sultan bin Mohammed Al Qassimi, Ruler of Sharjah, to enhance the local theatrical movement.

- Activating the role of theatre in schools and universities and show their plays on television instead of showing imported plays that do not express local preferences.
- Organizing training courses for local talents and launching a theatre competition within the educational institutions.

2.2 Fine Arts

Fine arts exhibitions in Dubai have flourished during the recent two decades, and have attracted a large group of UAE and Arab artists. Such domestic exhibitions presented to the audience of fine arts a group of uniquely talented artists, and shared the artistic experience. Currently, there are almost forty-eight art galleries in Dubai providing services in a variety of areas. The quality of these services varies and is governed by commercial aspects. Some galleries present art of high standards, and select good pieces, others lack funds or experience. In addition art exhibitions are being held in cultural centres and hotels.

Dubai has no non-profit art galleries, a National Art Gallery, nor a museum of fine arts. Several bodies are sponsoring fine arts activities. Exhibitions and galleries hold annual functions in support of fine arts, while artistic and cultural institutions hold a number of solos and open shows for Nationals, expatriates, and visiting artists. The Dubai International Art Centre and the Dubai Art Society play a role in encouraging and promoting local arts activities. In addition, Dubai has no established body to give recognition to artists or art galleries. The public schools curricula do not emphasize the arts. Materials for fine arts are not widely available in stores in Dubai, and most of the available materials are only related to painting, while missing other forms of the fine arts, such as sculpting and calligraphy and others. (see Appendix 1)

UAE has about fifteen pioneer artists who have earned international awards and accolades. There are no surveys conducted to assess the preferences and patterns of usage of fine arts services by Dubai Nationals. However, the general perception is that the majority of the UAE nationals do not usually attend the galleries nor do they update themselves in the arts field, while expatriates are more active in this area. The major reason for the lack of interest is believed to be related to the lack of educational background of the UAE nationals in the area of the arts. Nevertheless, the success of some of the private commercial galleries has given a boost to local artistic community and has helped to develop the taste of the local audience. As in other countries, the UAE benefits from a group of wealthy collectors who are interested in building an artistic tradition.

2.3 Music

In Dubai, there are music services provided through various venues such as the Dubai International Jazz Festival, featuring diverse music genres such as blues, funk, swing, acid, rock, contemporary, modern, and fusion. Other venues, such as the Emirates Symphony Orchestra for Children are performing in international music festivals (see Appendix 1). However, Dubai lacks a national musical band or orchestra. Additionally, Dubai lacks a music academy and undergraduate and postgraduate musical courses at universities. There are many commercially run institutes that teach music in Dubai; however, these institutes are not monitored for quality of services. These commercially run institutes provide services for fees that are not affordable by all communities in Dubai.

Many of the concerts are being organized by the expatriate communities in Dubai, and by the private sector. The capacity of the providers is lower than the demand, as is witnessed by the fact that the tickets are always sold out for international concerts. Many UAE nationals have demonstrable talent

in music and the UAE singers are among the best in the Gulf.¹ The Nationals enjoy a strong tradition of music and dance, both of which play a vital role in people's lives. Singing and dancing were, and still are, an integral part of all national celebrations. Many of the songs and dances, handed down from generation to generation by teaching the young from the primary level upwards the traditional songs and music that form part of the national culture, have survived to the present time.

The audiences in Dubai are mostly ethnically driven and there is no observed pattern of the frequency of attendance by the local audience to music performances of other communities. Attendance at international festivals such as the international jazz festival is rated very high. However, there are no statistics or surveys that reveal the percentage of Nationals attending music events.

2.4 Movies

In Dubai, the major event for movies is the International Film Festival, which was successfully inaugurated in December 2004, and included strong public participation with more than 13,000 attendees. Currently, movie-making movements in Dubai are still fresh and do not have sufficient experience, and technology to reach the world's standards. However, the project of Dubai Studio City is viewed as having a positive effect on film, television, and music production industries in Dubai and in the region, especially since it will provide a free zone type of accessibility.² Dubai enjoys state-of-the-art auditoriums, screening rooms, seminar rooms, and arenas that match the latest technology and are run by private providers.

¹ The cassettes sale of UAE singers was the highest in year 2004 according to ROTANA musical production company in the Middle East.

² Smalley Ben, *Middle East Media Guide 2006*, 1st Ed, Media Source, Dubai, UAE, 2006, p. 143.

Limited availability of infrastructure or providers to develop films exists in Dubai, either local or international. Dubai Studio City (DSC) project is a Dubai Holding Group project, which aims to promote the growth of the broadcast and film production industry in the region. DSC plans to offer technical infrastructure for the film, television and music production industries. Its aims are to build a large cluster of companies from across the industry, including production companies, support service providers offering production and post-production facilities, animation studios and services like dubbing, make-up, costume designing, stage designing, and building, casting, telnet agencies, as well as lab facilities.¹ There is a huge attendance to the cinema houses in Dubai both by Nationals and non-Nationals. This audience is generally interested in the commercial films. However, the audience for short and documentary movies is not highly developed. (see Appendix 1)

2.5 Analysis: Performing Arts, Fine Arts, Music and Movies

Dubai Cultural Council (DCC) has taken the initiative to support art activities including filmmaking, theatre, music and other activities. Fortunately, the current cultural process was cultivated by the Dubai International Film Festival and the studio city project. Dubai hosts high quality movie theatres and the government has already approved the Opera Theatre Project. Meanwhile, the Emirates Symphony Orchestra for Children plays an active part in Dubai's cultural life. Additionally, art and music teaching is offered by the private sector which has a talented staff, while the private universities play a role in providing art courses and programs.

UAE artists are among the best in the GCC countries and an increasing number of young UAE artists are emerging in various cultural fields, which receive excellent appeal similar to that received by

¹ Ibid., p. 144.

international performances. However, the attendance at international events and performances is high among expatriates. Fine arts attract a high number of Dubai Nationals, compared to other art activities, and an increasing number of nationals now show a significant interest in participating in other art activities. There is also a variety of art galleries and exhibitions throughout Dubai as well as a range of fine art selections.

Dubai Cultural Council boasts a bundle of strengths; however, it has to overcome some weaknesses. The Council does not have the authority to regulate and monitor the performances of the cultural sector, which suffers from a lack of funds. No University program or specialized art academy exists in Dubai and the facilities available for art activities are few and of low quality. At the same time, school curricula are short of specialized arts. The services provided by the private sector are very limited, while galleries and art performances are mostly commercial.

The quality of art facilities is not in line with international standards; therefore, high quality performances shun Dubai. Meanwhile, movies shown are commercial and choices are limited to US and Indian productions. There is also a lack of professionalism in the field of arts, and there are no art societies or associations in Dubai, while local providers and the workforce are limited. Moreover, in Dubai, specialized stores that sell art materials and equipment are few, and the interest of nationals is not sufficient to support the development of national arts. Attendance and participation in art activities and events is still limited among nationals and the studying of arts is not widely welcomed among nationals. In addition, language is considered to be a barrier for attracting tourists to local performances.

Dubai's continued rapid economic expansion and diversification has made the Emirate a destination for international business meetings, conventions, and trade fairs. The arts have been served well in general through the increased use of Internet and electronic media, and the global trend forecasts that arts and music will have a bigger part in school curricula. Copyright laws are making it more difficult to copy and circulate music digitally and the popularity of international performing arts is leading to large audience' demand for them. Regional competition in the film industry is growing and there is an increase in the DVDs' distribution and opportunities for specialized films.

As a result of booming business activities, there is an opportunity to build an international audience for local performances, and to host international events in the region. Experts say that increasing the academic hours allocated for arts and cultural activities can increase awareness and promote talents among students, so that more Arab films can be produced and promoted through Dubai Studio City. Finally, Dubai fine arts and music could be promoted internationally through the Internet and the electronic media.

Foreign art activities dominate the Internet and pose a threat to local culture, and there is a growing fear of its disappearance. We cannot ignore that illegal copying of original music and DVDs makes it harder to sell music or movie productions at a profit in countries like Dubai and could negatively impact Dubai's movies and television production industry. Industry experts say that Gulf and international performances in Dubai have the potential to overshadow the interest in local cultural arts.

3. Literature

The main focus in the UAE literature movement is on poetry. Services are limited and include: poetry, folk songs, common proverbs and folktales. In the modern UAE society, few literature productions exist, and very few new intellectuals and thinkers are arriving on the literary scene. There are no venues such as independent research institutions that support intellectual movements. The support for poets and publishers is limited, although the government has created some cultural awards to motivate quality standards in poetry. There are six public libraries in Dubai that have a wide range of books and research papers (see Appendix 2). However, the statistics about the frequency and use of these libraries do not reveal any relevant analyses on the support they bring to the literature movement and on their use by Nationals.

A decrease has been noticed in the number of younger authors, which is believed to be due to the limited career structure for literature graduates. The UAE audience is poetry-oriented and has limited interest in story, arts, and intellectual works. Anecdotal evidence reveals that reading is not a widespread habit among Nationals, and this is primarily believed to be related to the poor support for reading, and literature in particular, in public schools curricula.

3.1 Analysis: Literature

Universities offer courses in literature, liberal arts and humanities as part of their curricula, and local governments offer many literature awards, which includes poetry awards. Consequently, the local dialect is preserved by the traditional poetry. Dubai Municipality plays a leading role in providing public libraries, while other private cultural centres and businessmen publish literary books.

While no institute or association supports publishing of books and literature, bookshops and libraries are not sufficient, and do not provide a wide range of literary books. Unfortunately, literary

careers are limited to literature graduates and the number of young authors is decreasing as Arabic teaching in public schools is weak, and English is the dominant language in private schools. Reading, meanwhile, is not a common habit among nationals, and there is little audience of nationals and expatriates at the libraries. Data is insufficient on this issue. The Internet is increasingly being leveraged to convey literature to specialized audiences. Audiences for literature have too many choices on the Internet and local associations can use the Internet to promote and disseminate Dubai's literature to audiences locally and abroad.

4. Folklore & Festivals

Festivals in the UAE in general, and in Dubai in particular, are rich and varied, extending to suit various tastes in the diversified community. Additionally, such festivals are used as venues for promoting National culture and opening doors for all the world's cultures to be present in Dubai. Dubai festivals, mainly the Dubai shopping festivals, the Dubai summer surprises, as well as the global village have gained a regional reputation because they attract tourists from all Arab countries (see Appendix 3). These festivals are sponsored by the private sector and have large support from the government of Dubai. Part of the effort to preserve and promote local folklore and festivals was the launch of the Dubai city guide portal, which provides information on major events in Dubai. The folklore societies in Dubai are considered to be the oldest and most recognizable in the Gulf. Their main activities are meant to revive the folk heritage through teaching the younger generation folk dance and folk history, as well as performing public shows in various exhibitions and National celebrations.¹ However, because communication between the various communities in Dubai remains limited, the services provided by these societies are not widespread.

¹ Huriz Sayad Hamad, *Zayed Wal turath (Zayed and Heritage)*, 1st ed, Center for Documentation & Research, Abu Dhabi, UAE, 2002, p. 21.

These folklore societies are limited in what they can do to persevere the folk heritage of Dubai, especially because folklore is not included in school curricula, which is leading to a decrease in the interest of Dubai youths in folklore. Moreover, there is no government body in charge of restoring and preserving the folklore and there is a lack of research in this area, where most of the information is undocumented. Dubai has now a professional and trained workforce in organizing and hosting international festivals. However, there is a lack of providers and workforce for folkloric performances in this area. The local workforce is not professional and not properly trained. Most of it (folk dancers) is imported from neighbouring countries especially Oman.¹ The members of the local folklore societies including administrators, performers, dancers and trainers are mainly volunteering UAE Nationals, who have been committed to contributing to preserving more than seventeen kinds of UAE national arts. There are no surveys conducted to reflect the opinion of Nationals and analyze their preferences and patterns of attending folkloric activities and events. However, the general perception is that the interest of Nationals in folkloric activities is decreasing.

4.1 Analysis: Folklore & Festivals

Dubai has established a good infrastructure for its two successful festivals: Dubai Shopping Festival and Dubai Summer Surprises. The two festivals, which have a variety of activities and attract a big audience from the region, draw wide support from both the public and private sectors. One of the attractions of Dubai Shopping Festival is the Global Village, which is a venue for international folklore performances. Folklore performances are part of the social scene during the festivals (e.g. national events, and weddings), and there is a high participation on the part of nationals. In addition, there is a

¹ Interview with Mr. Masoad Al Sawaidi, Head of Aial Naser Folklore Association, April 2006.

big response and interest among expatriates and tourists, who are anxious to explore and watch local folklore performances. Meanwhile, Dubai has the largest number of companies working in organizing regional exhibitions, events and festivals. Event management providers are also available in Dubai.

One of the persistent problems is the limited funding dedicated to national folklore activities. Another problem is the lack of teaching folklore activities by any academy or school. Such activities are mainly served by the local societies and there is no government body in charge of preserving folklore. Folkloric activities are not well-organized and there are no proper records of myths and legends. Surprisingly, the Department of Tourism does not support local folklore sufficiently, for example, dancers representing Dubai's folklore are imported from Oman. In the meantime, there is no folklore transferred to the younger generation because there is no encouragement for the youth to learn and to be involved in folkloric activities. Needless to say, folklore training is poor and weak, and this explains why the new national generation is not interested in attending folklore performances.

Event management business is growing and Dubai has become the destination of international business meetings, conventions, and trade fairs. In addition, Dubai can attract more events, which would provide opportunities for the folklore to be performed and watched by foreign audiences in light of the booming business activities. Unfortunately, the Department of Tourism uses performers from neighbouring countries to show local folklore, and this, of course, brings the traditional folklore into oblivion.

5. Archaeology & Heritage

The research of early settlements in the UAE, begun in the early 1950s, is still dominated by foreign archaeologists, because of the dearth of local specialists in the field; expatriate archaeologists working here send the discovered artefacts to their home countries for study.¹ Dubai Municipality is currently planning to restore all remaining historic building like the *Al Bastakiyah* area and *Al Shindagah* to their former glory. The Historic Buildings Section of Dubai Municipality with the help of historic documents and pictures has reconstructed many historic buildings using the latest technology and techniques. The experience of the Historic Buildings Section is considered to be the best in the Gulf. There are four main excavation sites in Dubai at *Al Qusais*, *Al Sufooh*, *Jumeirah* and *Hatta*. The first two are graveyards dating back more than 2,000 years. The *Jumeirah* site reveals artefacts from the 7th to 15th centuries AD. These sites are not yet fully open to the public. However, tourists or tour operators may obtain a special permit from Dubai Museum to visit the digs. (see Appendix 4)

Schools and universities are teaching little or nothing about the heritage of the UAE. As noted above, the workforce in this area is mainly non-Nationals who are working in renovations and excavations. Academic training in archaeology is unavailable in UAE. Generally, there is a sense of a limited interest and lack of awareness by Nationals of local heritage and archaeology services. The lack of courses in schools and universities is not helping to create demand for archaeology and heritage.

5.1 Analysis: Archaeology & Heritage

Dubai Municipality has a specialized department and workforce for preserving historic sites. The Heritage Village and *Bastakia* district are created as venues for exploring Dubai heritage. It goes without saying that the quality of the restoration of old buildings is good and publications and maps on historic

¹ Interview with Mr. Faod Bu Kush, Head of Archeology department at Dubai Municipality, April 2006.

sites and archaeological digs are available in many languages for tourists. National students make visits to the museums as part of their school programs; however, the majority of museum visitors are foreigners.

The process of upgrading and maintaining museums lacks sufficient funding and there is no law regarding the protection of historical sites and buildings. Meanwhile, archaeological digs are not registered with the UNESCO world heritage list,¹ and the academic curriculum offers little education about heritage and archaeology, and there is no academic training on archaeology in the UAE. Unfortunately, archaeological digs are not open to the public and some sites are not well-protected and subject to vandalism. Moreover, there are no comprehensive records about all the historical buildings and sites. Almost all the workforce in Dubai Municipality is non-national and proper training is limited and therefore it is not strange to see UAE nationals shunning archaeology. In addition, there is an increase in the international focus to preserve local history, which is sought by international tourists. Given Dubai's focus on maintaining historical sites, there is an opportunity to promote these sites internationally, as well as a fear that international resources to maintain the historical sites could be attracted by other places that have more archaeological digs and historical sites than Dubai.

6. Media

The media sector is highly developed in Dubai. A wide variety of media services is available; however, there is not enough local content in the coverage provided. Dubai Media City is a successful regional hub for all media service providers hosting over 1,124 companies since its official opening in January 2001. The emergence of this media free zone has acted as a catalyst for the development and

¹ Interview with Mr. Faod Bu Kush, Head of Archeology Department at Dubai Municipality, April 2006.

deregulation of the media industry in Dubai and to attract investments from start-ups and established companies.¹ The UAE newspaper market has become even more competitive in 2005 with the introduction of additional newspapers and with the presence of international newspapers, such as the International Herald Tribune, providing daily papers in Dubai. Many magazines in Dubai are distributed for free to customers. Subscriptions and mailing lists are available to all.² Limited industry specialised and special interest magazines are available in Dubai, such as ones covering environmental issues, sustainable development or archaeology.³ The UAE radio market is one of the most developed in the region, using the latest digital technology, with twenty four stations broadcasting in Arabic, English, Malayalam, Tagalog, Hindi, and Urdu, reflecting the cosmopolitan make-up of the country's resident population.⁴ The Dubai Media Incorporated runs television and radio channels. The "Dubai TV" was re-launched in 2004 as a pan-Arab family channel, and "One TV" emerged from Dubai's former English-language *channel 33* to compete with the Western entertainment programming offered by other regional and local channels. *Sama Dubai* is a local channel launched in 2005 broadcasting programs with local content and which is presented by Nationals. Additionally, *Sama* is believed to be predominantly watched by Nationals and is insufficiently integrated or promoted.⁵ The media sector benefits from a highly professional and well-trained foreign workforce. The contribution of Nationals to the workforce is, however, extremely limited. Dubai is the regional hub for many media providers and publishers. Many international and regional groups launch their operations from Dubai.

¹ Interview with Mr. Mohammed Al Mulla, Executive Manager of Dubai Media City, April 2006.

² Smalley Ben, *Middle East Media Guide 2006*, 1st ed, Media Source, Dubai, UAE, 2006, p. 34.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 180.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

Various media courses are offered at universities and colleges (from mass communications degrees focusing on a particular branch of the media, to public relations, print journalism or broadcasting). However, no universities or colleges in Dubai and in the UAE provide media postgraduate courses. Available statistics and researches to demonstrate the pattern of use of media services and the preference of the National users are insufficient. Experts in the field commonly agree that media services are highly used by both Nationals and non-nationals. According to a national readership survey published by an independent research company (Ipsos-Stat) in June 2004, daily newspapers are read by 59.5% of the resident population of the UAE compared to 52.9% for weekly magazines and 9.1% for monthly magazines¹. Internet usage continues to grow rapidly in the UAE. Statistics show that more than 1,384,800 people have used the Internet up until November 2005 in the UAE (according to Internet World Stats – www.internetworldstats.com). (see Appendix 5)

6.1 Analysis: Media

Dubai has a wide range of media services in and UAE law guarantees the “freedom of expression”. Within this field, Dubai Media City is attracting international and regional media companies, while Dubai Press Club is a good venue for networking and press conferences. Dubai government also provides media services, which are run and supervised by Dubai Media Incorporated. Highly qualified expatriates work in the sector, promoting Dubai as the media hub for the region and providing many commercial opportunities for the private sector.

Dubai is in need of good quality academic courses on media; including related specialties such as film production (some graduate degrees are available). What is called the practice of self-censorship by

¹ Ibid., p. 34.

the media means that some information available internationally is not published locally. The Cultural aspects in the media are limited and the culture-related services and programmes are copied with the aim of commercial profit rather than making a cultural impact. Within this framework, there is a little local cultural content in the media and few Nationals are employed by media companies in Dubai. Another weakness is the limited number of local media companies in Dubai, and the absence of transparent goals and visions in the private media. We can also add to this the absence of detailed data about users, patterns and preferences, as well as the limited surveys and researches.

Dubai is rapidly expanding economically and diversification is leading to mega projects and changing demographics with an increasing reliance on an expatriate workforce. In Dubai, there is a wide public appeal and use of the Internet and new technology and the government is anxious to adopt international protocols in this regard. There is an opportunity to reach wider audiences by leveraging technology to spread cultural content digitally, despite the enforcement of copyright laws. The media is focused too much on branding Dubai with mega projects at the expense of culture and heritage. Additionally, the continued increase in the number of expatriates could result in foreign domination in the media.

7. Religion

Islam is the only religion of UAE Nationals. Religion plays an important role in reinforcing the values of a culture in a given society. "Tolerance and moderation" are the key values that underpin the strategy of the Islamic Affairs department, which is the government regulatory body responsible for all Islamic religiously related activities in Dubai. This department overlooks all religious activities in order to make sure that they are in line with the values of the department's strategy. However, no official

government body is in charge of the non-Muslim services which are available in Dubai through churches and temples.¹ Mosques and prayer services are widely available in Dubai and are spread throughout all the areas of the city. The total numbers of mosques in Dubai have reached 864.²

Classes on Islamic subjects are taught in many languages (Russian, Philippine and Chinese languages) and are provided by the Islamic Affairs department of Dubai, in addition to classes for new Muslims. Islamic centres for non-Arabic speaking expatriates are also available, such as the Indian Islamic Centre, Pakistani Islamic Centre, and Iranian club. Some religious programmes are provided using modern and contemporary methods making sure to use electronic media to provide knowledge through Internet sites. The Dubai government has taken a dedicated interest in preserving the mosques and has created a special section for preserving the Islamic culture in Dubai. The Islamic research centre in Dubai is where scholars provide people with religious knowledge. Many organizations in Dubai are engaged with Islamic Affairs and charitable activities, such as the “Holy Qur’an Centres”, the “Mohammed bin Rashid Centre for Cultural Understanding,” and some awards such as “Dubai International Holy Qur’an” award. The employees in the field of religious education are qualified scholars in the Islamic religion. Dubai selects great scholars from other countries having higher educational qualifications in their Islamic knowledge, and brings them to lead their religious related affairs. In this respect, the workforce is mostly non-National. All of these facilities are used regularly by Nationals, resident expatriates, and non-resident expatriates, conducting religious ceremonies, lectures, and conferences. (see Appendix 6)

¹ Interview with Ms. Aisha Al Kash, Head of public relation at the Department of Islamic Affairs in Dubai, Feb 2006.

² Department of Islamic Affairs in Dubai (2006) *Statistics report of Department of Islamic Affairs in Dubai: 2006 edition report*. Dubai: The Stationery Office.

7.1 Analysis: Religion

The Dubai Government has a Department of Islamic Affairs, which is centred on tolerance and moderation and offers high quality religious services. The Department provides services for new Muslims and there is material serving this purpose in different languages. Meanwhile, there are many specialized Islamic centres providing religious classes for non-Arabic speaking expatriates. Religious scholars, selected to practice in Dubai, are highly educated in the field of religious studies and are moderate and tolerant. Religious studies are available as part of University graduate and post-graduate degree programs. Services for other non-Muslim religions are also provided for the expatriate community.

Non-Islamic religion providers operate in isolation and there is little information about the services they provide. Terrorism has resulted in biased international attitudes and perceptions about the Middle East and Islam. However, there is an opportunity for Dubai to promote the tenets of tolerant Muslim values to attract tourism and investors creating a potential that regional fundamentalist terrorist groups might take advantage of Dubai's tolerance.

8. Technology

In the age of electronic reproduction, culture is spread via the screen, video, radio, etc., and therefore, exploration is not required to be in the context of ritualized spaces. In Dubai and the UAE, there are huge numbers of cultural websites where culture can be seen to span time and place. For some critics this involves mixing, matching and cultural exchange; for others it is a form of cultural domination. Every cultural foundation and institution in Dubai and the UAE has a website. However, technology is limited in most of the theatres in Dubai, which do not allow for world standard performances and shows. Media services use high technology, which supports the development of this

field and even the movie theatres are provided with the latest technology. Additionally, technology use is limited in most services other than media and there is a kind of low technology in theatres.

9. Shared Services

Limited shared services are available in the area of cultural activities. This lack of sharing is mainly due to the lack of coordination of activities between the various providers that are organized around different ethnic groups. Some logistic shared services are in Dubai Media City and the art galleries provide a platform for shared services for national and international artists. However, the Cultural Council does not coordinate all cultural activities, and there is a lack of coordination among the various arts providers. Limited shared services are in the private and public sector.

10. Role of the Government

The role of the government in the area of Culture and Heritage is important from a regulation perspective and for the promotion and development of the sector. Developing cultural life in Dubai is important to convey with the other accomplishments in economy, construction, and technology. In this respect, the Dubai Cultural Council (DCC) is working on assuming a coordination role between the various cultural activities happening in Dubai. The Dubai Cultural Council also contributes to sponsoring cultural events, as well as organizing courses and sessions in arts and culture. However, the Dubai Cultural Council has neither the mandate nor the authority to enforce overall coordination and to regulate the entire sector. Importantly, there are no government initiatives to create cultural awareness and artistic interest among Nationals through public schools, university programmes, awareness campaigns or other promotional tools. Government funding to support cultural activities through the DCC is relatively limited and is linear, therefore it is not based on programs and activities, which help assess and measure the impact of public spending in this area. For example, more than fifty percent of

the DCC budget in 2004 and around thirty percent in 2005 was spent on administrative expenditures. The remaining of DCC budget is partially transferred to support cultural activities¹.

The rules and laws regulating this sector are outdated and not comprehensive, creating heavy procedures in some cases and discouraging the development of the sector. Reference is made here to the law dealing with the creation of non-profit organizations dated 1974. This law is outdated and caters generally to all type of non-profit organizations. There is no one specialized law for regulating organizations that perform cultural and art activities. On another front, the government plays a censorship role in an attempt to preserve cultural ethics. The UAE government has control over the type of websites accessed by users through proxy servers in order to block the ones deemed unsuitable. This is only applied to a number and type of websites typically including pornography, online gambling, and any other materials deemed offensive to Islamic culture and sensibilities.

The Dubai Cultural Council provides support for cultural activities, while the Department of Islamic Affairs monitors Islamic religion related activities in Dubai. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Youth, Culture and Community Development extend several services to cultural issues. The Cultural Council has no mandate to enforce the coordination of culture and heritage activities and there is limited funding for cultural activities. Another weakness is the lack of new laws to regulate cultural activity because the existing ones are outdated. Additionally, we can say that licensing procedures for arts and culture service providers are complicated in some areas (e.g. ticket stamping). Finally, we venture to say that the government is not encouraging art and culture awareness and education.

¹ Dubai Cultural Council (2006) *Statistics records of Dubai Cultural Council: 2006 edition report*. Dubai: The Stationery Office.

11. Final Conclusion

Sufficient mention has been made of a profound dearth of interest in preserving Dubai's heritage and culture for future generations. The severity of Dubai's cultural problems (both current and impending) is an overwhelming testament to the shortfalls of various cultural players. Dubai's cultural scene is beset by issues ranging from funding to the non-existence of a governing agency on cultural arts and activities. The lack of funding allocation for culture, heritage and the arts hampers government organizations from awarding prizes for artistic/literary achievements and awarding subsidies for the pursuit of the arts. This phenomenon holds true for the Fine Arts and Literature although the UAE government has accorded ample financial support for festivals like the Dubai Shopping Festival and Dubai Summer Surprises, and theatrical infrastructure improvements. Support for folklores promotion, archaeology and heritage campaign, however, has not been reasonable; folklore presenters being imported from Oman and archaeology and heritage funds are mostly channelled to administrative expenses.

Education, being an essential tool for information dissemination, interest stimulation, and revolutionary change has not been aptly utilized to impact artistic/cultural perspectives among Dubai's youth. This has crucial implications for both the quality and availability of indigenous workforce in that line. There are limited schools for drama and theatre, music, and folklore. Academic trainings for archaeology and postgraduate courses for media are unavailable in the United Arab Emirates. Insufficient emphasis is given to fine arts, literature, folklore, and heritage in school curricula. Commercial Music Institutes, in addition to being of questionable quality, are beyond the means of some Dubai residents. Although initiatives focused on the dilemma could have sparked a renewed public

interest in culture and the arts, a lack of public interest is often the offered rationale for these academic limitations.

This dearth of public interest has crucial implications for the composition of Dubai's cultural workforce and the artistic/cultural participation among the populace. The Nationals' interest in theatre and performing arts is in congruence with the number of theatrical activity providers in that both are limited. Dubai's fine arts exhibits showcase some unique talents and artistic experience. However, the arena is beset by commercialism and a lack of appreciation among UAE nationals. Expatriates are more interested in Emirate arts, which benefit from an artistic enthusiasm peculiar to a wealthier segment of society. Dubai's musical arena is characterized by a musically inclined, musically upbeat society, and a commercialized musical education system. Songs and dances are an important part of celebrations, and there is an inordinate demand for international concert seats. Inadequate project experience and strong public participation, however, mark Dubai's film scene. The launching of the International Film Festival in 2004 and the Dubai Studio City Project are predicted to generate a strong reception on Dubai's film, television, and music industries. Dubai's literary domain, mainly focused on poetry, is not supportive of the development of intellectuals and thinkers. Government-sponsored poetry awards are an insufficient compensation for the limited career prospects for literature graduates. Festivals in Dubai, such as the Dubai Shopping Festival and the Dubai Summer Surprises have acquired an international reputation, drawing tourists from the Middle East and beyond. However, a highly trained festival hosting workforce stands in stark contrast to the unprofessional and poorly-trained folklore performers, who are mostly from Oman. While Dubai's rapid economic growth has made it a preferred destination for business meetings and international events, its vantage for exhibiting local folkloric performances to an

international audience has not been fully utilized. It is ironic that part of the reason of the businesses' choice of Dubai is the pursuit of some Middle Eastern charm.

Restoration attempts on Dubai's historic buildings and the circulation of accompanying brochures and maps in multiple international languages are commendable efforts at giving tourists a glimpse of its ancient glory. The aforementioned measures are necessary to take advantage of Dubai's vantage in the highly competitive heritage tourism industry. However, the unavailability of archaeology programs in the UAE academe, and hence, the dearth of local archaeology specialists resulting in expatriate archaeologists having to send artefacts to their respective countries for research/examination.

Dubai's media sector, with its state-of-the-art infrastructure and openness to competition, is in a struggle between foreign ownership and foreign workforce domination, and calculated guardianship measures against Western infiltration. The media hub, albeit accommodating of the city's cosmopolitan composition, suffers the dearth of commercialized local cultural content.

Islam is highly connected to culture and educationally integrated in Dubai amidst its policy of accommodation and support of non-Muslim, expatriate religions. A sobering fact is that the beauty of Islam has been overshadowed by negative perceptions attendant to Terrorism. By and large, Dubai's Islamic atmosphere, liberal due to its multicultural make-up, is aptly guided by the Islamic values of tolerance and moderation.

Technology can accord Dubai's arts and culture a distinct vantage point, but it can also affect it in less acceptable ways. Electronic proliferation is a global trend, and cultural domination vis-à-vis high

technology is unpredictable. Inadequate coordination exists among various cultural and arts providers, and between Dubai's public and private sectors. Dubai's cultural scene is oblivious to common incidents because of the dearth of literature on the subject; the absence of data on usage, patterns and preferences, and the paucity of surveys and researches are common themes that beset Dubai's cultural components.

That cultural/heritage problems prevail in Dubai, while the United Arab Emirates as a whole advocates culture and heritage is ironic. In the UAE, the preservation of many of its unique archaeological and architectural sites, and its manuscripts has been given special preference. Literature and customs are widely studied in schools, while museum displays, historical villages and the restored of vanished monuments (based on photographs, local memory and documentary evidence) have helped to create a context and feel for this cultural legacy.¹ It appears that most of the cultural development is occurring in Abu Dhabi; in 2005 a law was passed in this city establishing Abu Dhabi Culture and Heritage Authority. This new Authority's goal is to sponsor intellectual and artistic activities and preserve the cultural heritage of the Emirates. This entails directly promoting Abu Dhabi's cultural heritage, drawing up and implementing cultural policies, plans and programs, reviving cultural heritage projects, and organizing exhibitions and conferences on cultural heritage².

Abu Dhabi signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the New York-based Guggenheim Foundation to establish a world-class museum devoted to modern and contemporary art, called the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi (GAD), the museum designed by the eminent architect Frank Gehry will place the Emirates as a leading international cultural destination.²² The researchers have asserted

²⁰ Al-Abed, Ibrahim, *United Arab Emirates Yearbook 2007*, (London, Trident, 2007), p.270.

¹ *Ibid.*, p.271.

that situated in the centre of Abu Dhabi, there is a Cultural Foundation which is now part of the Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage (ADCH); this, at the heart of the capital's cultural life benefits children, adults of all ages, UAE citizens and expatriates. One of the most significant features of the Cultural Foundation is the National Library, which has well over a million books, primarily in Arabic, although there are also collections in a myriad of foreign languages. A majority of these volumes are available for reference for the public, requiring a simple registration process. There is also an area for children where special programs are planned, especially during the school holidays.¹ Obviously, the culture of Dubai should be promoted in the same manner; perhaps these cities could share wealth in culture preservation through the fine and performing arts and the media.

¹ Ibid., p.274.

Chapter 8: The Necessity of Cultural Development

1. Introduction

Because more than thirty-six years have passed since Dubai joined the UAE federation in 1971, taking an objective overview of the real changes that Dubai and the UAE have undergone during the nation-building process on economic, social and cultural levels would be worthwhile. The time has come to get a clearer picture of these changes, and their positive and negative impacts on the cultural scene in the country. Because the cultural scene is our primary focus, we will diagnose the present state of the culture, and its encouraging attributes. Additionally, we will define defects and shortcomings, so we can eliminate them. Moreover, we will discuss how to build on the strengths and the successes achieved to push forward the cultural development of the country, and maintain its steady progress in the face of the rapid changes and possible developments on the global scale that present a challenge to the cultural identity of the United Arab Emirates.

Over the last thirty-six years, numerous cultural foundations and institutions were set up, and were mandated to guide cultural performance and lead the artistic development of the country. These organizations held book exhibitions and organized symposiums, lectures, cultural, and artistic festivals to put the cultural movement in step with the rapid economic development that has been seen. The economic boom has left many concerns and questions. For example, what impact did the cultural ingredients have on the character building of people, to what extent did culture contribute to maintaining the national identity, and what role did the country's heritage play in the cultural aspects of our lives? These are legitimate questions, especially since the government and private organizations concerned with culture have huge resources and capabilities to function in ways resulting in the most impact.

If we closely examine the cultural scene, we will immediately notice that these organizations have not performed at a level that might achieve the goals of development and fortification of the cultural identity of Emirati people. Additionally, the cultural performance of these organizations did not restrain the negative effects of the consequences of the swift economic growth that shocked the foundations of many concepts and convictions along with imported educational systems, lifestyles and consumer oriented media policies. All these factors have eroded the cultural identity and led to a gradual cultural decline and deterioration in cultural awareness.

1.1. Summary of the Problem

Despite being attached to the UAE federation for over thirty years, Dubai has not undergone the kind of cultural advancements one would have expected. In the past three decades a number of cultural foundations and institutions were established specifically for the cultural advancement of the country. These entities were organized with the hope of guiding cultural performance and artistic progress in a certain direction. In addition, these organizations made reasonable attempts to accelerate cultural development within the country. Given the rapid improvement in the economic indicators of the country, the cultural scene needed constant attention in order for it to keep pace with the overall growth of the country. The attempts, however, were not in keeping with the requirements. Most citizens would say not enough has been done to conserve the rich tradition of the people of the Emirates. Additionally, none of these organizations came up with any plan to save the Emirati from the various confusing changes brought into the regular Dubai household with the western educational system, which came hand-in-hand with the economic boom. New education, greater contact with the rest of the world, new lifestyles, and other important transformations that occurred in the past thirty years have eroded some of the traditional notions and principles which had formerly governed the Emirati people's life. The confusing

gap this erosion left behind needed to be addressed sensibly, something that most citizens of Dubai feel did not happen. Given the lack of efficient handling of this vulnerable situation brought about by sudden progress, Dubai is now facing a tremendous cultural slump, and cultural awareness is slowly waning.

2. Evidences of deterioration of cultural awareness in the Emirati society

New global conditions will force differing realities on the ground in Arab societies in general, and in the smaller Arab societies most noticeably. The tidal waves of globalization have reached Arab and Gulf societies, which confront the challenge of facing its effects and repercussions with open-mindedness and awareness. The deterioration of cultural awareness and the spirit of patriotism in any society will lead to cultural, social and economic failures, and the small society of the United Arab Emirates must be prepared to cope with these internal and external challenges. Many of these issues are highlighted both in this section and in the work of Mr. Alshamsi Najib and, although, he presents a more Nationalistic agenda, his ideas relating to the importance of cultural continuity are important and will be used frequently throughout this chapter. Some forms of cultural corrosion can be summarized as follows:

Primarily, the prevalence of a consumer culture, which has easily penetrated this society due to weak and traditional standards of education, in addition to the role of media, which has promoted this new culture, is both notable and problematic. This can be seen especially among the younger generations, who were drawn to this emerging culture, such as western music, night clubs, dress, bikes and hair styles. This can be considered a revolt against traditions, heritage and historical background. Another flaw or failing in the cultural awareness of the UAE society is the weakening of human relationships and a significant change in behaviours once considered the norms, which continue to be

deeply affected by these emergent lifestyles. The introduction of social problems, such as drugs, divorce, weak social communications, and overwhelming individual interests are examples of these effects.¹

Additionally, the morbidity of psychological diseases, such as depression, insomnia, seclusion, isolation, and fear are emergent areas of concern. Finally, the notability of individual moral lapses, such as lying, hypocrisy, selfishness and disregard of punctuality should be included, as Najib suggests.

2.1. Reasons for the deterioration of cultural awareness and its effects on national cultural identity

Mr. Najib acknowledges that in spite of the fact that both private and governmental establishments have adequate financial resources to increase cultural awareness and maintain national identity, the performance of these institutions is not equal to the task for the following reasons:

The absence of a cultural strategy and action plan in the UAE that define the goals and set forth the correct mechanisms is a huge problem. Governmental bodies that are concerned with cultural, social, and educational portfolios bear the responsibility of strategic planning to preserve cultural and national identity. The absence of coordination between cultural, educational, and artistic establishments in the UAE has led to duplicative activities, with low quality production, and performances weak in substance. Although the cultural legacy and country traditions originate from rural and remote areas, the concentration of cultural activities is in major cities, such as Abu Dhabi and Dubai while outlying areas are somewhat sheltered. Cultural institutions plan their programmes and agendas with more concentration on foreign culture rather than on local culture. These groups host lectures, festivals and cultural events of other cultures on UAE land. Educational curriculum, whether at schools, colleges or universities, place culture or heritage of the society of the UAE in a less important category. As a result, coming generations will not be fully attached to their national identity. The role of media (TV, radio) is

¹ Al-Khawajh Hitham, Alshamsi Najib, *Al Thaqafha fi Fikr Abna' Al Emarat (Culture in the Thoughts of UAE people)*, 1st ed, Al Haramin Publications, Sharjah, UAE, 2005, pp. 73-74.

almost absent in strengthening values of national culture and in highlighting cultural icons. Cultural programmes are shallow and do not deal with real cultural issues of society, which would weaken the national identity of future generations. TV stations show programmes that deal with cultural and social issues of nations, which sometimes do not respect traditions and moral values of our society and negatively affect behaviours of younger generations. The contents of cultural journalism are weak. The cultural issues that highlight the national identity are not deeply covered nor dealt with on the cultural pages of local daily newspapers, monthly magazines, and other publications, which create general ignorance of history and national cultural identity among the current generation. The root causes for the weakness in cultural awareness are connected to the general deterioration of patriotic feelings in the Arab world and the chaotic situation on the political and social fronts that have pushed the Arab nation's culture and heritage to the background. Committed and creative writings that deal with national issues and concerns are major components in developing the cultural and moral dimensions of the character of individuals. A significant number of writers and authors, who were committed to national and cultural issues from a patriotic standpoint, emerged on the stage with the formation of the state in the early 1970s. But some of those writers have gradually retreated, causing an imbalance on the scene and additionally, paving the way for a new generation of writers, who seem less concerned with showing the deep roots and civilized image of the country and more concerned with attracting media attention and enjoying fame accompanying public life. Cultural institutions are to blame for the lack of support and care for the writers and artists who were totally committed to upholding the nation's identity and patriotism. The official local and federal cultural institutions with allocated budgets and full mandate did not pay the required attention to works of creative writers, especially in the publishing arena. Some of these writers were consistently denied when asking for their works to be published. Such writers with a high sense of patriotism and sincere commitment to national issues should have been supported, as they

represent the core of an everlasting task to maintain national pride and keep alive the legacy of the forefathers, which reflect the cultural identity of people of the Emirates.¹ Mr. Najib is very correct in his concern for the continuation of culture, but seems to present his material in a way that demoralizes other cultures in the UAE and may alienate the youth that he seeks to reach by his ultra-traditional sentiments.

2.2. The concept of cultural development in the UAE

Najib defines culture as the renewable, variable, sensational and mental expression of the country and the embodiment of its civic peculiarity that comes with the born characteristics and the human soul. Culture is the product of human disposition that comes in a natural display. However, it is not a case of values, which is sometimes called culture, but a group of expressions that are in harmony with human nature. Culture is a selected integrated behavioural knowledge system that includes beliefs and all manmade social environments. Additionally, it is the awareness of the human being of his or her life, existence and aspirations that are demonstrated in human action. The culture of a nation is the lively image of its character that comes from its beliefs, principles, history and heritage. It is intertwined with other cultures and absorbs ideas, arts and sciences that harmonize with its identity. The culture of a nation is doomed to give and take, to activate and be activated. Culture can also be described as the search and exploration for justice, welfare, and the benefaction and values that benefit the human existence. It is a never ending and regenerating process. All these values are embodied in the history, heritage and civilization of the UAE. They are also visible in its culture and arts. But the cultural and artistic movement in UAE in general and Dubai in particular seems to be poorly represented.²

¹ Ibid., pp. 74-77.

² Alshamsi Najib 'abdullah, *Al Mashhad Al Thaqafi fi Dawlat Al emārat Al 'arbiya Al mutaḥda Alrūya Wal Eshkaliyat (The Cultural Scene in the UAE.. The Vision and the Problems)*, 1st ed, Department of Culture and information in Sharjah, Sharjah, UAE, 2003, pp. 19-21.

Mr. Najib is absolutely correct when he states that the most important concept for cultural development in the UAE is the cultivation of the best available financial and human resources in the society to achieve social, economic and political development both on the individual and general level. In order to achieve the goals of cultural development, one must define the qualities and the quantities of the resources that can be invested to reach the targets. If the United Arab Emirates assesses cultural progress and rates the achievement in this regard on the indicators of how much has been spent on education and the number of students, schools, universities, and cultural institutions, this could lead to a measure of the level of attention and the efforts exerted. This is especially important when huge budgets are allocated to education, but would not measure cultural development and progress. The difficulty in measuring the depth of change and the progress made is due to the fact that this society is comprised of different nationalities with different languages and different cultural backgrounds and targets. In addition, the huge economic changes that the UAE society had been through has altered the foundations of traditional culture and has shifted it towards a more materialistic dimension, ignoring the moral dimension.¹

2.3. The importance and necessity of cultural development

Mr. Najib further highlights in the following, this cultural necessity, although his heavily worded claims of the threat of other cultures seem to be surrounded in scare tactics that could create a cultural backlash that should be avoided. He believes that in light of our understanding of cultural development in the UAE, and taking into consideration the current and future demands imposed by the nature of change and progress, achieving cultural development that focuses on the human being as the ultimate goal of any development process becomes increasingly important for the following reasons:

¹ Ibid.

The development that the individuals and the society of the UAE are anticipating requires forging the right structure for a total and nation-wide development plan. In any given society, man is the target and the ultimate goal of any development plan, so the educational and cultural components are vital in creating generations who firmly believe in the future of their homeland and nations. In particular, the UAE society, and the GCC¹ societies, in general, are facing huge internal and external challenges on the economic, social and cultural levels. These challenges threaten the moral and cultural composition of people. The internal challenges are embodied in the emigrated cultures with different values while the external challenges come through the concept of cultural globalisation, which threaten the individuality of people and societies to achieve the goals of those who advance the concept of globalization. The national identity and the cultural face of the UAE have been deeply affected by the rapid changes that have taken place. Through well-planned cultural programmes, cultural institutions must double the efforts to reform cultural awareness, maintain national identity, and continue connections in heritage and Arab status. Governments and societies should be fully aware of the global changes that are overwhelming many parts of the world. Societies should serve as a buffer to the negative effects of these changes and should reject what is not in harmony with social and moral values. The United Arab Emirates has a substantial foundation by laying down the infrastructure for cultural developments (buildings, cultural foundations, theatres, museums, universities, institutes, and auditoriums). However, these structures should be additionally utilized and scheduled with cultural events aimed at developing a national culture and a unique cultural heritage for the country. There is an international misconception that regards our GCC societies as lacking deeply rooted civilization, culture and heritage, which came to be known on the international stage only after oil was discovered in the area. The cultural institutions

¹ GCC: Gulf Corporation Council which consist of The United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar and Kuwait.

and creative artists have the responsibility of displaying the heritage and the culture of the region to all those who debate the history of the area. The cultural development should limit the negative effects of non-Arab cultures especially on the younger generations and strengthen the feeling of connection to the country's past among these generations, who should take pride of their ancestors' legacy.¹ Though Najib is correct in wanting these programmes, the preceding sentence that denotes negativity in others is a bit harsh, as is other parts of his vision in this particular paragraph. It cannot be stated enough, the importance of getting through to the younger generations on this issue and this approach may prove alienating.

2.4. Conclusion: Evidences of deterioration of cultural awareness in the Emirati society

Economic progress has been known to bring with it some complications. This becomes especially relevant in light of the recent 'Globalization' campaign in which the world is engulfed today. Globalization has successfully injected a number of diseases in Arab society. These include the love for material wealth, the slow growing disrespect for fellow human beings, and various other social evils, such as drug addiction, divorces, and feeble social communications.

One might wonder, of course, about the exact reasons behind these troubling changes, but one need not look too far to find them. The primary reason why UAE (unlike many other countries in the world) has not been able to keep its cultural scene in pace with its economic growth has much to do with the utter lack of planning on the part of the governmental bodies, which look after the socio-cultural aspects of the country. Not only have these departments been poor planners, they have also been quite incapable of coordinating with each other to ensure better results. They have restricted themselves to

¹ Alshamsi Najib 'abdullah, *Al Mashhad Al Thaqafi fi Dawlat Al emārat Al 'arbiya Al mutaḥda Alrūya Wal Eshkaliyat (The Cultural Scene in the UAE.. The Vision and the Problems)*, pp. 21-23.

urban campaigning and made few attempts to safeguard the culture in other remote rural areas, which need more culture conservation resources than the cities. The school curriculum does little to educate the children about their history. The media is no better. Given the utter callousness of these authoritative bodies the general feeling of nationalism has been reduced considerably in the last two to three decades. Finally, now the Arab heritage has come to the point of being completely destroyed.

Prompt attempts to reinstate the cultural identity of UAE need to be made. How can this restoration be brought about? Specialists feel that putting the resources prescribed for the field of education to good use would be a decent place to start. But, some would ask, why such restoration is required. The answer is simple: to ensure that our future generations feel as reverential towards their motherland as we do. Despite the warm manner in which we have embraced foreign cultures, we cannot let our roots be relegated to waste. Hence we have to prove, not just to the West, but also to our own children that our country too has a rich and cultural past, one which was worth our pride even before we managed to strike oil and, in the process, accumulate wealth. It is only when we share our pride with our children that they will take pride in what will soon be rightfully theirs.

3. Importance of popular heritage in maintaining the national cultural identity

Anthropologists and social researchers defined heritage as generally, “Everything that predecessors left to successors” and includes several elements such as habits, traditions, games, trades, chanting, proverbs, poetry, literature and all human innovation that was left behind by the forefathers. These cultural forms represent the different stages of historical development of any nation or people.¹

¹ Al-Nakhil Society, *Lamaḥat ‘an Turath Wafulkulūr Mujatm’ Al-Emarat (Glimpses of UAE Heritage)*, 1st ed, Cultural Foundation Publications, Abu Dhabi, UAE, 1996, P. 7.

This definition is compatible with the Mexico Declaration of Culture in August 1982, which broadly defined it as, all spiritual, materialistic, intellectual and emotional characteristics of a given society or a community, which includes arts, literature and lifestyles. It also includes basic human rights and systems of values, traditions and faiths. When institutions and individuals in any society search deep into their heritage, they mean to establish communications between generations and unite their common interest around the historical and cultural dimensions of their society. The people's heritage is as important as it removes time barriers, shortens distances, and forms a national cultural entity connected to the economic and social factors in the society. The concept of culture covers all aspects of human expressions including literature, art, mythology, morals and all forms of social life and human expressions and emotions".¹ It is useful that Najib uses a different country's cultural definition here to give perspective from the standpoint of an older nation to compare it to this younger country.

United Arab Emirates, a young country in political terms, has a strong heritage base that gives distinction and uniqueness to UAE, yet simultaneously connects it strongly with other countries. With its distinctive economic, environmental, and social characteristics, UAE has managed to establish strong communications with other cultures of the world, especially with Arab people in all Arab countries, as UAE popular heritage is a tributary to the larger Arabian and Islamic culture.² Therefore, it is of the utmost importance, as Najib connects, to view the cultural policies of older countries to help the young UAE.

¹ Ibid., PP. 8-13.

² Al-Khawajh Hitham, Alshamsi Najib, *Al Thaqafha fi Fikr Abna' Al Emarat (Culture in the Thoughts of UAE people)*, P. 82.

3. 1. The Relationship between Popular Heritage and National Identity

Mr. Najib has many questions about the youthful UAE and its future. In spite of the importance of the popular heritage in preserving the identity and character of the individual and in protecting him or her from diffusing into other cultures, the official attention from the Ministry of Information and Culture and other cultural institutions, including private ones, to protect heritage has not proven satisfactory. Individual efforts in this respect were limited and lacked streamlining and strategy with a dedicated national culture with heritage as the focal point within it, which allowed incoming cultures to alter the society. In addition, the situation created poor loyalty to the original culture and raised a question from the younger generations on the advantage in digging deep into the heritage of the past at a time UAE embraced the third millennium. New technologies, such as the internet, satellite channels, and all other communication mediums has played a huge role in this internal change. How can this country adhere to the culture of the ancestors at a time when UAE is in a race for acknowledgement on the new world map? How can one plant the principle of heritage in the minds of the younger generations? The answer to all these questions lies in defining the basics in studying heritage, which determines the importance of preserving it:

Najib again looks to the wisdom of others, this time believing that the late Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan had a clear vision regarding heritage as an absolute necessity in the lives of people. He said that “anyone who has no past has no present and no future”. He stressed the importance and the vitality of the past as being both the spring and the parameter of morals and values of the present, which constitutes a viable base for a promising and prosperous future. On another occasion, and in the same context, the late Sheikh Zayed said “our constant thinking of the past and its lessons, and of the present and its hopes, and of the future and its aspirations, will all lead us to build a prosperous nation” and that “heritage represents the spirit, the wisdom and the various creativities of the people. Nations are

measured by their heritage. A nation without heritage is a nation without a land to live on, or a shore to reach before getting lost in the ocean.”¹ The late Sheikh Zayed stressed the importance of heritage as a gathering force and a fortress for the identity of the people against invading elements of change² and should be considered one of the most important moral agents in the area of cultural continuity.

United Arab Emirates has embraced huge economic and social openness in the last three decades, yet this openness has produced a new and strange mix of residents where citizens have become a minority in their own country. The coming of more than three million people to seek work and employment opportunities in the country imposed a new status where it cannot be said that there is a national culture or a national economy. The new status is closer to a cosmopolitan emphasis than to a local one. The assimilation of the local culture of the society in a larger entity of incoming residents raises a significant question of how long the special characteristics of the local society can stand in the way of overwhelming change.³ Despite all of Najib’s questions, though, he does offer answers.

Najib discloses that the last thirty-five years in the history of the UAE has produced a new cultural situation so fragile and weak that it has been left to the cultural institution which lack proper planning and strategy for a genuine culture derived from the history and the roots of the society. Our medial organizations have also contributed to the marketing of fragile and weak cultures that do not correspond with the local heritage. Local institutions and intellectuals now bear greater responsibility to

¹ Ḥamdi Tamām, *Mausu‘at Zayed: Al Emarat Al insan Wal waṭan (Zayed Encyclopaedia: Emirates and the Nation)*, vol. II, 1st ed, Ministry of Information and Culture, Abu Dhabi, UAE, 1992, p.43.

² Al-Khawajh Hitham, Alshamsi Najib, *Al Thaqafha fi Fikr Abna’ Al Emarat (Culture in the Thoughts of UAE people)*, P. 83.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 84.

defend and protect their identity through fortifying and supporting culture with all the ingredients of the local heritage, thus creating more awareness of the cultural values of the UAE.¹

Mr. Najib presents his best angle at achieving UAE cultural goals in the following. He believes that studying and analysing all the components of local heritage, such as poetry, story, art, games or riddles, means the study of the social development of the UAE society throughout its long history and deeply rooted civilization and will measure the cultural maturity of local citizens. Heritage, which represents the accumulation of all creativities of the society, is a true reflection of a viable group with all its intellectual and creative elements. Therefore, any scientific analysis of its components means an attempt at preserving the past, which embodies the true cultural nature and environment in which citizens were raised. Analysing local heritage is the studying of the moral and social dimension of the community and how local people faced the hardships of their past life and succeeded in spite of all the challenges. The long and deep experience of past generations stands as an example to the new and future generations who know little about the hardships of their ancestors and provides faith in the present and hope for the future. Presenting heritage in the best context is the best solution to all those who question the authenticity of our values and our Arabian origin. Thus, popular heritage helps significantly in developing the national identity of the present generation and adapts it to understand human creativity in general.²

Underlining UAE's deep and rich culture by focusing on heritage and introducing it to younger generations of students in schools and universities and in educational curricula, media programmes,

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid., p. 85.

libraries, and forums are the best approach to educate students of the richness of the past and the history of the nation. Additionally, mapping out a culture for children based on well planned intellectual and social guidelines derived from the heritage of the society is the best approach to educate children and create a generation aware of its past heritage and strongly connected to the spirit of the Arab nation. This will also open a window for them to feel the myriad of experiences of their ancestors and formulate their own experiences to face the challenges of the present. In addition, it will strengthen the ties of each individual with his or her homeland; enrich the spirit of unity, and appreciation for the culture of their ancestors. Knowledge of the past and its real world communication with all its richness will create a new culture and experience by this generation to the coming generations, and thus the process of continuation is secured and will definitely build bridges to the larger Arabian culture, the Islamic culture, and human culture.¹ In this way, Najib shows how the past and present can be weaved into the fabric of UAE society.

The prevailing state of consumerism is one of the marks of the Emirati society for the last thirty-five years. This consumer trend has greatly affected the social, cultural and economic structure of this society. Here, necessity urges individuals to look back at individual heritage and its values in order to minimize the impact of the wave of consumerism that has bombarded our society and challenged its cultural unity. The mounting tendency of individuals to change and improve their living conditions has compelled them to give up many social, moral and behavioural codes of their ancestors, and the most recent generation, who preceded the oil era. These new standards of behaviour were influenced by communities who sought work in the UAE and by the new financial standing of these individuals, which helped consumerism to increase its stake in the lives of people at the expense of culture and creativity.

¹ Ibid., p. 86.

Even some writers, authors, and intellectuals were affected by the new facets of life and adopted ideas to participate with the rest of the community, distancing themselves, unintentionally, from popular heritage, which is the source of all cultural structure and creativity of the society and can never restrain progress and prosperity. The cultural heritage is, and should always be, the strong foundations of the present that, in turn, is the launching pad to a promising future for all individuals, especially creative talents.¹ Therefore, Najib is correct in correlating culture with all things in a society, including consumerism and its effects.

Studying the heritage of the UAE is a tribute to the first generation of Emiratis who laid down the building blocks of the society and enriched it with their creative works. It is a moral commitment for the current generation and all cultural institutions to preserve and respect the legacy of the predecessors who represent the past. To reiterate the words of Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan, “a nation with no past has no presence and no future”.² Obviously, Najib appreciates the wisdom of Al Nahyan, as he quotes this wise man more than once in his analysis. In this case, there is a common responsibility for everyone to preserve heritage and revive all its components.

The results of archaeological discoveries made by foreign missions serves as a reminder of the rich history of the area and the treasures of the inventive people of the UAE. Discoveries also proved that the region was the cradle of civilizations dating back to more than seven thousand years, such as at “*Umm Al Narr*” in Abu Dhabi, “*Meleiha*” in Sharjah, and “*Gulfar*” in Rash Al Khaimah.” In addition, the discoveries indicated that UAE was an extension of the great civilizations of Mesopotamia in Iraq,

¹ Ibid., p. 87.

² Ibid., p. 88.

Sabaa in Yemen and *Majan* in Oman. These facts should be recognized and publicized through publishing works on the subject and at exhibitions and conferences so that all citizens and residents become aware of the history of the area and the role that the inhabitants played many years ago.¹ Again, Najib rightly reiterates the importance of writers and their role in preserving UAE history and heritage.

The study of the heritage and its historical roots of the UAE should be a national priority for the government, given its importance in preserving the character of this society and its role in providing education needed to prevent any cultural dissolution. There must be some form of cement for the region to stand firm in the face of globalization and the inhomogeneous mixture of population.² Though Najib, again uses a form of scare tactics here in relation to globalization and its effects on culture, a more “watered down” version of his sentiments would be useful in helping achieve cultural goals.

The UAE’s heritage presents a comprehensive living system built by the past creative and innovative generations that enabled them to pass through all life’s difficulties and challenges. The pearl diving odyssey is an example of the struggle against all living circumstances that positively assisted in creating the timeless legacy of poetry, stories, songs and other arts, which formed the basis and the source of our present culture.³ This is but one example that Najib uses to highlight the desired role of artists in the region in this study.

The study of the UAE’s heritage represents the embodiment of the history of the society and all the changes that occurred over the past centuries. Emirati poets such as *Al Majdi Bin Dhaher*, and the

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., p. 89.

famous Arab sailor, *Shihab Al Din Ahmed Bin Majed*, wrote many poems that narrate the history of the area and document all the political and social changes that happened in UAE and in the Gulf region. The Emirati poets were very close to the lives of their fellowmen, such as *Salem Bin Ali Al Owais*, and *Rashid Al Kheder*, who were also close to Arab causes, such as the unity of Syria and Egypt, and occupied Palestine.¹ Najib realizes, as is vitally necessary, that not only Emiratis, but other Arab artists can help contribute to this cultural cause in the coming years.

Over the past years, UAE has witnessed many changes that were affected by the trade routes established with other civilizations such as India, Africa and Aden. These contacts enriched the cultural, economic, and social life in the UAE. In addition, the colonization of the area by the Portuguese, and later by the British provided a subject matter for poets who expressed their refusal and protest to the occupiers, and wrote many poems in this respect.² This recollection that Najib evokes, creates a connection with other cultures of the past and these sentiments must include the differing cultures in the UAE at present to be amenable to the younger generations in continuing these complex cultural goals.

Analyzing the popular heritage of the UAE and comparing it with the heritage of other Arab countries is one form of glorifying the spirit of Arab unity in culture and the common area that UAE's heritage shares with other Arab countries. All Arab countries should conduct thorough studies, and analysis of their cultural legacies and heritage to identify the common ground that unifies us in culture

¹ Ibid., p. 90.

² Ibid., pp. 90-91.

and in spirit.¹ This is extremely important and should be part of the “cement” that Najib wishes to be a part of this undertaking.

3.2. Registering of lyrical folk art in the UAE

Every country has its own tradition of lyrical folk art. The lyrical folk art constitutes an integral part of the different cultures, which differ in their diversity, opulence according to many factors, such as: environmental diversity, ethnic diversity, cultural diversity, civilization ancestry, and degree of isolation or openness. The full understanding of the necessity of maintaining the folk arts originates as a part of the awareness of the national personality’s magnitude, collecting both the traditional and contemporary. No doubt that the modern photocopying and recording devices have made it possible and then easier to register such arts to enable them to be enjoyed by the public. Also, many associations, and centres have been established all over the world to maintain, register, and study those arts by anthropology, social and folklore scientists, as well as the musicians and writers.

Since the appearance of humankind in UAE, different types of lyrical folk art has been found. Some are no longer being performed, and others still continue and remain practiced today. These arts have been exposed to some modern effects, which some people consider to be renovation; while others consider these changes as just a matter of metamorphosis. UAE basked in an environment of diversity that manifested itself in the following four clear environments:

- Marine Environment: presents itself in the coastal cities, which were capitals for their emirates, location for their economical activities which depended upon diving, pearls, fishing, shipbuilding, and business.

¹ Ibid., p. 91.

- Desert Environment: find visual expression in the steppe extending from *Ras Al-Khaima* at the north till the borders of *Al Ruba Al Khali* at the south, Oman at the east, which was the field for steppe's activities depending on camels' and goats' breeding.
- Agricultural Environment: shown in the oases scattered along the desert in addition to the mountainous agricultural villages, the people there depend upon cultivating of palm trees, viticulture, tobacco, etc., as well as livestock breeding.
- Mountainous Environment: in addition to the north side of *Ras Al Khaima* Emirate, this area is also visible in Emirate of *Fujairah*, and the coastal and internal cities of the east coast of *Sharjah* and *Fujairah* Emirates, they depend in both on marine and agricultural activities.

In addition to the linguistic affluence, which came as a consequence of the variety of economical activities, and different types of environments, the same, resulted in a huge diversity in lyrical folk art, each of these environments has its own deep rooted tradition, which expresses its nature, its people's mode, values, tendencies, dialects, and art. Regrettably, some of this lyrical folk art has been lost due to the perishing of the professional who was attending its performances. For example, when the diving professional died out in the 1940s, the *Naham* profession also perished. Also, the marine *Shalat* and *Hadawat* were blotted out, which were formerly performed collectively at every diving stage, such as getting the ships down into the sea, or getting them out of the sea for maintenance, and the collective singing accompanying the maintenance process, also *Khateefa*, rowing and *musana*.¹

Even fishing was attended with many examples of lyrical folk arts, which are no longer performed, as most of the seamen today are from Asian countries. In addition, many types of steppe's

¹ *Naham*, *Shalat*, *Hadawat*, *Khateefa*, and *musana*: all these are kinds of marine songs in the UAE and almost vanished.

lyrical folk art have disappeared, such as *Radha*, which used to be done during the digging of wells; *Tarej* was formerly performed during “Night Walk”, *Tagroda* while riding on a riding animal, etc. This occurred due to the changes in the new generation’s lives, which are now following the modern life style. As a result, only a few lyrical folk songs are still alive, which have resisted the big change in the steppe’s people lives.

3.3. The Lyrical Folkloric Texts

Even more agonizing is the fact that, until now no comprehensive registering has been done to record the lyrical folkloric art in UAE except in limited circumstances where the researchers became satisfied with only giving illustrative examples. Due to the lack of understanding of the text by the writers, some of these works have been exposed to distortion. Since we first depend upon the elders to register and record the lyrical folkloric art that performed and memorized them, it is therefore, difficult to write them now. For example, as for some songs and marine *Shalat* songs, which have not been performed for six decades, it is very rare that divers now have them memorized, as most of them died. If there are survivors, his memory will usually be very weak. The steppe’s lyrics may be luckier because the old life styles related to them have survived for one or more decades.

3.4. Negligence in Registering of UAE Lyrical Tradition

Since the time Gramophones entered UAE in 1950s, some folkloric lyrical traditions had started to spread out, which was known at that time as *Al Bastakiyah*, which is a Persian word in line with the pearls box. These subsequently appeared in the *Saiaa* art, and some poems were recorded on discs by some local singers like *Ali Balroga*, *Harib Hassan*, and *Ahmed Sultan Al Aajamani*, The registered local items began to increase pursuant to increased demand from one side, and the spreading of recorders from the other side. Since 1971, the Ministry of Information and Culture assumed sponsorship of the

folkloric arts associations in UAE. In addition, Abu Dhabi and Dubai's television channels persisted in producing a variety of folkloric programs including the lyrical folkloric arts and displayed them for public, which contributed to informing the UAE people about every area's arts. However, we cannot allege that all the folkloric arts are registered because most of them were still under practice when they registered, and although some of them are about to be perished, some records have been destroyed because they had been produced for temporary use only. In addition, there is no space for the pop arts, which have been produced in black and white. Our local television channels are appreciated for putting forth efforts to register the folkloric arts during the seventies of last century. However, we still need to avoid the extinction, and assume a pioneer role towards registering and studying of our folk lyrical art that has been left for us, and to maintain and prevent it from dying out or gradually dissolving.

3.5. Setting up a special Institute for registering the lyrical Traditional Folk

Assuming that such a difficult and long-term mission requires establishing of a special centre to register the lyrical folk tradition, which shall be concerned with the following:

- To enumerate the lyrical folk's traditional types in different emirates and in the preceding four environments.
- To register, investigate and publish the poetry texts of the lyrical folk tradition.
- To register the folk ensembles by both voice and picture, and to archive them.
- To collect the UAE folk artist's biographies and to register them in voice and picture as much as possible.
- To collect samples of traditional music instruments, which were used in the past and exhibiting them in a special museum in the centre.
- To provide the local media with the lyrical folk traditional records.

- To study that collection from folk, literary, musical and anthropological angles to enrich the traditional library with these studies for researchers use.
- To conduct seminars and lectures about lyrical folk tradition. .
- To train a cadre of researchers on field collection in this field, so that the researcher can acquaint with musical arts and folk poetry, as well as tradition interest.
- To extend the cooperative bridges and exchange of experiences with similar centres in GCC countries and the rest of the Arab Countries.

The ministry of Culture, Youth & Society Development is the authority concerned with establishing such a centre, sponsoring it and providing its requirements. As its main specialty, and this is tantamount to an invitation from a person in charge of the folk tradition, and who is aware of the danger surrounding and threat to our national tradition as a result of the rapid social and cultural changes, and our massive need to protect and maintain our handed down folk arts, which we consider to be the symbol of our originality, and one of the most important things that define our national personality.

3.6. Conclusion: Importance of the popular heritage in maintaining the national cultural identity

It is only when we climb on to the shoulders of our predecessors that we can see far, and how true. It is only on the firm foundation of our yesterdays that our today can be built, thus the stronger our past the sounder our present. UAE has a rich and diverse cultural heritage and, for the benefit of the younger population, elements of this culture need to be made available to everyone so that all her citizens can enjoy her glorious past.

Our cultural heritage plays a significant role in determining the level of cohesion of our community. It is important to realize that our national identity is deeply related to our knowledge of our cultural heritage. A magnificent past is often the reason for a feeling of pride in one's country, a

necessary ingredient in every nationalist endeavour. Unfortunately, despite making a “reasonable” amount of effort, the cultural authorities in UAE have been incapable of safeguarding the cultural institutions and traditions of the country. Their failure has much to do with the utter lack of planning on their part. Many think a more systematic approach would have salvaged the situation quite easily.

Thanks to the rich natural endowments of the country, such as its bejewelled seacoasts, vacant deserts, high mountains, and agricultural fields, a number of folk art forms have emerged in its lap. As is obvious, these tremendously powerful and inspiring art forms are slowly dwindling under the pressures of modern urban life. The lack of awareness about these art forms has kept a number of national art aficionados from investing large amounts of money on them. All because they are clueless about the splendour of their own cultural heritage, these individuals busily spend money on western art and western music.

Since most folk arts, such as lyrical folkloric texts, follow the oral tradition, most of them have never been recorded, and now with changing times, and less and less practice in the field, researchers fear that some of these texts might have been lost forever. To ensure that the texts that are still available do not suffer the same fate, academicians in the field suggest the establishment of a special institution, which will be devoted completely to registering and recording various kinds of traditional folk lyrics.

4. The Future of the National Cultural Identity

Najib realizes that the world has undergone enormous and swift changes and developments in the economic and social arenas that have directly affected the socio-cultural environments of nations. With the introduction of emerging technologies, such as satellite channels, the world has become a small global village. Any human being, even living in the most remote part of this planet can easily watch

what is unfolding in the world. The internet and new information technologies have removed all barriers between people around the globe and have created opportunities to communicate and exchange information on cultures to develop relations and set up networks surrounding business and economic interests. Additionally, new technologies have assisted in opening new markets that became accessible by agreements of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and under the umbrella of the globalization in all its forms and stages whether socio-cultural or economic. The world has become a global village with new realities, threats, and fears that cultures and languages of nations would dissipate and a new global society with new culture, theories, and concepts would come into being.¹

The nations, who are not prepared to embrace the new realities of the global society, will face great challenges and pressures aimed at disintegrating their history and culture and even threatening their very existence, especially those nations that were closeted for a long time and never embraced or opened doors to the changes and developments. The realities of the new global society began to occupy the Arab world in general and the Gulf region in particular. However, the Gulf region was the most prepared for the new and unavoidable changes that would effect all aspects of this society. UAE is the most open among its Gulf and Arab neighbours and will not easily face the difficulties of dealing with and absorbing the requirements of the new global society. In this respect, the call to preserve the nation's heritage must not be interpreted as a call to literally adhere to it. We have to embrace the new changes on one hand and preserve the national cultural identity on the other. The realities of a new global society cannot dismiss the qualities of our society and its cultural heritage, especially when elements of this heritage are shared with other nations. These nations can all create mediation against attempts at cultural dilution. In addition, there are many elements in our heritage that are shared with the

¹ Al-Khawajh Hitham, Alshamsi Najib, *Al Thaqafha fi Fikr Abna' Al Emarat (Culture in the Thoughts of UAE people)*, pp. 91-92.

cultural heritage of other advanced nations, which paved the way for our nation to join the global society.¹ Though, some of the scare tactics that Najib uses to precipitate panic of other cultures here is not the best approach to dealing with the assimilation of Emiratis into other ways of life. Though benevolent in thought, this approach may possibly create an uprising of indigenous Emirati dissent and should be dealt with in such a way that embraces and emphasizes the importance of individual culture for all.

Over the last fifty years, UAE society has witnessed monumental changes and became fully prepared to understand the requirements of gradual change. Many UAE nationals pursued academic studies in Western countries and many UAE nationals traveled the world for either business or pleasure that gave them the opportunity to be more receptive to these inevitable changes. Change is natural and is one of the qualities of modern times on both individual and government levels. The ability of the current generation to absorb, to the letter, the cultural legacy of the bygone age is unlikely. However, it is vitally important that the new generation be fully aware of UAE heritage and have loyalty and pride in it. It is also important to present the people's heritage in the best form for the new generations, so they will have an affinity towards it. Though Najib does not acknowledge the separation of thought versus culture, it should be noted, as Emiratis may learn innovative ideas while separating them from individual moral ideals.

Najib believes that encouraging UAE's creative individuals and researchers to delve into inherited stories is paramount. They should be given to full-time dedication to this mission that could extend for a few years during which they can prepare studies and research on UAE heritage. Selected and suitable elements of local heritage should be included in school and university curricula, such as

¹ Ibid., p. 93.

popular literature, folklore, poetry, etc... History studies should be taught to university students, while traditional games, riddles, songs, etc. should be taught to students of kindergarten, elementary, preparatory, and secondary schools. Heritage should be given more media attention in radio and television cultural programmes and introduce the legacy of the ancestors to the new generations in an honest and rational way. An annual nation-wide Heritage Festival should be organized, similar to the *Al Janadrya* Festival of Saudi Arabia to display traditional sports, dances, songs, and handicrafts in which all-cultural organizations and societies participate. It should also be part of the tourism master plan of the country. Sport Clubs bear the responsibility of spreading traditional sports by organizing local tournaments to encourage the new generations to learn such activities. GCC countries should also work on organizing ancestral sports competitions and contests on the Gulf level, similar to camel, horseracing, and marine sports that gained publicity all over the Gulf countries. Local popular societies should play a bigger role in presenting the heritage of history to the younger generations through organizing artistic shows and exhibitions, and winners should be awarded with prize money. The Ministries of Culture and Labour and Dubai Cultural Council should financially support these societies, advertise their activities, and bring media attention to their programmes. There is a great need to embody components of cultural heritage in national identity to function as an extension and continuation of the development process. Cultural heritage should not be confined to books and libraries, and should be an integral part of people's lives. Cultural and media organizations should publish children books deriving their information and themes from our heritage. It will be a very important step towards acquainting new generations with the heritage of the country and the legacy of the past peoples. This process will enrich children in the UAE and the Gulf with the wisdom and the experiences of past generations to enhance their connection to the society. Preparing studies and research on UAE's cultural heritage and defining the components which this country shares with the heritage of other countries is vitally important, as

well. These studies and research documents should be translated into other languages and distributed to foreign organizations and institutions both inside and outside the country. This pioneering work is a national mission and is aimed at creating awareness that UAE stores a rich cultural heritage that is part of human civilization.¹

4.1. Conclusion: The Future of the National Cultural Identity

The worlds as we know it today is a result of a number of significant changes that have appeared in human society in approximately the past five decades. Given the interconnectivity of the social, economic and cultural atmospheres in any given country, it is obvious that changes in any one of these fields will have a lasting effect on the other two. Thus, changes such as those brought about due to globalisation are not just restricted to the various technological advancements they bring; they also have a deep impact on the socio-cultural and economic scene of a country.

Today the world is “one large global village” where keeping in touch with someone miles away is almost as easy as knocking on your neighbour’s door. Communication has been reduced to the click of a button and new principles, new ideologies and new values are being instilled in our system every day. Under the circumstances, countries that are not firmly secure about their own identity will tend to bend under the pressure of these new realities of the modern “global” community. Countries that have until now stayed behind closed doors and confined themselves to their own culture alone will not survive under the sudden invasion of a “world” culture.

Unlike many other countries, UAE is thoroughly ready to take up this challenge. It has been far more open-minded than most of its neighbours, and will thus deal with these “trying” times in a far more

¹ Ibid., pp. 94-96.

efficient manner. Her priority therefore should not be dealing with the new changes that are likely to modify the country, but holding on to the past, which has moulded its present. As most of us know from experience, even the pleasant winds of change can badly uproot the anchors of heritage. We must ensure that the modern times do not keep our children from knowing, and being proud of their glorious past.

How can this be ensured? To begin with, it would be helpful to encourage creative youngsters and researchers to study about their country's heritage. The process can begin in school. A better attempt at including national material in the school curriculum should prove handy in this process. The media should be given the added responsibility of raising public awareness by promoting more cultural heritage related matter. An annual cultural festival along the lines of the Al Janadrya festival of Saudi Arabia might also help improve awareness. A country's cultural heritage is not meant to stay locked up in pedantic books and ancient libraries, but should instead be brought out and made an essential part of the citizen's lives. Every attempt at raising cultural awareness should be focussed on this ultimate goal.

5. The Role of Writing in Developing Cultural Awareness

It is true, as Najib discloses that all forms of writing whether journalistic, cultural, or creative, reveal the commitment of the writers. Committed writing expresses human actions and aspirations and expresses the authenticity and the values of the society. To reach this stage of committed writing, we should have writers who approach this task as a high level human behaviour governed by moral standards and social principles. When writing does not meet the aforementioned criteria of moral values, it turns into a negative human action with no value and no substance. It then takes the shape of entertainment with no goals. If we measure writing in the UAE by that ruler, we will notice that it has passed through different stages and challenges over the last thirty years. There were creative, distinguished, and promising writers on the cultural stage, who groomed themselves with an array of

experiences and knowledge. This group of local and Arab writers contributed vigorously in leading the UAE society towards enlightenment for a specific period. However, over the years there was a cessation of creative writing and a retreat of this group of pioneer writers, which caused some shortcomings and drawbacks in the creativity movement in UAE society. One could attribute this to personal reasons of the writers, but we believe that the main reason is the media, especially print journalism, which did not give this group of writers adequate and required attention. Unfortunately, print journalism focused on other groups of writers and gave them much attention and publicity. Personal relations and connections played their roles in this situation.¹

The importance of qualified writers as an agreed addition to cultural policy should be regarded as highly essential, Najib restates. This new situation has pushed serious and respected writers to the back stage while a new group of writers, with less or even no commitment to serious writing, took centre stage. Some of these writers regarded writing as just a source of living, making money, and getting some publicity, as long as they can sustain their situation. There is nothing wrong with making a living out of writing, but writing should help in the advancement of the individual and society. Writing is a high-level human action, especially when it goes to the core ideas and realities. Serious, creative, and committed writers represent the living conscience of the nation. United Arab Emirates, as a young country making major inroads towards progress and prosperity has provided much space for intellectual life and creative writing and has placed rules and regulations, which ensure and guarantee the rights of local and resident intellectuals. Additionally, policies were implemented to improve the performance of writers and quality of writing. Cultural organizations and institutions should take a clear stance towards committed writing and encourage it while it should reject lean and mediocre writing. Doors should not be wide open to

¹ Ibid., pp. 96-97.

those writers who have no moral commitment to their traditions, heritage, culture, and society and newspapers should be vigilant and selective in what they publish.¹

Najib has drawn up strategies for cultural and media organizations that support and nurture committed writers and advance social goals for writing that is of vital importance. Setting up adequate policies to achieve these goals for a society capable of facing the challenges and understanding the different dimensions of international economic, political, and intellectual changes is paramount. Sponsoring committed writers and helping them to contribute to their society's progress should be the responsibility and one of the goals of these institutions, which should also bring back that group of writers who have refrained from writing saying that, "do not want to be part of the scene when the floor was given to "shallow writers." In addition, that commitment to serious writing should be the responsibility of writers, but also of journalistic and cultural institutions that should gaze at the bigger picture of society and its requirements and means of developing it.²

5.1. Setting up a National Publishing House

Whenever the issue of publishing is brought under debate in the UAE, many authors call for establishing a National Publishing House that shoulders the responsibility of publishing creative works of Emirati writers and ensuring the distribution and circulation of these works to each and every place inside the country and throughout the world. Many people argue that the nonexistence of national publishing house, mandated to encourage and develop creativity in the UAE, is one of the main reasons for the decline in creative writings and a major factor for the decrease in local creativities. In the absence of a local institution prepared to snap up the idea and start the project, Dubai Cultural Council, or any

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid., p. 98.

other government organization stands with an excellent opportunity to take the initiative of establishing a national publishing house, or at least start a publishing section inside the organization that supports the local books, taking the form of a share holding company with the aim to serve the culture of the community. Major problems in the publishing industry in the UAE are:

- The absence of publishers who are committed to fostering and encouraging creative writers, which has a negative impact on the productivity of Emirati writers.
- Due to the absence of a national publishing house, some writers print their books outside the country and at their own expense, or seek the assistance of limited official institutions, such as the Culture and Sciences Association in Dubai, the Cultural Foundation in Abu Dhabi, and the Emirates Writers Union in Sharjah.
- Local businesspersons have not yet ventured into investing in the publishing industry, which might, once fully exploited, yield reasonable returns on the investment.
- The difficulty of convincing investors and capital providers of the importance of investing in large publishing houses, as they tend to invest in projects that yield quick profit returns.
- In spite of the existence of private printing establishments in the UAE, some authors prefer to print their books outside the country through famous presses, seeking greater distribution and hoping for more publicity. Authors, as such, have their own preferences regarding printing with famous and renowned publishing establishments.
- Local printing establishments in the UAE do not regard productions of local writers with the respect due and the writers' financial rights are frequently disputed and eaten up. Furthermore, the low-quality publishing and poor distribution, which sometimes does not go beyond the borders of the emirate, add to the frustration of writers and increase their tendency to seek channels outside the UAE.

- Individual initiatives to set up publishing houses in the country have virtually failed; as such the houses were not prepared to bear financial losses. In addition to the lack of support from cultural institutions and organizations to buy considerable copies of printed materials, they followed a tradition of most Arab and western countries to encourage and support authors and publishing houses.
- The lack of support from media organizations, which ignore local publishing on the pretext that local writers do not cover a variety of subjects, has been devastating. In addition, local newspapers give minimal attention to local publishing. One valid reason might be that those who are in charge of the cultural sections of these newspapers are not nationals.
- Some local authors have the financial resources to publish their works at their own expense, but lack the expertise of distributing their materials and ensure the widest and largest circulation through the right channels. Local creative writers are in need of the right distribution agencies to present their works to the public in a professional and honourable manner. For this reason many writers choose to print their books at the well-established Arab publishing houses with less, or even no, financial returns, only to be able to reach the Arab readers everywhere.
- A real problem exists in the distribution process of literary printed materials, and the decreasing public interest in literature in particular and reading in general. These facts have been produced by the telecommunications revolution that deeply affected public choices, interests and lifestyles, such as the wealth of satellite channels, internet, and computers, which compel writers to develop their tools to a more challenging level and try to make their literary production “daily bread and butter to the people.” This is a painstaking mission and a limited number of literary men and poets have managed to make a niche in this fast moving

stage. The highly popular and widely circulated books that deal with subjects that attract the interest of people such as cooking, beauty, and different tips and advice regarding social, personal and family affairs usually include numbers in their titles such as, “100 Stories on the Virtuous Men,” “50 Ways to Keep and Maintain Beauty,” and “1000 Jokes,” and publishers managed to find a way to print these books at a very low cost and so can be sold for a few dirhams. Many people would buy literary books if they were made available at local bookstores, supermarkets and gas stations at low and affordable prices, in the same manner followed in Western countries.

There are at least two international book fairs held annually in the United Arab Emirates in which local publishing houses can take part. During the Sharjah Book Exhibition 2005 there was minimal presence of Emirati literary books, which also did not find their way to other international exhibitions due the costs incurred for such participations, for example, fees, travel, hotels and other expenses, with the exception of books published by the Ministry of Culture, The Cultural Foundation in Abu Dhabi, the Documentation and Research Centre and the Emirates Centre for Strategic Studies. However, with the existence of a National Publishing House, the Emirati book will be able to participate in all book events and will have a decent presence on the shelves of Arab Public Libraries, which usually source out their needs and update their inventories from international book exhibitions. It is vitally important to set a national marketing plan for local books with the assistance of television, radio, printed journalism, and public facilities so they can gain significant publicity and create public awareness and demand for local Emirati books.

5.2. Conclusion: The Role of Writing in Developing Cultural Awareness

While writing, every writer's level of commitment unknowingly seeps into the text itself. Those who write to serve a greater good and not just to make a few bucks value his/her work as a possible means of influencing and strengthening a community's beliefs and principles. There is, of course, nothing wrong with writing for money alone, but in a country such as UAE where much needs to be done on the literary field cheap entertainment can wait.

In the last three decades a number of writers have emerged in the literary world, many more have disappeared. Many of those who chose to stick to their chosen field wrote with a certain purpose in mind. They knew that they needed to lead the local audience in a specific direction in order to help equip them for the change that was to come. Under the watch of these insightful writers, the social and literary scene in UAE flourished. With time however such "creative" writers have been wiped out. What have taken their place are journalistic writers, who believe in delivering sensationalist news. Thanks to the success of this latter group the truly talented writers now refuse to return to the field and publish their "off-beat" material.

To ensure that such gifted writers do not get disgruntled from facing constant rejection, cultural organizations and institutions must take appropriate steps to encourage such committed writing. In addition, newspapers should be more aware of and careful about what they are printing. To help them in the task all media and cultural establishments should preferably draw up strategies and policies to encourage and support (even financially, if required) these talented writers. Recognizing certain common social goals of all kinds of writing is also of vital importance. In this vein, setting up a National publishing house would be a good place to start. Such a publishing house would help local writers to

write socially relevant text without bothering with the publishing and distributing process. Such ease of mind will undoubtedly encourage more and more new and committed writers to publish new books.

6. The Role of Cultural Institutions in Cultural Development

We have categorized the cultural institutions (official and private), categorized the cultural groups of people, and finally specified the impediments that prevented institutions from performing their duties in the best manner thanks to the work already done by Mr. Najib.

6.1. Ministry of Culture

It is common knowledge that the Ministry of Culture is the official body mandated to spread cultural awareness and is fully commissioned to sketch the civilized image of our society. Najib expands on its role here by revealing that over the last thirty-five years, the ministry was the umbrella under which cultural and media organizations sought shelter, and was the last haven for writers and intellectuals to finalize cultural issues and activate cultural awareness in the country. Since the creation of the UAE union and the formation of the first UAE government in the early 1970s, the Ministry of Culture and Information has been provided with all financial and human resources and had to strike a balance between its responsibilities towards culture and its responsibilities towards information. Using its information arm, the Ministry utilized all its capabilities in spreading cultural awareness and the results were encouraging. For example, the first years witnessed a boom in cultural activities such as the cultural season which attracted many lecturers, intellectuals, and poets from around the Arab world, and was generous in rewarding their participation and output. The cultural season was an excellent medium for enriching cultural awareness in the United Arab Emirates.¹

¹ Ibid., p. 99.

On the other hand, the Ministry widely opened its doors to writers, authors, researchers, and poets who wished to publish their literary productions. Over many years, the Cultural Directorate published the works of many national and resident writers and paid them well enough and encouraged them to continue writing. It also bought reasonable quantities of these publications in an effort to support them. None of the other cultural activities organized by the Ministry were designed according to a programme or cultural strategy. Among these activities are book fairs, opening new libraries, supporting theatre groups and cultural societies, and sending cultural caravans to remote and rural areas to screen cultural and educational films to establish a balanced level of cultural development all over the country. In the absence of a well-planned strategy, the Ministry was working exactly as any other social service ministry. Due to overspending, the ministry went into a relapse and could not resume activities, especially after tighter budgets were introduced by the government in the early 1980s, which largely affected cultural activities while more concentration was given to the Ministry's other arm, information. Najib has observed the cultural activities made by the Ministry in the 1970s and in the first half of the 1980s. It can be gathered that the activity concentrated on quantity rather than quality. The aim was to generate as much cultural output as possible and cover all areas of the country. This policy was reconsidered due to the financial constraints introduced at that time. The new situation reflected on cultural associations that depended on the financial support of the Ministry. Performance and production of theatre groups were also affected because of the limited financial support they received. With the weak and limited financial resources of the Ministry, cultural life almost halted. Yet a resurgence was seen with the emergence of the Cultural Foundation in Abu Dhabi and Department of Culture and Information in Sharjah which were financed by provincial governments of both the Emirate of Abu Dhabi and the Emirate of Sharjah.¹

¹ Ibid., p. 101.

In light of the aforementioned realities, and the performance of the Ministry of Culture and Information, which concentrated on the media side of its mission, it is worth considering setting up a Ministry for Culture and National Heritage tasked with charting a master plan for cultural development and working as an umbrella for all cultural work in the UAE. Najib is both correct and concise in affirming this vision. The idea of setting up a higher council for culture, arts, and literature was launched in year 2002 by his highness Minister of Culture and Information Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed who saw the necessity of introducing a new formula for cultural work, instead of wasting efforts among different and scattered establishments which contributed to cultural activity in spite of all their shortcomings.¹ The call to establish a higher council for culture stressed the imbalanced situation, in which cultural life was suffering, and the necessity for a cultural ministry and other organizations to achieve the supreme goal of building the citizen, who is aware of his or her duties and capable of facing challenge. The current situation stresses the fact that the cultural output in the UAE does not actively contribute to achieving awareness and human and social development in a way that meets the ambitions and aspirations of the society. This can be attributed to many reasons, but a conclusion can be made that the role of the cultural community bears some responsibility. Cultured figures and intellectuals in the UAE are in a state of dilemma and hesitation. Some other cultural people are in a state of negativity and refrain from action, although their society desperately needs them:

6.2. The First Group (The group of alienation or hesitation)

The first group of cultured figures and intellectuals rebelled against traditions and codes. They pursued the new and strange traditions that our society was unable to absorb. They saw the necessity of

¹ "The Tourism Magazine" from Dubai interviewed the Minister of Information and Culture in the UAE, His Highness Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan. Date of issue 14th of January 2002.

a cultural revolution and demanded that the new cultural formulas be similar to those adopted in Western countries, especially European ones. The chronology of progress in other nations refutes this argument, as the cultural body of UAE cannot accept just any Western or Eastern ideas. It is similar to bringing a plant from Alaska and putting it in the soil of the UAE desert--it will not survive. There is a big difference between societies that have made big leaps in culture and a society that is only thirty-five years of age. Some Asian countries achieved huge economic and scientific progress, not only because of their financial resources, but also because they heavily invested in developing human resources and maintaining their national identities. Therefore, we cannot say that adopting the formulas and ideas of Western countries serves the purpose of achieving the cultural development that we seek. Developing culture comes only by improving the mechanisms of cultural work and not just by rejecting Western ideas and prepared cultural recipes. Culture also develops by benefiting from the experiences of other Arab countries with which we share values and principles. Our society is governed by a set of traditions and moral codes that would not accept foreign formulas. Accordingly, when cultural development takes into consideration traditions of the UAE society and other Arab societies, there will be real progress in this respect. When we take off the trousers and the shirt and when we put aside the cigar and the pipe, and when we put on the local national dress "*Kandoura*"¹ with the head cover and headband, we can understand what our society wants from us. This is what we can say to the first section of estranged or alienated people. This is a sincere call to this group of people to understand the realities of the local society, which we should work together to cement with traditional culture and to develop awareness

¹ "*Kandoura*": the local dress of the men in the UAE.

gradually and by stages instead of by being rebellious.¹ The metaphors used here by Najib are especially important in revealing the gravity of the alienation here.

6.3. The Second Group

The second group of the cultured people, those who live in negativity and refrain from being actively involved in culture, have made themselves strangers in their own society. This may be a case of excessive selfishness. It is possible that they are satisfied with only educating themselves and keeping themselves aloof from other sections of cultured people. It is essential that this group begins to stop theorizing and refrain from being negative. They are asked to help in being the buffer to our society against many social problems that are invading its structure and be part of the solution and not part of the problem. Development of society requires the effort and contribution of each individual and any lingering or slackening in playing this role will expose society to many dangers. Since cultural development is the cornerstone of the social development, the pioneers of culture in the UAE, whether nationals or expatriates, are required to bear responsibility in and participate in drawing up the strategy of awareness and culture based on true and absolute commitment to UAE values. Cultural institutions will give their support once the required strategy is set with clear goals and meets all the aspirations.² It is paramount, as Najib articulates that all writers literally get on the “same page” so to speak, as well as the rest of Emirati cultural leaders.

6.4. External group – The Youth Group

Recent official statistics have shown that the youth segment comprises more than half of the UAE population. These youths have many aspirations and responsibilities, challenged by thousands of

¹ Al-Khawajh Hitham, Alshamsi Najib, *Al Thaqafha fi Fikr Abna' Al Emarat (Culture in the Thoughts of UAE people)*, pp. 102-103.

² *Ibid.*, p. 105.

different and contradictory ideas. We have to identify what is wrong and what is right in these ideas. Who bears the responsibility for this identification process-- the family, the society, or the media? The answer to these questions lies in the fact that we should create methods through which we can introduce the right concepts of a virtuous life for the youths. The emirates society is currently a haven and a melting pot for many cultures. It has become multicultural through intermarriages with other expatriate communities that created intellectually perplexed new generations with different religious beliefs, languages, traditions and values with incompatible unifying elements. The new generations are diligently trying to integrate with the Emirati society. It is the right moment to give direction and introduce the best cultural and religious values to the new generations; otherwise they will be facing challenges of identity crisis and refrain from wholeheartedly contributing to their society.¹

Government officials should bear the responsibility of introducing strategies to frame the cultural values and social conceptions to youths, especially those closely connected with religion, and loyalty to local and Arab culture as this is the moral and patriotic cornerstone to defend the country and its interests. Education, media and parents play the major part in strengthening these concepts among the new generations. The new generations are currently experiencing a huge exposure to foreign media that knows no boundaries through satellite channels and Internet that sometimes glorify behaviours and actions of others. The challenge is how to disseminate well values and explain which are right and which are wrong, who are the good people and who are the villains. Youths are still missing a role model who embodies all local cultural and religious values and can win their minds and hearts. The role of media is vital in removing blurring lines on all political, religious and economic issues. The huge development in all fields requires young human forces capable of ensuring its progress.

¹ Almhyas 'a'sha, *Alsyasa Almrna Li Dawalt Al emārat Al 'arbiya Al mutaḥda Wa maqalat Akhrā (The Flexible Political System of the UAE and another articles)*, 1st ed, Dubai, UAE, 2004, p.66.

The older generation is deeply concerned that the strengths of character and identity that were nurtured by the lifestyle, customs and traditions of the past could be lost as a result of a new affluence and the effects of globalization. There is a good cause for this concern, especially with the pervading influence of satellite television and the Internet, but there is also considerable cause for optimism since, although the context may have been altered, core values have been preserved. Cultural ethnicity is alive and will remain so. Educational curriculum at schools and universities are viewed as backward and not providing intellectual stimulation to youths who spend considerable time glued to computer and TV screens. The opportunity presented itself to get to the minds of these youths in producing attractive and constructive programs that tackle the economic, cultural, social and even political future for these youths and present them with questions about their relationship with their society. These include questions about the youth's expectations, willingness to contribute to society, willingness to work and their desire to be creative and productive. We all have the responsibility to protect youths from misconceptions and pave the way for them to contribute to their society. Helping out youths is a national responsibility and commitment. It is also a religious obligation to nurture national interests in their minds and spirits. Officials, teachers and parents are all under the obligation to extend helping hands to guide sons and daughters to safety and prepare them to face the challenges of the modern age with open-mindedness and wisdom.

6.5. The Importance of Voluntary Work

Public Welfare Associations, owned and managed by individuals or groups, are usually formed with the mandate to provide social and other services to local communities. In the United Arab Emirates there are more than 113 private associations extending a spectrum of services to the public through social welfare programs. Although these associations are not the subject matter that we are trying to

discuss, the type of voluntary work that can be done through these associations is our focus. Voluntary work can be described as efforts and services provided by individuals to the benefit of society on a free of charge basis. Private associations, as such, are obliged to encourage and create awareness among people on the importance of voluntary work and provide the opportunities for them to contribute in this respect. Unfortunately, there is no exact data about the number of local people enrolled in voluntary work. Many locals are not aware of these private associations and the scope of services they provide to the society in cultural and educational fields. The UAE government allocates an annual budget to support these associations and help them to remain existent. Yet their performances have not reached satisfactory levels in contributing to the society's development, which is primarily attributed to the lack of awareness on the importance of voluntary work among citizens.¹

The issues that prevent local citizens from taking up voluntary work can be summarized as follow:

- There is an almost complete lack of awareness of the importance of voluntary work.
- There is a minimal amount of information about public welfare associations and their activities.
- There is a weak relationship and liaison between public welfare associations and the media that should highlight the achievements of these associations and their benefits to society.
- Public welfare associations are not promoting voluntary work and encouraging local citizens to participate in their programs and support their activities.
- Materialistic conceptions prevail among certain social groups which believe that any physical or mental work should be paid for, irrespective of the objectives.

¹ Ibid., p. 62.

- There is a scarcity of services and activities that are visible to the public eye and can be regarded as deserving respect and admiration by members of the society.
- There are certainly some charitable work associations that perform their duties with impressive efficiency and success, yet a greater involvement in voluntary and charitable work on a national level is required. In many parts of the Western world, private associations extended their services to include even political, social and business life. They became highly influential in local politics and part of the decision making process in many areas, even more influential than some government owned and managed associations. Judicial system in some Western countries order convicted criminals to join voluntary work associations in an effort to redeem themselves from sins and crimes they committed against their societies.

The public welfare associations can play a more functional role in their society as follows:

- These associations should promote and advertise their goals and activities on a regular basis and during festivals, holidays and national occasions.
- Society should encourage local citizens to participate in voluntary work activities irrespective of their ages and occupations by joining these associations and emphasizing that voluntary work is a patriotic behaviour.
- All people should be eligible to apply for memberships in these associations, without restrictions on some and preferences for others.
- Society should encourage local women to join the associations that provide social services. The participation of women in social life should not be limited to associations that deal only with women's affairs.

- Public welfare associations should advertise and publish materials, periodicals and magazines about their activities and achievements on a monthly and annual basis.
- These associations should organize cultural and educational competitions and lectures for all members of society to explain the goals and the benefits of voluntary work.
- Cultural and educational government institutions should play a greater role in encouraging students and employees to participate in voluntary work activities.
- Local associations should learn from experiences and successes of voluntary work in civilized and advanced countries and the role that those play in the development of their societies.
- Voluntary work should be regarded as a national requirement and a valuable addition to government policies to improve conditions of people. Many individuals in our society have the spirit for voluntary work, but need encouragement and the proper channel to contribute to their society's welfare.

6.6. Mediums for Formulating Awareness

Formulating awareness for citizens, especially the young generation, is a national responsibility for the present and the future. We have to remedy the root causes of cultural deterioration in our society.

Through formulating awareness, we can realize the following:¹

- Maintaining and improving national achievements that the UAE has successfully made since the early days of the federation over thirty-five years ago.

¹ Al-Khawajh Hitham, Alshamsi Najib, *Al Thaqafha fi Fikr Abna' Al Emarat (Culture in the Thoughts of UAE people)*, p. 105.

- Preventing social diseases and imported consumer culture from invading our society and protecting our youths from running after evil cultures that aim at taking them away from their patriotic responsibilities and feelings.
- Achieving social and economic development for our society and raising the productivity of individuals in order to create prosperity and erase poverty.
- By education and wisdom, the UAE society can create a real presence in the Arab arena and will have an appropriate standing on the international stage to win the respect and admiration of the international community, not only by its economic power and resources, but also by its wisdom, faith and values.
- By increasing awareness and education, the society can race time to achieve progress and prosperity and face the challenges ahead. It can protect its national achievements and look after its rights. Otherwise, it will be an easy prey for those countries, which watch it with an envious eye, and want to fulfil their interests at the expense of others.

Prophet Mohammed says in a *Hadeeth*, “A strong believer is better and closer to God than a weak believer.” Based on this *Hadeeth*, we aspire to be strong, yet with wisdom and justice to achieve our legitimate goals, to live in peace and security and to lead a life of prosperity and development, to protect ourselves and defend our own existence.

Education and awareness are the fortresses, which protect us from the modern diseases. Everyone should know his responsibility, otherwise devastation will reach each corner and each home and at that time no one will hear your cry for help.

6.7. Conclusion: The Role of Cultural Institutions in Cultural Development

A number of things prevent the cultural authorities from performing their responsibilities in the manner in which they ought. For an example, one may examine the Ministry of Culture. Since the emergence of the very first UAE Government, the Ministry has had to play a dual role and manage not just the cultural aspects, but also the equally significant “information” department. The Ministry did of course take full advantage of this dual role by trying to increase the cultural awareness of the citizens using various techniques falling under the auspices of the “information” department and create what it called a “cultural boom” of a certain sort. However, all too soon the funds dried up (thanks to indiscriminate and completely unplanned expenditures) and all its efforts went to waste. On close analysis, it was found that the “culture boom” the Ministry had been so proud of was more reliant on quantity of events rather than quality and as a result they left hardly any mark on the citizens. With the tighter budgets of the 80’s, the already impoverished department closed its ambitious operations once and for all. In the 90’s of course with the emergence of the Internet and related information technology the “information” section of the department easily stole the ‘culture’ department’s thunder.

Given the nature and the obvious gravity of the problem of setting up a Ministry for Culture and National Heritage, which will oversee the various nationwide efforts at cultural development, is extremely important. His highness Minister of Culture and Information Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed had put forth such a suggestion as early as 2002. Though five years back the necessity for such a council did not appear obvious to all concerned parties by now most authorities must have woken up to the pressing need.

UAE, like most other Asian countries have a culturally bifurcated society. A large part of her citizens consists of cultured figures that have rejected the original traditions of the country in favour of

the conventions of the west. Yet another group consists of equally cultured and educated individuals who refuse to in anyway contribute to the cultural re-emergence of the country. They remain pleased with their personal position and education and do nothing to alter the social situation. The third group, consisting of the youth who make up more than half of the country's population remain largely confused by the plethora of knowledge and information available to them and find no place for themselves in either the first or the second group, or anywhere else for that matter. Given the potential of this last group, initiatives must be taken to educate these youths about the values and ethics of their own country. Such edification and such edification alone will help them distinguish between the good and the bad, and work for the benefit of their own society.

It is perhaps of some value to try to introduce these youngsters (and others) to voluntary work, which is often managed by Public Welfare Associations. Such social work will not only help them understand and recognize their own country at a hands-on level, but also encourage them to alter the present scenario and improve current situations.

7. The Cultural Scene in Dubai (in particular) after Establishing Dubai Cultural Council

More than thirty-six years have passed since culture and art were given official organizational structures to streamline their activities and progress, yet they could not establish strong and profound communications with the larger audience as many impediments and hurdles still lie in the way. Dubai enjoys a wealth of writers, actors, directors and artists, yet it lacks organized financial resources to support and sponsor cultural and artistic production. Over the last three decades, writers, cultural figures and artists have argued that Dubai managed to build its image as a regional and international business centre with the miraculous achievements that stand as testimonies to Dubai success as a destination for

business and investment. However, they claim that culture was not high on the government's list of priorities, and did not get the adequate attention.

It was a frustrating situation, but did not last for long. Soon, on Tuesday, the 20th of May 2003 His Highness Sheikh Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, in his capacity as Ruler of Dubai, issued a law for establishing Dubai Cultural Council, defining the new body's functions and responsibilities, which changed the climate into a promising future for the whole cultural movement when Chaired by prominent UAE writer Mohammad Al Murr, Dubai Cultural Council is mandated to:

- Building a national cultural identity for UAE citizens through activating and coordinating cultural activities in Dubai with related organizations and institutions.¹
- Drawing up strategies and launching initiatives that would help create a cultural climate within our society.²
- Optimizing skills and encouraging ideas on cultural development among all people.³

Now a supervisory cultural body is in place, and can fully exercise its mandate to give the cultural movement the adequate environment, attention and support so it can flourish and bear fruit.

7.1. The Cultural and Artistic Movement in Dubai: Causes of Weak Performance, and Solutions

7.1.1. The Drama and Cinema Movement

There is an increasing necessity to create a drama and cinema movement in Dubai that can grow in step with the huge progress that Dubai succeeded in achieving in the areas of business, economy, infrastructure projects, and information technology. Yet the artistic movement cannot thrive without the

¹ The Emir Decree of Dubai about Dubai Cultural Council issued on 20th May 2003.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

support, encouragement and sponsorship of official or private organizations which take the responsibility of establishing theatres, production companies, financing movies and launching awards for those who excel in their contribution to this movement. “*The Ibdaa Award*”¹ presented by Dubai Media City for students of Information and Media Colleges is a prime example of encouraging creativity among students. However, most of the winners of the award have been, so far, from outside the UAE.

UAE television and movie drama is still in the infancy age and suffers from poor performance, which could be attributed to rarity of local skilled and trained staff, from script writing to final technical requirements for a convincing drama work. The reasons for unconvincing and weak scripts could be summarized as follows:

- The Gulf region was not a theatre for big and historical events that changed the destination of history as in the case of Iraq, Syria and Egypt, so drama in the Gulf lacks the conflict element.
- Until recently, the Gulf region was thinly populated and was largely homogeneous. Tribes and interrelated families were shaping up the identity of society. The situation is quite different in some other Arab countries where societies are diversified, multi-ethnic and multi-cultural.
- The Gulf region enjoys a relative luxury and welfare preventing big gaps between social classes from happening. In some other countries, there is widening gulf between the rich and the poor.

¹ *Ibdaa* is an Advertising and journalism awards held by Dubai Media city. Winners from all over the universities come and participate in the Ceremony.

- Thinkers and scriptwriters refrain from penetrating new social problems with courage and transparency.

In addition to the aforementioned reasons for weakness, young local cadres are hesitant to cope with the challenges of drama production, attributing their hesitation to limited resources. Young directors should try to build up experiences through available capabilities, so every new drama will gain more respect and will be given larger resources and attention, and so on.

Another problem that hinders the progress of drama is that young cadres are not given much attention by production companies, whether government or private, and so there is a high tendency to deal with foreign skills, which has negatively affected local drama. Furthermore, some officials are strangers to the technical work that is involved in the production of drama, which again leads and adds to weaknesses in scripts. Local cadres and skills need support, encouragement, and competitions to measure their performance, and awards for their excellence. They also need to learn and share experiences with outside expertise. Local cadres should be given the chance to prove himself. Production companies should support new local directors. Media corporations import produced and packaged programmes and Arabic drama serials! While they shun locally produced drama. There is an absolute necessity for holding forums, think tanks, debates and competitions within the educational institutions to create a cultural and mental awareness of drama and develop a taste for local drama among the larger audience.

Art, in the UAE, cannot be separated from its regional environment and surroundings. Analyzing the success of the theatre movement in Kuwait and first major Kuwait film "*Bas Ya Bahar*"¹ might be beneficial. The governmental support of artistic groups initially started in Kuwait in cooperation with

¹ "*Bas Ya Bahar*": the first Kuwaiti film produced in 1971.

other expertise from the gulf region, namely from Bahrain, then spread over the rest of the region. The Emirati society consists of locals and expatriates. Art here should reflect this reality and should not concentrate on the native citizens only. The role of the government of Dubai, which recorded unprecedented success in the region in terms of business and economy, should support production of drama in theatre, cinema and television in a way that mirrors the present state of society. The government should financially support production companies and initiatives made by individuals or groups, and motivate the youth experiences with freedom of expression. The United Arab Emirates should carry out a serious study to identify all available potential and expertise and enhance artistic performance by opening institutes to train actors, producers, and all technical cadre needed. It should also give incentives to locally produced programmes (special prices for local programmes) that comprehensively express society and not only concentrate on localities and heritage.

Another hurdle that comes in the way of drama in our society is that a proportion of this society still looks negatively at art in general and drama work in particular, ignoring the importance of television drama, and its positive impact in shedding light on social problems and complexities. On the other hand the weak competition among local drama works led to further recession. Here comes the role of Dubai Cultural Council as a haven or as a union for writers, artists and cultural figures to organize their activities and meet their requirements. Also promising talents should have access to professional and academic training, which will reflect on their social status so that society will look more positively towards art and artists.

7.1.2. The Cultural and Artistic Movement in General

- Culture should be looked at as a commodity

Many could disagree that culture should be treated as a commodity, because many see culture as the core constituent of a society and cannot be “for sale.” However, the way we should look at it is that culture can be promoted as a tourist attraction. In the Western hemisphere, culture survived and succeeded only after it was dealt with as a commodity and was given an economic value. Writers should make a decent income from their work. In some western countries, novel writers get a down payment from the publishing house even before their novels are written and might take more than six months to one year to finish. In the United Arab Emirates, introducing the protection of intellectual property law was a major success and a boost to artists, thinkers and innovators, and especially to singers as it protects the rights for cassette ownership and distribution, the rights of the lyric writers and the rights of the composers. Songs have more audience and fans than books and so theoretically, culture can be treated as a commodity with the support of government issuing the regulating laws. The cultural foundation in Abu Dhabi launched, “The book on tape” project that was welcomed by many people, and proved again that culture can be marketed. If we want to turn culture into a commodity, we have to evaluate the cultural product itself. The cultural product in Sharjah and Abu Dhabi is “stronger” than that of Dubai. However, in the seventies, Dubai’s cultural production was much bigger than now. The situation deteriorated because many people invested their money, time and talents in business and trades, which came at the expense of cultural production.

- The necessity of introducing cultural rules and regulations

There are some scattered cultural landmarks in Dubai. Museums, libraries, cultural centres and private cultural foundations are present and the Dubai Cultural Council came to regulate cultural activities and establish coordination between government and private institutions involved in culture. It was a wise decision by Dubai Executive Council headed by His Highness Sheikh Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum to create a cultural council rather than a governmental department, because culture is a popular and collective work that progresses through the democratic environment and dialogue and should not be managed by bureaucratic rules.

One of the top priorities of Dubai Cultural Council is the introduction of cultural rules and regulations, starting with the general budget of the council. In Sharjah, each cultural foundation receives a monthly financial assistance of Dhs.10,000 from the government. This is not the case in Dubai and many artists and cultural figures prefer to establish their foundation in Sharjah rather than in Dubai. In Kuwait, the government cuts five percent of banks' profits (as tax) and channels the amounts to support the culture and art movement. In Dubai, we do not ask the government to impose a tax on local banks, which even failed to execute the policy of increasing the percentage of citizens working in the banking sector by four percent annually.

Members of Dubai's Chamber of Commerce and Industry exceed 100,000 and if the government imposes an annual fee of Dhs.100 on each member, it will make an annual total amount of Dhs.10 million. This money can go into a fund for cultural development under the supervision of Dubai Cultural Council. Among other steps to regulate cultural activities, Dubai Cultural Council should be responsible for issuing licenses for the arts exhibitions rather than Dubai Municipality. The council logically has

more knowledge and experience to accept, refuse, or evaluate artworks to be exhibited. In addition, financial rewards should be made available from the “Cultural Development Fund” for plays, songs, cinema works, writings, etc. and should satisfactorily compensate the time and effort of the artist.

- Establishing a National Theatre Group

Dubai can host the best theatre groups in the world and organize world events but regrettably, there is no big theatre, like that of Abu Dhabi and of Sharjah, to accommodate a big theatre group. The problem is not in building a theatre, but building a national group to present national arts, music and dance. Cultural tourists always look for native cultural activities that give them an idea about the cultural production of the country. We should not be against bringing other foreign cultural shows into the country, but our priority must be to show visitors and tourists the culture of our country demonstrated in the best artistic way. In order to establish a national theatre, members of the group should be given full time jobs at this establishment with decent salaries and rewards program. Dubai Cultural Council could be assigned to control and regulate this process, just like the Football Union and sports clubs. Dubai Cultural Council should also be responsible for training and preparing new and educated leaders to be responsible for the artistic and cultural movement and replace the old generation of leaders who have made their contributions. New blood should always be injected in any organization to secure sustainability and progress.

The Sultanate of Oman succeeded in establishing The Royal Omani Orchestra, which proved itself as one of the best orchestras in the Arab world. The performances of the Orchestra represent a cultural achievement and a success story for Oman. The shows were described as a high level of musical

performance at a time when cheap and imitated musical performances were dominating the market. Dubai should have a national Orchestra of which to be proud.

The State of Qatar launched its first cultural festival in its modern history. It is in fact the first cultural festival of its kind in the Gulf region. The first edition of the festival started in March 20, 2002 with the participation of more than 2000 artists, men of letters, and cultural figures. The National Council organized the festival for Culture and Arts in Qatar. The annual event includes international shows and folklore dances from Arab, Asian, European, and American countries. It also includes exhibitions for Islamic art, Children's art, photography and drawings on Ostrich eggs. The International Oliver Exhibition also participates in this event with its world famous paintings. The festival hosts a wide range of activities, such as poetry evenings, debates for Arab and foreign intellectuals, and musical performances, etc. The State of Qatar aimed at attracting world attention to the country and at making Doha as the cultural capital in the region and even for the Arab world. To ensure success for this festival, Qatar established close relations and cooperation with all cultural foundations and centres in Baghdad, Damascus, Cairo and Beirut

Comparing the Dubai Shopping Festival with other shopping festivals in the region, it is obvious that Dubai Shopping Festival is still the leading event of its kind in the region in spite of the fierce competition from some neighbouring countries. Dubai has proved itself as a market leader in organizing events with high level of administration and expertise, in addition to its geographic location and high standard of security and safety measures. All these positive indicators prove that if Dubai Cultural Council organized a "Dubai Cultural Festival" it would be another success story in the history of modern

Dubai. Its success could also surpass all expectations and might be better than The Doha Cultural Festival and the *Janadiriya Festival*¹ in Saudi Arabia.

- Dubai's Public Libraries should promote Knowledge and Culture among Citizens and Residents

Throughout the history of mankind and civilizations, libraries have been the channel and the source of the cultural and human heritage. Cultures are like underground rivers that run through our lives and relationships, giving us messages that shape our perceptions, attributions, judgments, and ideas of self and others. The interaction between civilizations that settled in the Arabian Peninsula, Middle East and North Africa have vehemently enriched and contributed to the intellectual and cultural output of these areas, and led to the establishing of the oldest libraries in the world to preserve the intellectual treasures. Islam played a prominent role in the history of libraries when thousands of books were translated into Arabic to explore, learn and contribute to new sciences and interact with other cultures, and in addition, when thousands of books were written by Muslim scientists, artists, scholars and philosophers in almost every science and art contributing to the world heritage and empowering mankind to excel and progress in all fields. Libraries were a key factor in preserving the intellectual treasures in all stages and ages. Libraries also assisted in creating the cultural fluency, which means awareness of several dimensions of culture, including concepts, philosophies and theories, all have been shared through books. Having the benefit of reading about other cultures we accumulate brilliant reference points and shared experiences.

The late Sheikh Rashid Bin Saeed Al Maktoum, Ruler of Dubai (1958-1990) inaugurated Dubai Public Library in Al-Ras area, which overlooked Dubai Creek in 1963, ushering in a new era for

¹ Janadriya Heritage and Culture Festival, an annual festival Showcasing Saudi Arabia's Culture and Traditions.

education and knowledge in Dubai and in the region. The library has developed rapidly in its collection and premises extensions. The public library in Al-Ras now includes halls for Arabic and English books, references and periodicals, audio-visual materials and the Internet. In addition to the library administration, there are other administrative units such as supply, indexing, categorization, meeting hall, Mosque, car parking. The notion of establishing a public library in Dubai came into being after The Emirate of Qatar established its own public library, which was called The Qatari Book House. The first books that filled the shelves of the Dubai library came as a present from His Highness Sheikh Ali Bin Abdulla Al Thani, the then Ruler of Qatar. Under the supervision of Dubai Municipality, the library project developed quickly and by 1970 the number of books exceeded 12000. Dubai library soon became a cultural landmark, providing visitors with all facilities and drawing up its agenda of activities and attracting visitors and lecturers. Among the first who gave religious lectures at Dubai Library was the prominent Islamic scholar *Sheikh Yousif Al Qaradhawi*.¹ (see Appendix 2)

In many countries, it seems that almost everyone has his or her nose in a book while commuting. So, in order to meet the lifestyles and traditions of our region and in order to encourage reading and provide easy and convenient access to sources of knowledge and education, and to reach out to all communities all over Dubai, four public libraries in residential areas were inaugurated in 1989 in Hor Al Anz, Al Rashidya, Al Safa' um Saquim, and the fifth one in the Hatta area in 1998. Other public library branches in Al Tawar and Al Mankhol areas were inaugurated in 2004-2005. When establishing these libraries the nature and the variety of local society interests have been taken into consideration. The building has been designed in order to include: halls for Arabic and English books, references, periodicals, a library for the children and a multi-function hall supplied with most advanced display and

¹ Cultural Horizons magazine, *Land Mark*, Issue No. 17, Dubai Cultural Council, Dubai, UAE, Sept. 2006, pp. 24-25.

presentation devices. All these libraries are connected with an advance computer network, new libraries system, Internet services, in addition to a good and balanced collection of information resources and knowledge in different subjects in Arabic and English. Dubai Municipality is currently finalizing designs for new premises for the Dubai Central Library that will come as a boon to book lovers in the city and give a major boost to the cultural scene of the emirate. The new book-shaped building, to be constructed on the banks of the picturesque Al Mamzar Lagoons, will include extended facilities. The central library is currently located in Al Ras area. The central library would consist of over 1.72 million books and other library materials including CDs and audio-video cassettes.¹

7.2. Analyses & Conclusion: The Cultural Scene in Dubai after Establishing Dubai Cultural Council

The last three decades have been tough for the cultural field in Dubai. Despite having been allotted a special organization to look after its needs, not too much cultural advancement has really taken place in the past thirty-six+ years. That is not to say that Dubai lacks in any sort of talent or enthusiasm. She still has a large number of extremely gifted and thoroughly creative individuals raring to burst into the creative scene. However, as is quite obvious, they are not likely to be given as much time and encouragement as they deserve simply because the government is busy with other things at the moment. The authorities have spoken and clearly cultural activities are not high up on the list of priorities.

This changed drastically with the emergence of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashed Al Maktoum. By establishing the Dubai Cultural Council, he turned the tables and brought back the city's cultural heritage to where it really belonged. The new supervisory cultural body has adequate authority to allow the various cultural movements the sort of push they need.

¹ Ibid.

Dubai now needs a decent Drama and Cinema movement, which will allow some momentum for both these art forms in the country. Most artists in these fields feel that it will take a good jolt of some kind for such art forms to progress at the rate business and economy has advanced in the country. For this jolt to come, professionals in this field are hoping to receive full support and sponsorship from private organizations. The launch of the 'Ibdaa Award' for the students of Information and Media by Dubai City is an example of such support. Dubai still thoroughly lacks local skill in the field and thereby falls crucially short of the technical support any such field requires. Lack of encouraging production companies both in the field of cinema and drama is yet another problem. There are a number of reasons behind these individual issues and proper scrutiny of each of the problem will reveal possible solutions to them as well. UAE should turn to Kuwait (where the Government is known to provide tremendous support to artists) for inspiration. Also, a well-run campaign should be worked out to rid the citizens of the various negative attitudes they have towards the arts. Such modification of ideologies is intrinsic to ensuring that more youngsters enter these fields.

Dubai has three major theatre groups namely, The Dubai AL Ahli Theatre, The Dubai Popular Arts and Theatre and Dubai National Youth Theatre. Of these the Dubai National theatre is the oldest. All three of them face desperate financial crises. Often some of them do not have the requisite amount of money to prepare stages or transport their actors from one place to another. Thanks to the financial crunch almost all theatre actors are quickly leaving the stage and their groups and settling for more lucrative jobs. Artists think the situation can easily be salvaged if the government provides enough monetary support to the theatre groups on an annual basis. In addition, an increased effort on the part of the media to publicise the theatre will help increase the audience to a large extent. Sponsorship for

shows from private organizations will also go a long way in ensuring that the groups are not in any want of fundamental resources. (see Appendix 1)

Unlike in the western countries, artists think, in Dubai culture is not thought of as a 'commodity' and thus not dealt with in terms of money. Hence publishers do not adequately pay writers and theatre artists do not even have enough money to pay for a rehearsal space. Here people invest in business and not in the arts; therefore, despite being a prosperous country, we have little provision for the artists. For the position of the arts to change this attitude must be altered considerably.

Apart from providing for local artists the government must also look into the establishment of a large national theatre, which will be able to accommodate not just local groups but also sizeable international troupes. Although it is not just a national theatre that Dubai needs; she also requires a decent national group, which will present the national arts and music of Dubai. Apart from helping national integration such a group will also draw in large amounts of tourists.

The first public library in Dubai was established in the late 1960's. By 1970 the library had more than 12000 books. Apart from holding books, the public library in Dubai is also an educational centre that hosts regular lectures on religion and other matters. Following the first library a number of other libraries have come up in various corners of the city. Almost all of these are equipped with the various new technologies required in an organization as itself.

8. Results of Previous Studies

- How to create a road map to enable Dubai to play a major and active role in culture and arts, in making culture a tourist attraction and investment and enriching culture with a distinctive identity.

- The possibility of marketing culture and arts in Dubai through a profit-making perspective so cultural events can survive and progress to regional and international levels.
- The availability of cultural initiatives, but on the other hand the need for sustainable government support financially and administratively, which is the reason behind establishing Dubai Cultural Council.
- Previous analysis showed that Dubai needed a cultural council to administer and supervise cultural activities, such as festivals, competitions, and cooperation with regional and international cultural foundations.
- Present generations are not interested in culture and contributions of the older generation will cease one day, which creates an urgency to create the right climate for culture to thrive before it is too late.
- Cultural activities in Dubai are limited and unorganised and need considerable strategic planning. The private sector participates in supporting and producing cultural output.

9. Final conclusion

More than three decades after Dubai attached itself to the UAE federation, the time has come to scrutinize whether UAE and Dubai have undergone any significant cultural change following their association. At a superficial level, at least a number of changes have taken place in both Dubai and the UAE. Several cultural organizations have been established and effort has been put in to organizing cultural events. However, the apparent advancement is not necessarily an indicator of any real progress. The past three decades have seen crucial changes in the people's lifestyle, naturally these alterations have had significant amount of effect on the holistic cultural make up of the country. With the advent of various telecommunication facilities such as the Internet etc. for instance we have become far more open

to external influences. Despite this sudden openness, however very little of our personal traditions and values have really undergone any transformation. Due to the discrepancy, a widening gap has emerged between those who (thanks to their newly established connection with the rest of the world) have decided to give up their own traditions in favour of the traditions of the west, and others who are determined to stay deeply rooted in their past. Of course, the changes brought about by the new developments are bound to lend us new perspective, but surely abandoning our own culture for what we have only now learned cannot be a wise decision.

Much thought is thus being put into how this discrepancy may be dealt with. Preserving one's own culture is significant for a number of reasons. To begin with, it helps render our future generations with the kind of pride and respect they ought to feel for their own country. The same kind of pride and reverence is also known to increase national cohesion.

In this time of crisis, when almost the whole world is in a sort of cultural flux, it is thoroughly important to safeguard our own culture in order to ensure that our country does not get swallowed by other, foreign cultures. With the rise of globalization the world will soon become one big 'global village'. To mark out our specific presence even in this community, it is important that we remember where we come from and what our past was like.

To save our culture from extinction, we must act now, before our kids refuse to learn who their ancestors were and what the glorious past of their country was like. Action needs to be taken in various fields. While it is definitely difficult to define what our culture is, it is obvious that certain elements represent, these therefore have to be handled with special care. Our national music, sport, drama, films, literature and the like need to be revamped and for that we need to plan and strategize. When attempting to rescue our culture we have to make sure that our approach is thoroughly methodical and not

unnecessarily emotional. The past has proved that an emotional approach only causes avoidable expenditure and helps in no overall advancement. It is therefore important that we plan how we are going to go about our attempts in the field in an extremely regimented manner. Reasonable amounts of finances, sponsorships and organizational support is also of extreme significance.

In order to guarantee a glorious tomorrow we must re-awaken our past. Our past and only our past can truly define our present and future identity.

Chapter 9: Cultural Thinking and Cultural Tourism Development in Dubai

1. Introduction

In order to keep with the changing times, Dubai had two choices. Either she could conform to the economic ideologies of the west or she could formulate new ones for herself. The former would be easy and the latter tough. However, without settling for comfort Dubai settled on hardship and decided to undertake the gruelling latter path.

In Dubai, an odd symbiotic relationship exists between the governing class and the business elite. Thanks to their close association formulating economic methodologies proved much simpler than usual. Even in the face of harsh criticism these individuals quickly achieved what they had set out to learn.

Dubai is a charming city steeped both in history and the present. It has equal amounts of respect for yesterday and today, and is thus as reverential towards her cultural heritage as she is towards her modern beginning. Due to her dual preferences, Dubai is the perfect site for cultural tourism. Dubai of course has a lot to offer to the cultural tourism sector. Yet the sector itself has much to offer Dubai as well. Proper planning in the field can help Dubai increase its profits from the tourism industry substantially.

To ensure the increase profitability, however, Dubai will have to prepare herself with greater amenities, and make available various ingredients that will augment the cultural tourism market. For this purpose, the government should take special care and establish a specific department to look after this aspect of tourism. Additionally, augmenting the various cultural facilities would be an important step. Dubai is a land of wonders. Small adjustments will ensure that this wonderment reaches tourists from various countries and lures them into a visit to the city.

2. Dubai as a Generator of Ideas

Dubai's unique past and history laid down the groundwork for its present. Vast and ambitious projects being announced daily in Dubai communicate an underlying fact; the iron will pushes the emirate forward and places it among the advanced cities of distinct recorded civilization. Since Dubai broke the traditional barriers and the illusionary restrictions towards internationality, observers insist that Dubai undergo an extraordinary change. For them, there are two possibilities: either Dubai will be a school of the modern economic thought in the future that will be instructed in universities and high institutes, or to be later affected by this rapid progress and will experience a setback that reverses all development sectors. This stance is not new for Dubai and its history. All previous projects of Dubai were incredible in their time and most of them met with difficult financing conditions and seemed impossible to come to fruition. However, the iron will of Dubai's merchants and governing class laid down a new methodology of economics; a methodology that emerges from the local conditions, market demands at that time, and the future needs. By the end of 1950s, the British authorities regarded projects initiated by Sheikh Rashid too ambitious and would have a poor return on the emirate. They always believed neither economic resources nor the actual needs of Dubai would absorb these projects. Nevertheless, after a few years of starting some of these projects, they were not only found necessary, but also required expansion to contain the increasing demand on services supplied. This belief was maintained when Dubai thought to build Port Rashid and its expansion, Jebel Ali Port with its multi quays, and the dry dock, which were all ambitious projects that surpassed Dubai's ability and absorptive capacity.¹

¹ Faṭma Al-Şaygh, *Dubai Al bedayat Waltaḥawlat (The Beginnings of Duabi and the Transformations)*, 1st ed, Albayan Publication, Dubai, UAE, 2006, pp. 193-194.

Innovation, the most important pillar of creativity, never stops in Dubai. Creation of new unusual projects was its means to international attention and growth amidst an international economic and commercial atmosphere based on competition and the best service at the best price. The ongoing developments in Dubai and their potential effects on the region and the world economy were first subject to study by the West. A Western comprehensive study targeted the emirate's dependence on the Western expertise and technology, its readiness to provide an investment-attractive environment, and all facilities, to see the possible influence on the West and its economies. For example, Western newspapers described "The Palm" project to be imaginary and too demanding. Western media said it was economically and practically illogical. As the project's delineations started to appear and as the project was sold in full, the same media praised it saying it is one of the most important tourist attraction projects in Dubai. The large projects gave Dubai a major international reputation that attracts attention. On the other hand, other observers regarded the situation as a "small bubble" that would not be able to stand adverse currents or strong wind. The ongoing development makes Dubai a lone bird singing away from the flock. Dubai could not achieve success by jumping over the social and political limits of the region. Separately from the Gulf region and other neighbouring regions, Dubai would not be able to fulfil international expectations. Moreover, other emirates should cope with the progressive development of Dubai, a matter that needs long-term planning.¹ Despite this poor argument, Dubai did not ignore warnings, especially that its history and past development proved the claim incorrect. Sheik Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President, Prime Minister, and Ruler of Dubai, announced that Dubai's development and projects are studied to adversely affect neither other development aspects, nor the future progress of the entire region. In addition, the projects are designed to positively influence other emirates. Among Dubai's projects that have had positive effect on all the Emirates are Dubai

¹ Ibid., p. 194.

Media City, Dubai Internet City, Dubai Healthcare City, Dubai Humanitarian City, Dubai Knowledge Village, and all are vital projects that will benefit not only Dubai but also the whole Emirates and neighbouring societies.

Dubai's policy efficiently set an excellent example of the unique commercial mentality that features Dubai and its governing elite. Dubai is characterized not by market thought, but by this distinct commercial mentality and the close connections between the governing elite and businessmen class, which are among other factors that repute Dubai as an economic front. This communication cleared both parties' understanding of the other, and factors in the fulfilment of many huge projects. Without the government's facilities and the courage of the businessmen and their high confidence in the potential of the national economy, projects could not have been accomplished placing Dubai among the more advanced cities. Today, Dubai deserves to be proud of developing a modern economic thought that presents its gained experience to many countries. Unless the assiduous work and intensive effort of its locals, and the true belief of the government administration in the capacities of those people, Dubai could not have held onto this super rank.¹

Behind this great leap stands an unparalleled mentality that neither tires nor bores; non-stop working intellect that turns dreams into reality: the governors of Al-Maktoum and Sheik Mohammed Bin Rashid, the Vice President. Sheikh Rashid. All had a broad mind that predicts the future and benefits from lessons of the past for the good of the present and towards promising future. Over its history, this broad mindedness of the rulers has been a feature of Dubai where the realized needs of their people and targeted awareness that difficult objectives are attainable by persistent work and cooperative efforts. At

¹ Ibid., p. 195.

the present, Dubai is a great addition to both Arab and Muslim worlds, which are proud to include an Arab Islamic city, which approaching modernism without prejudice to the Islamic values. While going deep into the heart of the 20th century, modern Dubai did not abandon the humanitarian efforts that give the city its spirit. For example, Dubai International Holy Quran Award and the generous donation to the needy and the afflicted people are final evidence that Dubai will remain a "Donating City".¹

2.1 Conclusion: Dubai as a Generator of Ideas

Dubai has always believed in shaping its present and future according to the rules and dictums handed down in its extremely inspiring past. In the past few decades, Dubai has struggled to attain the kind of position and stature enjoyed today in the world market. Under the circumstances Dubai really has two choices: it can both shape up its future generation in modern economic thought and thus secure its tomorrow or it can reap the benefits of its present success and sink in failure in the near future. Previously, Dubai did not even have the luxury of making such a decision. Most projects announced formerly, no matter what their size, were thought to be over ambitious. This has much to do with the British rule during that time. The British like most colonizers led the Arabs to believe that their dreams were impossible, that their country had neither the need nor the capacity to sustain such projects. Soon however the British were proved wrong and the Arab projects emerged as highly profitable.

The people of Dubai believe in innovation and creativity, but most of all, they believe in having faith in their own dreams and aspirations. Thus they go ahead with their projects undeterred by the criticism of the foreign press and media, and manage to persuade them to accept their success in the long run. Many scorned their ambitions and blamed them for trying to override the rest of the countries in the

¹ Ibid., p. 196.

Emirates, but Dubai was careful to keep its relations with all the other countries in perfect health. Therefore, today it can safely confess to having been highly successful. Dubai believes in keeping the governing elite and the business class in close contact so that they might help each other in taking the country ahead. The result of this policy is for everyone to see.

A number of people have contributed to this tremendous climb. Thousands of people have worked around the clock to help Dubai reach where it is today. These include (but are not confined to) the governors of Al-Maktoum, and the Vice-president, Sheik Mohammed Bin Rashid. Thanks to their efforts Dubai is a modern Islamic city, which has successfully incorporated its traditional past into its progressive attitude towards life.

3. Cultural Tourism

With its modern skyline and quality infrastructure, it is difficult to believe that Dubai was once a small town of Bedouin traders. Exotic animals used to inhabit the grounds occupied by the present-day *Nad al Sheba* racetrack.¹ Contemporary Dubai has been built beyond reasonable expectations, more so from the stigma, which befell a post-Gulf War Arabia. High technology and high-fashion shops are now as commonplace as the gold souks. Modern Dubai is an eclectic mix of old and new, ancient and modern.

Tourism, cultural tourism in particular, is considered one of the fastest-growing industries globally; with fierce competition being its natural corollary. Dubai is viewed as one of the prime tourist destinations, giving the country a distinct vantage in this arena. Dubai's relative advantages pertinent to

¹ Nad Al Sheba host of the famous Dubai World Cup is a racetrack with two courses, a sand/dirt mixture and a turf track.

tourism are manifold. First, tourism is a rapidly growing, huge industry, which is, therefore, a crucial sector that of which Dubai can take advantage. Dubai is aptly capable in meeting global standards, being in itself, a set of visions. Dubai's global position, as predicted, will be that of an "internationally recognized hub and destination of choice for cultural tourism." Dubai's vision reiterates this notion, stating a threefold agenda for its long-term goal of becoming an international tourist hub: creating a quality environment conducive to immigration and investment inflows, necessary for enticing a technologically knowledgeable/skilled human capital base, launching a policy of arts and culture developments, with the creation of an arts centre in Dubai, initiating an annual programme of cultural activities (e.g. expositions, concerts, visiting artist performances) to mark its reputation as a modern society. Second, tourism is a highly unpredictable industry, with trends and factors influential to tourist influx. Factors that positively affect tourism are disposable income increases, transportation cost decreases, tourism package cost decreases, and the presence of political stability. Travel distance has become an irrelevant tourism factor. Third, competition has spurred creative marketing strategies on the part of tourism providers. They have started providing leisure and business packages in greater variety, higher quality, and more competitive pricing schemes, thereby boosting the market demand for tourism. With the current trends in tourism at work, the demand being on the favourable side, it is projected that the \$3.3 trillion global tourism industry will grow at a 6.8% annual rate for the next ten years.¹

Fourth, the tourism industry is challenged by a body of better informed and discriminating clientele. Tourism providers, therefore, need to package destinations in a detail-specific and compelling manner, categorized on the basis of market segmentation, in order to lure prospective tourists. The

¹ World Travel & Tourism Council: [wttc.org](http://www.wttc.org), <http://www.wttc.org>.

package destinations can also aim at a wider range of tourists for particular destinations in order to satisfy the market demand.

In view of these trends, Dubai must adhere to the aforementioned steps to be able to take advantage of the tourism sector to the fullest extent. Dubai must maintain research based equilibrium values according to the tourist segment, from where tourism providers can base tourist package offers. The move is expected to optimize Dubai's gain from possible tourism generated revenues. It must also continue upgrading its support services in order to be able to service the increasing number of tourists, broaden the basis of their motivation for tourism, and eventually, draw more tourists into visiting. A study of tourism's framework is a prerequisite for understanding it. According to the Singaporean Board of Tourism website, the tourism landscape is composed of two sections: motivating attraction, and supporting services. Motivating attractions include business tourism, cruise events, honeymoons, and especially, cultural tourism. Supporting services, however, include IT & communication systems, travel agencies, hotels, entertainment management companies, and computer reservation systems. Cultural activities, in addition, are part of a broader tourism framework; by building on both Motivating Attractions and Supporting Services, Dubai will be able to attract tourists, and encourage repeat visits.¹

Cultural tourism is the type of tourism intent on an exploration of and education on the culture of a particular place. The motivating attraction components of cultural tourism are cultural/historical heritage, performing arts (theatre), visual arts, and music. The Cultural Historical Heritage component includes parks, sightseeing, tours, cultural events, festivals and fairs. Performing Arts (Theatre) includes musicals, operas, ballet and dance exhibitions, and dramatic and classical performances. The Visual Arts

¹ See Singapore Board of Tourism website: www.stb.com.sg.

component includes museums, painting galleries, craft exhibits, and film and photography showcases. Music includes symphonies, orchestras and concerts. Supporting Services for cultural tourism are comprised of marketing organizations to promote the arts and Dubai's position as a "centre for the arts" in the region, operational organizations to collaborate with performing arts talents and IT specialists for marketing, state-of-the-art venues like auditoriums, screening rooms, seminar rooms and staging arenas, and the technology that allows for world-class performances and shows. (see Appendix 1, 2, 3, 4)

Cultural tourism is a substantial contribution to Dubai's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). With the exception of Bahrain, Dubai's tourism sector is the largest percentage contributor to GDP at eighteen percent of Dubai's direct gross domestic product and twenty-nine percent of its indirect GDP. The Dubai Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing official pointed out that Dubai recorded 82% hotel occupancy in 2006, which ranked third in the world behind London and New York.¹ Bahrain's advantage is principally due to its proximity to Saudi Arabia. Dubai has become a major destination and stands to profit from cultural tourism. Dubai has to invest in quality cultural tourism infrastructure for a full availing itself of this privilege.

¹ UAE Interact website:

http://uaeinteract.com/docs/Tourism_contributes_18_to_Dubais_GDP_per_year/23960.htm

Year: 2002	Cultural Tourist	Regular Tourist
Average Spending	\$631	\$457
Average Age	48	46
Retired	18%	15%
Graduate Degree	21%	18%
Spend \$1,000+	18%	12%
Travel Duration	22%	18%

Table 1: characteristics of the tourism demography (1) - Source: National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, www.nasaa-arts.org

This United States based data on cultural tourism illustrates some key characteristics of the tourism demography (regular/cultural tourists), with important implications on the possible benefits from cultural tourism. Research suggests that promoting cultural tourism in Dubai will attract an extremely valuable clientele that will be willing to spend more (\$174 average difference) and lengthen the duration of their visit (four percent difference). Cultural tourism promotion, research also suggests, increases the likelihood of drawing tourists with more advanced ages (forty-eight vs. forty-six average, three percent difference in retired tourists demography) and educational backgrounds (three percent difference holding a graduate degree). Hosting such demography is a boost for promoting Dubai as the ‘image leader’ in the region, an immense contribution to the knowledge economy.

The National Assembly of State Arts agencies website asserts that some economic and cultural trends have had a huge impact on cultural tourism statistics. First, there has been a general rise in

affluence and education level trends. Second, the United Arab Emirates has born witness to cultural diversity; with expatriates now accounting for more than eighty percent of the UAE population. Third, an increase in the economic role and education of women had women typically setting up the vacation plans. Fourth, a decrease in time for leisure, which is a mark of modern society increased the demand for and placed emphasis on shorter and value-added trips. Lastly, there has been an intensified influence of technology in every domain; an increased awareness of cultural issues, therefore, effected tourists by creating a demand for a greater variety of cultural activities. These trends imply favourable growth prospects for cultural tourism in Dubai.

From analysing Dubai's situation, it is evident that the current cultural tourism landscape is insufficient. Cultural tourism activities in Dubai are on a small-scale, fragmented, and uncoordinated, and bereft of independent quality checks and strategic guidance. The Dubai Explorer 2006 reports that the only activities/establishments, which garnered a medium rating on the concentration graph, were Dubai's six parks (Creek side Park, Mushrif Park, Rashidiya Park, Safa Park, Al Mamzar Beach and Jumeira Beach Park). The Performing Arts Division (comprised of nine groups and clubs), the Visual Arts Sector (composed of forty galleries) and Falconry Division's three centres were noted as having the lowest concentrations. Dubai, however, is not deficient in Venues for Musical and Theatrical Performances which include: seven venues for Classical Concerts (e.g. Crown Plaza Hotel), six venues for Theatrical Performances (e.g. a 500-seat Community Theatre built in 2006 in Emirates Shopping Mall) and fifteen venues for Dance/Pop Concert Events. These numbers are suggestive of the budding need for appropriate staging facilities and equipment; the demand for performance venues having been predicted. Comparing the aforementioned figures to a cultural tourism investing country's infrastructure statistics will reveal some startling differences. (see Appendix 1, 2, 3, 4)

2002	Dubai	Hong Kong	Dubai: HK
Population	1.4 mm	6.8 mm	13%
Land (sq. km)	3,885	1,070	3.6x
GDP	41 bb	162.6 bb	10%
GDP/Capita	\$19,000	\$23,912	80%
Museums	2	13	15%
Theatres	2	6	3%
Arenas	1	2	0.5%

Table 2: characteristics of the tourism demography (2) - Source: World Bank website, Dubai statistics and HK Leisure and Cultural Services Department website www.nasaa-arts.org

The data supports a finding of Dubai having eighty percent of the GDP per capita of Hong Kong, but pales in comparison to the cultural infrastructure, with only fifteen percent of the number of museums and three percent of the number of theatres and arenas. Based on this data, Dubai should have at least ten museums and five theatres in order to parallel Hong Kong's status as a tourist spot. The Cultural Tourism Industry Group and the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies websites specify the apparent quality and tourism potential of museums, art galleries, concert halls, historic sites, and national and state parks as main considerations influencing cultural tourists. The organization of cultural events, festivals, and fairs is a consideration, as well. With an understandably hectic itinerary, the logistics scheme and accompanying amenities are also important to potential tourists. Some of these features have already been instituted and/or organized in Dubai, such as national and state parks, cultural events, festivals and fairs. These institutions or affairs are considered highly competitive and very manageable. On the other hand, theatres, concert halls and archaeological sites are basically nonexistent. The construction of theatres and concert halls is a reasonable and achievable objective, as exemplified

by the construction of Dubai Community Theatre. The opposite holds true for establishing archaeological sites, which is a challenging feat.

The creation of an investment in organizational networks in Dubai that promote cultural activities will beget ample dedication, which will enable cultural organizations to fund, foster and implement innovative ideas crucial to the development of cultural activities. In addition, the implementation of high impact activities will command the highest visibility and draw a significant number of tourists. Those projects are built upon cultural tourism, which is currently unavailable in Dubai. Cultural tourism necessitates the creation of a dedicated oversight committee within the Dubai Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing structured to: coordinate with the private sector regarding the development of projects, fund and foster the development of different project concepts, and assist in projects implementation to foster the development of cultural activities.

3.1. Possible High Impact Projects

Cultural tourism necessitates an identification of viable high impact activities for implementation. Possible projects include the construction of a culture complex (based on Barbican or Lincoln Centre), the construction of an additional opera house (modelled after London's Royal Albert Hall), the erection of a major performing arts venue (in joint effort with the private sector's Community Theatre project), the erection of a concert hall (in partnership with Moscow for purposes of production and guidance), the initiation of a desert arena, hosting cultural events and activities, and erection of art cinema houses for Indian Films (NYC's Angelica Theatre-based).

Moreover, there is an apparent need for an amendment in Dubai's existing laws on private ownership to further the development of cultural tourism in this region. In a 1999, the Dubai Department

of Tourism and Commerce Marketing survey, as posted on the HK Leisure and Cultural Services Department website, a majority of the respondents specified the scarcity of peculiar activities and sights in Dubai. The respondents criticized the offered cultural activities as being on a small scale, fragmented, and uncoordinated. These survey results support the need for improvements in cultural tourism infrastructure, developments in ongoing cultural activities, and initiation of high impact projects. The Dubai Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing, with its current organizational setup, are ill equipped for a full development of cultural services. A labour force comparison between the Dubai Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing and the Hong Kong L&C Services Department yielded startling results; the HK L&C Services Department has twenty six times more employees.

There is an immense need to foster a dedicated organization in charge of coordinating the development of cultural activities in the region. The organizational setup will be based on the Hong Kong model where its primary role would be to act as the central node of cultural activities in the region. Other organizational responsibilities include promotion of cultural performances, provision of support to festival organizers and private companies, and offer of audience aimed educational programs, and overall logistical operations (e.g. venues and ticketing).

3.2. Conclusion: cultural tourism

It is evident that the dearth of cultural facilities and cultural activities has brought Dubai to a tourism disadvantage. Cultural facilities and activities have been described, aptly or otherwise, as being small scale, bereft of quality control, and seemingly uncoordinated with other cultural tourism authorities. Established institutions, however, such as the Dubai Museum, Sheikh Mohammed Centre for Cultural Understanding, and the Dubai Natural History Group have potentially important roles in

boosting Dubai's cultural tourism prospects. Currently, the Dubai Cultural Council is the government emphasis in Cultural Tourism. An expedient cultural tourism infrastructure will facilitate Dubai's agenda of drawing a desirable demographic, generating ample revenues from increased expenses and lengthened travel duration on tourists' part, and according Dubai the status of an 'image leader' in the world. Furthermore, it is expected to heighten students' awareness and enthusiasm for acting, sufficient encouragements for the scholarly and professional pursuit of the Arts. An overall improvement in the quality of life is expected with the creation of a cultured tourism experience; creative arts specialists and cultural promotion companies will then be drawn to Dubai.

4. Implications

The magnitude of Dubai's long-term agenda has various implications for the government and support systems, and marketing and production logistics. First, a high degree of government support is involved, so much so that the need to institute a governmental agency for cultural promotion purposes presents itself. Second, creating partnerships with relevant local and overseas organizations is required for the promotion and improvement of Dubai's Art and Culture. Third, the creation of specialized umbrella organizations, like a National Heritage Board or Arts Council, would be a significant assistance to the government for a more focused management. Fourthly, the government has to support, subsidize and grant incentives to private sector initiatives in support of Dubai's cultural tourism agenda (e.g. museum foundation, arts organizations). Lastly, there is a need for the government to set guidelines and policies directed on an effective management of cultural facilities, heritage conservation and tourist education.

Support services have their own share of responsibilities. First, the management of major facilities, such as stadiums and performance venues, will ensure organizers constant facility access and facility maintenance. Second, there is a need for the implementation of an accessible and automated ticketing system, possibly with the use of the Internet, to ensure a widespread distribution and expediency. Third, the endowment of financial support to festivals, event's organizers, museums' administration and arts organizations can be a cultural tourism marketing tool. Lastly, the Internet is an effective marketing instrument with a global domain; therefore, creating websites and publishing electronic newsletters on cultural tourism is an information dissemination option.

Dubai's cultural tourism agenda has peculiar implications for marketing and production logistics. First, ticket pricing has to be reasonable and demand-based; with discount offerings for senior citizens, students and children, and price markdowns on special occasions and for promotional reasons. Second, an effective marketing strategy is key to succeeding in this arena; to participate and organize sales missions, trade and tourism fairs, consumer fairs and other promotional events is therefore necessary. Third, cultural organizers have to be responsible for audience briefing on cultural themes in order to help the audience appreciate different cultural performances. Finally, an educated domain is a boost to cultural tourism; therefore, the provision for educational programs addressed to students (lectures, workshops, seminars and symposia) and the encouragement of learning institutions to participate in cultural activities will significantly bolster Dubai's tourism agenda.

Dubai's vision has crucial implications for production logistics, as well. First, affairs organizers have a wide array of production options ranging from traditional repertoires to avant-garde creative performances. Organizers have a corollary responsibility of heeding consumer demand and garnering

independent ideas; providing a means for the submission of independent project proposals is therefore required. Second, it is the organizers' privilege and responsibility to provide performance opportunities to both established and up and coming local artists and groups. Third, there is an organizer responsibility for a performance venue planning and management, with a corollary need for the constant enhancement and upgrading of performance facilities. Lastly, production organizers have to establish and be of support to local professional artists groups like philharmonic societies, dance companies and orchestras. With a competent strategy and ample guidance, Dubai's vision of cultural tourism need not be impossibility.

5. Final Conclusion

Dubai is an amazing destination for tourists from all over the world. It has something for everybody. It is an odd concoction of the past and the present and is peppered with hints of the future. It is a dream destination for a large number of people from all over the world to come and work here. Each of them, of course, has different reasons to come here. But then Dubai has the capacity to accommodate different reasons and different people; it has room enough for everyone. This has perhaps much to do with the fact that the people of Dubai zealously guard their own culture and traditions. Despite the emergence of a new era, Dubai has not given up her past and is thus firmly rooted in her identity. Thanks to their confidence in who and what they are, the people of Dubai have always been hospitable toward everyone who chooses to come under the umbrella Dubai provided. It is due to their fortitude that Dubai is today a great city. Surely, in the years to come, it will become more prosperous and far stronger and provide a home for many more.

To keep up with the demands of the day, Dubai, like most other countries in the Gulf, had two choices either she could surrender herself totally to Western ideologies and let them decide her fate or she could devise her own system and work according to it. Fortunately, Dubai chose the latter.

While choosing their own methodology, the merchants and governing class in Dubai were careful to take into consideration all the local features, the movements in the market, the requirements that are likely to emerge in the future, etc. Their endeavour was often criticized and mocked, but fortunately such condemnation did not hinder them from going forward. Today Dubai is bearing the fruit of this resilience.

Unlike many other countries, in Dubai, there exists a spirit of co-existence and cooperation between the governing class and the businessmen. The splendid understanding between the two is the secret behind Dubai's success. Thanks to the communication between these two groups, the projects taken up in Dubai are directed towards one single goal, pushing the national economy to unforeseen heights.

Yet another marvellous thing about Dubai is its openness. Despite being steeped deep in religion, people in Dubai have the deepest respect for modern times, and therefore, make every effort to keep pace with the changing world. At the same time, regardless of the modern era that it has so enthusiastically welcomed, Dubai has been particularly careful to hold on to its cultural heritage, especially its religious base, which, even today, provides the greatest support to the people of Dubai.

Today's Dubai is a far cry from the original town inhabited by the Bedouins and their exotic animals. It is now a thriving, modern city, complete with all possible urban facilities. It is a heady mix of the old and the new, and can therefore hope to attract a variety of tourists.

Dubai has a glorious past and an engaging present, all the right ingredients for cultural tourism. Cultural tourism itself has much to offer to Dubai. Apart from being a highly profitable, quickly growing industry, it is highly volatile, and can thus allow you to make incredible amount of money if only you keep to the basics. Creative competition in the field means all parties in the industry will try various techniques to lure the tourists. Thus, increasing the number of hotels and resorts will only mean a greater number of tourists and amount of profits.

To keep up with this expected surge of tourists, Dubai must equip herself with essential supporting services, such as hotels, telecommunication facilities, etc. in order to ensure a smoother visit for the foreigners. She should also exploit the rich cultural scene brewing in her belly and engage in what is called 'cultural tourism'.

A brief look at the present scene, however, reveals that currently Dubai is not adequately prepared to deal with the demands of cultural tourism. In order to prepare herself, Dubai needs to increase the number of theatres and parks in the city, etc. For such developments to actually take place, the authorities in Dubai ought to also start looking for sponsors since the expenditure is likely to be heavy. The government should also establish a specialized department especially to deal with the specific requirements of the cultural tourism sector. To keep up with the alterations, this department will bring about the individual establishments (such as auditoriums, theatres, and opera houses) will also have to follow a set of prescribed rules.

Dubai has a lot to offer her visitors. Apart from the splendid shopping malls, she also provides numerous opportunities for luxury living, a fabulous nightlife, great ambience, world championships,

sporting facilities, museums, theatres, and auditoriums. New attractions are being planned to keep the visitors pouring in.

CONCLUSIONS

Having investigated and analysed the problems and opportunities confronting Dubai with regard to its cultural aspects in detail throughout this thesis, I would now like to draw together my conclusions and make a number of recommendations. Some of my conclusions have already been anticipated in the final concluding sections of each chapter.

1. UAE enjoys one of the most strategic locations on the planet

This location also made it viable for trading and cultural exchange especially with South Asia by mean of land and sea commercial. The settlements occupying this region were quite advanced and had a sophisticated way of life. Proof of the social, cultural and religious habits of the people can be seen through various excavations and the articles recovered from these excavations testify this. One of the most interesting sites that were excavated in Dubai was called the '*Hill of Snakes*' that existed since 2000 BC. They had advanced and complicated ritual practices and a way of life but the arrival of Islam which replaced the old snake worshipping ritual practiced by people in UAE. It was facilitated by one of the major features that have characterized UAE for a very long time.

Due to the strategic location of Dubai it has become a main trading in the Gulf owing partly to the success of its pearl-making business. However, UAE was the cross road of many cultures due to its strategic location beside bodies of water used for trade and transportation, and so have its parts. The result is the commingling of the arts and culture of its parts, including the Dubai Emirates thus losing their distinction among each other.

2. Various different facets contribute to a country's personal feeling of Culture

No matter what your personal opinion regarding what constitutes your culture is, however, every individual or community will make an attempt to preserve and secure everything that represents culture for them. Thus, historical sites will be conserved, and music will be safely secured into the hearts of the people who have heard it, and the poetry will be cherished and recited when the time is right. Every community has their own way of conserving what is theirs. When the community is as big as the population of UAE (which though not particularly large, has come to swell under the constant migration from other countries), the methods of conserving the culture will be varied.

With every turn of the wheel of time, the unique tapestry of UAE's culture will grow stronger and brighter, as thousands of more people make her their home UAE's history is bound to grow richer and more varied. Hopefully, with time, the rest of the world will take her lead and provide a harmonious site for culture to prosper, uninhibited.

3. Different aspects of the demographic composition and its growth in UAE in general and in Dubai in particular

The demographic composition of UAE in general and in Dubai in particular is highly skewed in favour of foreign nationals and this ratio is rapidly changing in favour of foreign nationals. Such a large number of foreign nationals have been caused by rapidly growing economic growth rate of Dubai and the consequent demand of skilled and unskilled professionals, which cannot be supplied locally. Though, this unfavourable ratio of foreign nationals to nationals has not led to any serious trouble so far, but the same cannot be told about the future. There are many intangible problems that may crop up in future.

4. The UAE tribes have been shaped by their unique experiences in the harsh environment of the deserts

Perhaps the success and development of the UAE can be attributed to the strong sense of culture, and the strong sense of culture can be attributed to the shared experiences of their ancestors up to the present day generations. The harsh deserts and the high waves are still there, and it is a unique place in the world. Their shared experience of cultivating a rather unfriendly environment pulled the people and tribes closer, making them rely on each other and not act solely as individuals. The Bedouins would have had a more difficult time if they travelled and tried to survive as individuals in the harsh conditions of their setting, and that is primarily the reason why they still continue to value the tribe as a social unit, not only as a means of survival, but also as an important link to the past and a way of honouring all those who came before them.

5. The various traditional habits and heritage of the UAE people are important in determining their sense of history and identity

The traditional habits and folklore of the UAE are in large part shaped by the environments in which the people live. A redeeming quality is that the people of the UAE put a great importance on their traditions, and this is evident in their desire to follow and uphold the tradition over their own. An interesting part is how, even with the dawn of modernism and globalization and the presence of foreign influences, the people still choose their own norms, like their dress codes of robes of black and white for women and men, respectively, over the current fashions.

The government has taken the initiative in preserving various heritage sites and promoting the culture and traditions of the UAE in various international activities, like the Dubai Shopping Festival, through exhibitions. Although more can be done to preserve the culture and tradition, heritage, and

folklore of the UAE and its people and its rich history, at least the people and the government are starting exhibit efforts in that area.

6. There are various theories stating different interpretations for the cultural developments of UAE

Some theories state the different economic scenario of UAE since 1970s influence the cultural preferences of people here. However one point is clear that UAE needs more intellectual freedom if it wants its culture to grow. The studies and inferences on culture show that the UAE's cultural activities are ineffective in social life, they simply don't attract audience. There are a lot of cultural councils in UAE who are delivering mediocre performances. The rise of new intelligentsia is under formation with a growing conflict between conventional and modern cultures. That can also be called a conflict between western capitalist culture and the Islamic culture of Middle East. The modern intellectuals of UAE are in a dilemma.

7. Local culture and heritage are not well promoted and not passed on to the new generation

Local content is low priority in media and there are few local productions and very few local cultural programmes on national television and radio. Local plays are often of low quality and do not attract Nationals nor non-Nationals. Language is a barrier in creating more coordination between the various community cultural groups. There is a need for providers of Folkloric performances, because the majority of the workforce (folk dancers) is imported from neighbouring countries. There are not enough training centres for local folklore dancing and local handcrafts. Folklore is poorly transferred to the younger generation, because there are not enough schools that teach children about folklore and heritage. Heritage venues such as the heritage village are not heavily promoted for tourist attractions. In

summary, there is a general consensus among people dealing with cultural issues in Dubai that local culture and heritage are in danger of disappearing.

8. Action needs to be taken in various cultural fields

Dubai now needs a decent Drama and Cinema movement, which will allow some momentum for both these art forms in the country. Apart from providing for local artists the government must also look into the establishment of a large national theatre, which will be able to accommodate not just local groups but also sizeable international troupes. Although it is not just a national theatre that Dubai needs; she also requires a decent national group, which will present the national arts and music of Dubai. Apart from helping national integration such a group will also draw in large amounts of tourists.

Cultural organizations and institutions must take appropriate steps to encourage such committed writing. In addition, newspapers should be more aware of and careful about what they are printing. To help them in the task all media and cultural establishments should preferably draw up strategies and policies to encourage and support (even financially, if required) these talented writers. Recognizing certain common social goals of all kinds of writing is also of vital importance. In this vein, setting up a National publishing house would be a good place to start. Such a publishing house would help local writers to write socially relevant text without bothering with the publishing and distributing process. Such ease of mind will undoubtedly encourage more and more new and committed writers to publish new books.

9. Dubai is a Generator of Ideas

The people of Dubai believe in innovation and creativity, but most of all, they believe in having faith in their own dreams and aspirations. Thus they go ahead with their projects undeterred by the

criticism of the foreign press and media, and manage to persuade them to accept their success in the long run. Many scorned their ambitions and blamed them for trying to override the rest of the countries in the Emirates, but Dubai was careful to keep its relations with all the other countries in perfect health. Therefore, today it can safely confess to having been highly successful. Dubai believes in keeping the governing elite and the business class in close contact so that they might help each other in taking the country ahead. The result of this policy is for everyone to see.

To keep up with the demands of the day, Dubai, like most other countries in the Gulf, had two choices either she could surrender herself totally to Western ideologies and let them decide her fate or she could devise her own system and work according to it. Fortunately, Dubai chose the latter.

Additional recommendations could be useful to develop the cultural scene in the UAE in general and Dubai in particular as per the following points:

1. Climate of uncertainty due to the sheer scope of change

The challenges faced by Dubai in view of its unstable regional environment and the attendant atmosphere of uncertainty cannot be underestimated. In the whole Gulf Region, the function of government is undergoing overwhelming changes as it struggles to become more inclusive in terms of law, equality, transparency, creativity, knowledge, human rights and basic human freedoms and respect diversity in all its many manifestations in the area.

Our cities are embracing new lifestyles and globalized cultural values which may negatively affect the future of our national identity and its future. Such a prospect makes it difficult for citizens to cope with the invasion of ideas, cultures and values. Contemporary life now involves so many different

features of global modernity. Such a situation requires us to introduce and develop new policies to deal with our current situation. Privatization, for example, must ensure the existence of social responsibility, sound social services, in addition to the values of accountability, work, achievement, creativity and competition.

Developing governmental structures, institutions and work mechanisms requires developing the general awareness of citizens and introducing a national cultural project, because culture is a vital component in any modern government since it constitutes the general vision of the world around us, which provide the human values, standards of behaviour and interaction with others.

The quality of its culture sets the directions and goals of any society, and so cultural development should be an indispensable goal of modern governance. Cultural development has a direct impact on the development of human beings and on creating a national cultural asset which serves as the cornerstone in building a society and on forming a cultural movement that will set the mind free and enhance the knowledge and skills of the society. It should be a basic right for any citizen to participate and contribute to the cultural life of his or her society and should add value, richness and happiness to his or her well being. Culture is not a luxury that one can live without, or a concession restricted only to the elite.

In addition, citizens should not only enjoy their “Cultural Rights” but they should actively contribute to creating a rich and varied cultural environment. This cannot be achieved only by building new and modern theatres and opera houses but by creating the environment for talented people to excel

and innovate and to reach new intellectual horizons that underpin the people's patriotic feelings, national identity and freedom and enable them to build their future in a modern and fast changing world.

2. National Cultural Values

Cultural development should be placed high on the national agenda in terms of planning, financing and implementation; setting the framework and goals for this agenda should definitely focus on enriching national character, raising awareness of national identity, nurturing creative potentialities, supporting self-confidence and positive interaction with political and social realities.

The success of any cultural action plan depends on its comprehensive approach, balance in objectives, and satisfaction of human needs. It also should have an answer to the question: What kind of citizen do we need in the future? In the United Arab Emirates, all policies pursue creating the environment for citizens to thrive and be creative, open, sharing, and believe in values of justice, liberty, social responsibility and eager to learn and explore. The very nature of culture depends on sharing values with citizens to develop their lifestyle, intellectual activity, and enhance their taste for beauty, knowledge, spiritual heritage that all constitute the cultural identity of people.

Our reaction to the development of the arts and culture in general is personal and individual. We tend to respond to works of art according to our level of expectation. Thus, we like some works of art and we don't like others, simply because they don't reveal to us what we feel they should. We cannot escape from our personal preferences. And when we look at art, we do so with a prejudiced eye. Our reaction is coloured, too, by the ideas of our time about particular aspects of art. Each generation tends to prefer one style of art to another. Regardless of this nature, any opportunity to influence the cultural

environment actually can put a dent of impacts that environment, its mood and direction. Culture somehow has its way of imbibing as well imparting or affecting any nation's constituents.

3. Culture is not only a mirror to reflect life, but also an instrument that shapes it

Cross cultural influences on a society does not happen overnight but only gradually over time. Throughout history, the society of the United Arab Emirates was never isolated from influence of passing cultures on its land and coast, and witnessed dramatic changes in recent years as many people from different backgrounds chose to make this country their second home, though many have kept their cultural values as "isolated islands" yet the cultural interaction can be invested within a cultural plan to enrich culture and human values.

Future cultural developments in our society require enhancing cultural awareness, enlarging the circle of cultural life, stimulating cultural activities, supporting talented individuals among new generations to contribute to shaping up the future and grant the students in schools and universities the opportunity to develop their talents and skills through training and excellent education. This elite will form the cultural strength of any given society and the power to generate creativity in art, music, theatre, science and literature.

Every society has to explore its cultural riches and develop them, and every society has to preserve heritage and create a national pot of talented individuals such as musicians, writers, poets, playwrights, actors, directors, translators and historians. Every society has also to strengthen relationship with its cultural organizations, as it does with financial, business and tourist organisations.

Cultural development can be achieved by opening doors to knowledge, art and beauty to all individuals in remote areas and among youth communities. The experiment of establishing child centres in the Emirate of Sharjah and spreading this project to all cities and villages of the country proved to be a success story in this respect.

The creation of a “National Fund for Cultural Development” to support talents and encourage research, translation and writing is also another pillar in the structure of a cultural industry that should adequately cover all geographic areas and sectors to maximize anticipated results.

Generally speaking, though, while each work of art is evidently the expression of an artist’s personal viewpoint, it is at the same time an expression of a general vision of the age in which it was created. For the artist, like any other individual, belongs to a milieu, and he/she cannot escape the influence of his/her social, economic, political, religious, scientific, and technological environment. These factors affect his/her artistic expression. His/her vision is also necessarily influenced by his cultural traditions and by his own training. Yet a sensitive artist is often not a conscious social agent, and a great work of art need not be a statement of what has transpired in a particular age. But usually the artist becomes a kind of historian, recording in his/her work the attitudes and way of life of his/her period. Or he/she becomes a critic or moralist, analyzing and commenting on the virtues and vices of his particular society, as well as pointing out a course of action for its renovation. Creating a cultural atmosphere that encourages the diverse artistry of a nation such as UAE or Dubai in particular enhances the “recording” as well as the “critiquing” of artists on its milieu. At any rate, art at any given period simultaneously reflects two things – the genius of its creator as well as the sensibility or the

characteristic values and attitudes toward important aspects of life held by the society in which the work of art was born. Even the most subjective and personal expressions show these two aspects.

4. History, Heritage and Culture

Heritage is the result of human experience and is always subject to change and upgrading. It is the accumulation of traditions influenced by time and place and by economic standards and lifestyles. Cultural heritage also comes from sources of traditions and social codes, and is also based on aesthetic values which develop overtime. Other sources are the moral values which the society embraces through education and not through laws. These moral values never develop and remain as printed codes in the conscience of the nation, such as humility, honour, delivering on promises and telling the truth.

There is another kind of experience associated with art and culture. This refers to what an onlooker or listener undergoes when he/she perceives the work of art. The perception may kindle an experience which is similar or related to what the artist tried to express. In this juncture, an interplay or interaction occurs between the artist, his/her art, and the people who are “recipients” of this kind of human activity. It goes without saying that art and culture must be directly seen or heard in order to be enjoyed or appreciated. No amount of reading about a painting or sculpture can take the place of actually seeing it. A varying combination of sensory, emotional, and intellectual responses is involved in experiencing art and culture. This is the rationale that planned establishment and development of cultural heritage at an advanced rate must be pursued; that is, more people experience art and culture and the heritage that is in the making.

5. Art and culture to stimulate the mind and entertain the audience

Art is a planned activity. Unlike the spider when it weaves its web, the artist does not put his/her materials into shape instinctively. Rather, he/she thinks out a design, selects his/her materials, and arranges them according to his/her design. To be sure, he/she may not be wholly original; no artist really is. But he/she would be producing something that never existed before. Sometimes, the finished product may not turn out as he/she had originally envisioned it to be. Creation involves constant correction and redirection, depending on the demands of the material and the challenges it poses. Sometimes, the art object may be the result of a cooperative activity, by a team of artists motivated by a common goal, as in the production of a play or a movie. Each finished product is an expression of order – the artist's idea of order. The artist has made the form the vehicle of his idea. Its parts have been so integrated as to produce a unique entity which communicates to all men as long as it lasts. It is taken as a self-contained object, reacted to, and evaluated by people who come in contact with it.

Precisely due this of art nature that a national effort or a grander scale of concerted enterprise helps to establish and develop a mindset that further stimulates and enhances present culture and advances it towards a progressive one. Can we bring culture back to its true place in the daily life of citizens? Can we succeed in attracting people to culture and its mixed identity? Can we succeed in stimulating the sense of sharing and innovating new methods for cultural activity in villages and cities? Are we going to stick to old and traditional ways or try to introduce new techniques and create mutual interests between public and private sectors to contribute and benefit from culture? Do we need the culture for the elite or a culture for all with greater and higher national goals? Confusing questions hanging on and awaiting to see what the future holds.

6. Educating the social behaviour of people is a by-product of culture and art

One cannot conceive of a society without art, for art is closely related to every aspect of life. Art performs a social function by influencing social behaviour. Many works of art influence the way we think, feel or act. They cause us to laugh at a certain phenomena, raise our voices in protest over certain matters, or see a social reality which had never been apparent to us before. They can bring about in us decisions to collectively change, correct or improve upon the human condition.

In spreading a doctrine or teaching ideas, attitudes, and ways of behaving, paintings, prints, sculptures have been used either in place of or as complements to the written word. Religion has especially capitalized on the arts to spread belief and reinforce and sustain faith. Art forms such as frescoes, statues, and paintings for instance, not only interpret theological or spiritual matters but also provide models for the faithful. These art forms, along with religious music and rites, contrive an atmosphere for further contemplation.

Commercial or advertising art today is as much a greater influence than any form of art. By making a deep impression on people through striking designs, lively colours, and catchy tunes, they persuade people to buy a product, a service, or an idea or participating in government and non-government programs for example.

Display and celebration is a function of cultural art that is held importantly by any nationalistic character. It is the commemoration of important personages in society. The statues of national heroes that grace parks and plazas are commemorative works as are the commissioned paintings of leaders or

rulers. Often they serve to record important historical events, or reveal the ideas of heroism and leadership that the community would want the young to emulate.

7. A collective work for collective living in enhancing landscape and cultural panorama

Considering the growth of population and the physical and aesthetic inadequacy of most communities, their improvement and the design of new and insurmountable traffic problems have made city living a nerve-wracking experience for any city dweller. And overcrowded and blighted areas have spawned a host of social problems, ranging from health to criminality. Planning new communities in areas which are not thickly populated and replacing city congestion with good housing is not accidental but rather a fruit of planning. Community planning involves efficient organization of buildings, roads and spaces so that they meet the physical and aesthetic needs of the community. A community may grow in strategic areas such as natural ports, road terminals, industrial complexes or mines. A preponderance of some particular interest has been noted in certain cities; some of them are seats of government, university towns, or industrial centres. A community may thus assume a specific character and its growth and physical development must take this into account.

Today, with fast urban development, other focal points have sprung up in the form of shopping centres and recreation centres. Intentional planning of the complementary relationships between nature and industrial breakthroughs must be given larger accommodation. Harmony with environment and neighbourhood, blending the cultural charms and conveniences are not impossibilities. A community governs itself, and it therefore provides structures where the functions of government can be efficiently carried out, and which would in appearance, be symbolic of community dignity and pride.



APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Service Providers & Workforce in Performing Arts, Fine Arts, Music & Movies

a. Performing Arts and Fine Arts

Film Society	Courses in Drama	Undergraduate Courses in Fine arts	Short Courses & Workshops in Fine arts
Dubai Film Society (Dubai Men's College): Members watch and criticize classic films	Dubai Drama Group: Non-profit, amateur theatrical group with over 100 members	American University in Dubai: Bachelor of fine arts (BFA) in Visual communications	Lotus Educational Institute: Provides experimental study of visual arts
	Rang Manch Theatre Academy: Hindi actor Kader Khan's academy, the first theatre school in the Gulf		Emirates Hobbies Association – Arts and Crafts: Offers art and crafts classes and workshops for kids
	Speech and Drama Classes (LAMDA): Develop student's communication		Dubai Ladies Club – Art and talent center: Offers various art options for women, including drop-in arts and crafts classes. Also exhibits work by local artists
			Dubai International Art Center: Holds classes in all artistic media, from mosaics to calligraphy
			Creative Modern Art: Art classes train women and children in arts
			Crafter's Home: Offers classes in sand-art, ceramics and bead weaving

Art Galleries			
Green Art Gallery	The Majlis Gallery	Total Arts	Hunar Gallery
Falaw Gallery	Gallery XVA	Art Space	Five Green
Beaux Arts	Creative Art Center	Intex Universa	Creations Arts

Original & Unique Art Gallery	Four Seasons Ramesh Gallery	Al Abbar Art Gallery	Profile Trading
Courtyard Café & Gallery	Middle East Arts	Gallery One	Fortix Original Painting & Framing
More Café	Mattar Art Centre	Lotus Educational Institute	Creative Modern Art
Dubai International art center	Dubai Ladies Club	Abrash Gallery	Aquarius
Derby Art Gallery	Design People	Emirates Hobbies Association – Arts and Crafts	Art House Dubai
Art Space	The B21 Art Gallery	Basta Art Café	Elements Art Café
Five Green	The Jam Jar	Majlis Gallery	Mercato
Ostra	Soho	The Third Line	XVA Gallery
Zyara Café	Intex, Colours on Canvas	Mirage Glass	Pagoda House

b. Music

Courses in Music & Dance
Crystal Music Institute: Vocal, dance and instrument training in Carnatic, Hindustani and Western music
Dubai Music School: Founded in 1980, and accepts all students
Ovidio Music Institute: Piano school
Popular Music Institute: Offers a digital recording studio and music computer room; also courses in music theory
Shruthi Music & Dance Institute: Offers classes in everything from voice and instruments to oriental and western dance
The Music Institute: Classes in vocals, instruments and music theory
Dubai Ladies Club – Art and talent center: Offers various musical classes
Ballet Center: Teaches children ballet, tap, modern dance, Irish dancing, Spanish dancing
Creative Modern Centre: Ballet classes for children of all ages
The Dance Centre: Offers ballet, modern dance, jazz, tap, funky and Irish dancing
Juli Music Centre: Offers piano, woodwind, brass, string or drums
JMC Children's Choir:

Local Folkloric Musical Associations
Eyyal Nasser Association for Art and Heritage
Dubai Association for Folklore and Theatre
The Association of Folklore and Rowing

c. Movies

Local Cinemas in Dubai		
Al-Nasr Cinema	Century Cinema	Cine Star
Dubai Cinema	Galleria Cinema	Grand Cinecity
Grand Cineplex	Grand Megaplex	Grand Metroplex
Lamcy Cinema	Plaza Cinema	Emirates Mall Cinema

Appendix 2: Service Providers & Workforce in Literature

Public Libraries in Dubai		
Al-Ras Library	Hor Al-Anz Library	Al-Rashdiya Library
Um Saqem Library	Jumairah Library	Al-Towar Library (under-construction)
Hatta Library (Hatta)		

Research & Think-Tanks centers in Dubai
International Center for Biosaline Agriculture: Scientific center develops and promotes the use of sustainable agricultural systems that use saline water to grow crops
Institute for Near East & Gulf Military Analysis (INEGMA): Political center, self-financed establishment that offers media, research and consultation services in the fields of defense, security and geo-politics

The Government Institutions
The Public Libraries
The Dar of Islamic Studies and Heritage Revival
Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing in Dubai
Child City
Dubai Shopping Festival and Summer Surprises Office

The National and Private Associations
The Association of Culture and Science
Sultan Bin Ali Al-Awais Cultural Foundation
Juma Al-Majed Centre for Culture and Heritage
Dubai Ladies Club
The Women's Revival Association
Oasha Bint Hussain Cultural Centre
Mohammed Bin Rashed Centre for Cultural Understanding
Knowledge Village
The Modern Creative Centre
The Committee of Classical Music in Dubai
The Association of Heritage Architecture Preserving

The Cultural and Gov. Awards
The Dubai International Award of Holy Koran
Zayed International Award of Environment

Hamdan Bin Rashed Al-Maktoum Award in Education Excellence
Sheikh Hamdan Bin Rashed Award of Medicine Science
Al-Awais Award of Scientific Research (The Association of Culture and Science)
Sultan Bin Ali Al-Awais Award for Cultural and Scientific Accomplishment
Rashed Award for Scientific Excellence (The Association of Culture and Science)
The Dubai Award of Excellence (The Economic Development Department)
The Dubai International Award for the Best Practices of improving the way of Living (Dubai Municipality)
Dubai Press Award
The Arab Media Forum (Dubai Press Club)
Ghanim Gabbash Award for Short Stories
Ibbd'a Award (Dubai Media City)
Shaikha Latifa Bint Mohammed Al-Maktoum for Childhood Creativity (The Women's Revival Association)

Appendix 3: Service Providers & Workforce in Folklore & Festivals

Exhibition Centers			
Airport Expo Dubai			
Dubai International Convention Center			
Dubai World Trade Center			

Exhibition Organizers			
Al-Bader Exhibition Organizers	Al-Fajer Information & Services	Bayt Al-Khaleej Exhibition	Brightway Exhibition & Conference Organizing Co.
Channels Exhibitions	Datamatix	DMG World Media Dubai Ltd	Dome Exhibitions – Dubai
Dubai Experience	Dubai Sail LLC	Dubai Shows Ltd	Epoc Messe Frankfurt
Expolink Exhibitions	Fair Exhibition Organizers	Fairs & Exhibitions	Future Commercial Marketing
General Exhibitions Corporation	Global Links Dubai	IBC Gulf Conferences	IIR Exhibitions
In Time Events	Index Conferences & Exhibitions	International Conferences & Exhibitions	International Expo-Consults
International Exposition	Itlala Exhibitions & Conferences	Mediac Communication & Exhibitions	Motivate Events
New Fields Exhibitions	Orange Fairs & Events	Planetfair Dubai	Promofair
Promoteam Ltd	Seatrade Communications Ltd	Streamline Marketing Group	The Domus Group
The Main Event	Universal Ventures		

Exhibition Stands			
360 Degrees	A.H. Events & Exhibitions	Al-Calily General Trading Est.	Apollo Advertising
Big Dot	C2D Advertising	Circle Exhibition Services	Concepts LLC
Costra Advertising	CPL International	Decent Dimensions	Design People
Dome Exhibitions – Dubai	Eagle Star Engineering	Easy Stands	Eclipse
Electro Industries – Dubai	Global Displays	Kingsmen Middle East	Laspinas Interiors
Lazer Advertising	Masonlite	MediaPro FZ LLC	Multiline Décor
Pico International (Dubai) LLC	Salony Creations	Sign & Display	Simple Media Solutions

Spaceexhibit Architecture	The Image Works	Total Media Solutions	Trucolour Exhibition Services
Unique Business Solutions	Wafi Communications	World Image (Middle East)	

Event Management			
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4 Seasons Entertainment	Alpha Omega Services	Artaaj Events	Biz-events
Chillout Productions	Concept Events	Congress Rental Emirates	Contempo Events Design LLC
Cue Media	D'Events	Delphine Productions	Done Events
Dubai Artistic Innovation	Eclipse	Euro Media	Factory Productions
Futuristic Communications	Gearhouse LLC	Gulf Arena	HQ Creative
ITP Events	M&M Entertainment	Madar Sound & Light Systems	Mirage Promotions
MMI Events	Multilink Events & Management	Pico International (Dubai) LLC	Prisme International
Promoseven Sports & Events	Protec – Production Technology LLC	Repertoire Entertainment	Seven Star Events & Productions
Signature Group	Technopro LLC	The Talent Brokers	Think Factory
Total Concepts International	Twilight Events Dubai	Whisper Events	World Image (Middle East) LLC
World of Events			

Appendix 4: Service Providers & Workforce in Archeology & Heritage

Heritage, Historical Sites & Monuments			
Al Ahmadiya School	Bait Al Wakeel	Bin Muzaina House	Burj Nahar
Heritage House	Heritage Village & Diving Village	Majlis Ghorfat Um-Al Sheif	Dubai Museum
Hatta Heritage Village	Sheikh Saeed's House	The Bastakiya	Dubai Wall
House of Sheikh Obaid Bin Thani	Watch Towers & Morabaats	Dar Al Nadwa	Municipality Museum
House of Sheikh Joma'a Al Maktoum			

Appendix 5: Service Providers & Workforce in Media

Newspapers	
Al-Bayan (Arabic)	Emirates Today (English)
Emarat Al-Youm (Arabic)	Gulf News (English)
7 Days (English)	Khaleej Times (English)
Emirates Evening Post (English)	Asharq Al-Awsat (Arabic) – International newspaper

Magazines
<p>News & Political magazines:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ertebat (Persian) – targeting the Iranian community in the UAE 2. UAE Digest (English)
<p>Lifestyle & General Interest:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Al-Sada (Arabic) 2. Almara'a Alyaum (Arabic) 3. Ahwal Magazine (Arabic) 4. Mamlaka (Arabic) – distributed only in Saudi Arabia 5. Al-Shindagah (Arabic & English) 6. Insight (Arabic & English) 7. The Buzz (English) 8. Aquarius (English) 9. Attitude (English) 10. Connector (English) 11. Global Indian (English) – aimed at non-resident Indians 12. Living in the Gulf (English) – distributed only in the UAE and Oman 13. ME Magazine (English) 14. Options (English) 15. Stars (English) 16. The Magazine (English) 17. What's New (English) 18. Young & Trendy (English) 19. Aircrew Dubai Magazine (English) 20. Citylife (English) 21. Gulf Connoisseur (English) 22. Jumeira Beach Magazine (English) 23. REMIX Magazine (English) 24. The International Indian (English) - aimed at non-resident Indians in the Middle East 25. Jumana Magazine (English) 26. Jumeirah Magazine (English) – official magazine of the Jumeirah Hospitality Group
<p>Entertainment & Listings:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CityInfo Dubai (Arabic) 2. Showtime TV Guide (Arabic & English) 3. Time Out Dubai (English)

4. Infusion (English)
5. Bollywood International (English)
6. Concierge (English)
7. Discover Dubai (English)
8. Grand Cinemas Movie Entertainment Guide (English)
9. Hospitality (English)
10. Movieguide – Gulf edition (English)
11. Out & About (English)
12. Play (English)
13. Time Out Abu Dhabi (English)
14. Visitor (English)
15. What's On (English)

Celebrity & Society:

1. Ahlan (Arabic)
2. OK! Middle East (Arabic)
3. Layalina – UAE edition (Arabic)
4. Ahlan (English)
5. Ahlan Masala (English)
6. Hello! Middle East (English)
7. Mondanite – UAE edition (English)
8. Society Dubai (English)

Women's Magazines:

1. Sayidaty (Arabic)
2. Al-Jeel (The Generation) (Arabic)
3. Oyoun Magazine (Arabic)
4. Sabaya Magazine (Arabic)
5. Nisaa Alfaen (Arabic)
6. Arabian Woman (English)
7. Beauty & Style (English)
8. Emirates Woman (English)
9. Good Living (English)
10. Oxygen – Middle East edition (English)
11. Viva (English)
12. All Woman in the Gulf (English)

Fashion & Shopping:

1. Class Magazine (Arabic)
2. L'Officiel Hommes (Arabic)
3. L'Officiel Middle East (Arabic)
4. Paris Gallery (Arabic)
5. Alam Assaat Wal Moujawharat (Arabic)
6. Arabian Watches & Jewelry (Arabic)
7. Pen ME (Arabic)
8. Sayidaty Fashion (Arabic)
9. Fashion (Arabic)
10. Damas Magazine (Arabic & English)

11. Day & Night (Arabic & English)
12. Grazia (English)
13. Impulse Magazine (English)
14. Latest (English)
15. Paris Gallery (English)
16. Souk (English)

Food & Cooking:

1. Milh wa Soukkar Magazine (Arabic)

Bridal Magazine:

1. Aroos Al-Arabia (Bridal Arabia) (Arabic)
2. Emirates Bride (English)

Parenting & Childcare:

1. Ahali (Arabic)
2. Bumps and Babes (English)
3. Emirates Parent Plus (English)
4. Yummy Mummy (English)

Men's Magazines:

1. Arabian Man (English)
2. Charged Middle East (English)

Teenage & Children's:

1. Atfal (Arabic)
2. Young Times (English)

Student Magazine:

1. Sala (Arabic)
2. Studio Al-Talabah (Arabic)
3. Studentalk Dubai (Arabic & English)
4. Campus Journal UAE (English)
5. Mash Up (English)

Sports Magazines:

1. Al-Riadah Al-Yaum (Arabic)
2. Knotika (Arabic)
3. Arabian Yachts (Arabic & English)
4. Banat Al-Reeh (Arabic & English)
5. F1 Racing Middle East (Arabic & English)
6. Sport Extra (English)
7. Boat Owner Middle East (English)
8. CLEANBowled (English)
9. Game On (English)
10. Middle East Golfer (English)
11. Race Week (English)
12. Total Sport Magazine (English)
13. On Course (English)
14. F1i – Middle East edition (English)

Motoring Magazines:

1. Aswak Al-Sayara Al-Arabia (Arabic)

2. BBC Top Gear (Arabic)
3. Gulf Auto (Arabic)
4. BMW Magazine (Arabic)
5. Mini Magazine (Arabic)
6. Automart (Arabic & English)
7. Autocar Middle East (Arabic & English)
8. Assayar – The Motorist (Arabic & English)
9. Auto Trader (UAE) (English)
10. Wheels (English)
11. Car (English)
12. Car Express (English)
13. Middle East Car (English)
14. Top Performance Magazine (English)
15. Wheels & Gears (English)
16. 4x4 Off-road & Accessories Magazine (English)
17. GTQ (English)
18. Auto Emirates (English)

Homes & Properties magazines:

1. Property World Middle East (Arabic)
2. Property Weekly (English)
3. Decoration (English)
4. Emirates Home (English)
5. Identity (English)
6. Inside Out (English)
7. Propert.ae Magazine (English)
8. Property World Middle East (English)
9. Emmar Properties (English)
10. PROPERTYworks (English)

Travel & Tourism magazines:

1. Travel Arabia (English)
2. Travel & Tourism News Middle East (TTN) (English)
3. Business Traveler Middle East (English)
4. MICE International (English)
5. Middle East Travel (English)
6. Aviamost Magazine (Russian)

Airport & In-flight Magazines:

1. Dubai Voyager (English)
2. Etihad In Flight (Arabic & English)
3. Open Skies (Arabic & English)
4. Oryx (Arabic & English)

Literature, Art & Culture magazines:

1. Aafaq Thaqafia (Cultural Horizons) (Arabic & English) – issued from Dubai Cultural Council
2. Dubai Al-Thaqafia (Arabic)
3. Canvas (English)
4. Juma Al-Majed Culture & Heritage Magazine (Arabic)

5. Huroof Arabiya (Arabic Calligraphy) (Arabic)

Business Magazines:

1. Arabian Business – Arabic (Arabic)
2. Entrepreneur Middle East (Arabic)
3. Forbes Arabia (Arabic)
4. Saneou Al-Hadath (Arabic)
5. Business & Finance Club (Arabic & English)
6. Invest Dubai (Arabic & English)
7. Arabian Business (English)
8. MEED – Middle East Economic Digest (English)
9. Brand UAE Magazine (English)
10. Gulf Business (English)
11. B2B Buyers Digest (English)
12. Human Assets Middle East (English)
13. Mir Sobstvennika (Russian)

Chamber of Commerce & Business Group Magazines:

1. Economic Bulletin (Arabic & English)
2. Economic Horizons (Arabic & English)
3. Finance & Business (Arabic & English)
4. Britain in Business (English)

Banking & Finance magazines:

1. Banker Middle East (English)
2. Islamic Business & Finance (English)
3. OMAN MONEYworks (English)
4. Private Equity & Venture Capital Middle East (English)
5. SAUDI MONEYworks (English)
6. UAE Banking Review (English)
7. UAE MONEYworks (English)

Insurance magazines:

1. Insure (Arabic & English)
2. Policy Magazine (English)

Retailing magazines:

1. Retail News Middle East (English)
2. RetailME (English)

Industrial magazines:

1. Technical Review Middle East (Arabic & English)

Oil & Gas magazines:

1. Shell in the Middle East (Arabic & English)
2. Offshore Arabia (English)
3. Oil & Gas Middle East (English)
4. Oil Review Middle East (English)
5. Pipeline Magazine (English)

Advertising & Marketing magazines:

1. Al-Tasweeq Al-Arabi (Arabic)
2. Advocate (English)

3. Campaign Middle East (English)
4. Communicate (English)
5. Gulf Marketing Review (English)
6. theBite (English)

Printing Magazines:

1. Middle East Print Communication Magazine (Arabic & English)

Media & Broadcasting magazines:

1. AV Specialist (Arabic & English)
2. Digital Studio (English)

Computers & IT magazines:

1. Channel (Arabic edition) (Arabic)
2. PC Magazine Arabia (Arabic)
3. PC World Middle East (Arabic)
4. TAG (Technology & Games) (Arabic)
5. Technomania (Arabic edition) (Arabic)
6. Windows Middle East (Arabic edition) (Arabic)
7. e4all (Arabic & English)
8. Arabian Computer news (ACN) (English)
9. Arabian Reseller News (English)
10. Channel Middle East (English)
11. Computer News Middle East (English)
12. IT Weekly (English)
13. LinuxWorld Middle East & Africa (English)
14. Network Middle East (English)
15. Network World Middle East (English)
16. PC Magazine Middle & Near East (English)
17. Reseller World Middle East (English)
18. Security Advisor Middle East (English)
19. SMB Advisor Middle East (English)
20. Storage Advisor Middle East (English)
21. TAG (Technology & Games) (English)
22. Technomania (English)
23. Window Middle East (English edition) (English)

Communications Magazines:

1. CommsMEA (English)
2. HiTEK (English)
3. Telephony Middle East (English)

Architecture & Interior Design magazines:

1. Ceramica (Arabic & English)
2. Architecture Plus (English)
3. Commercial Interior Design Magazine (English)
4. Gulf Interiors (English)
5. Kitchen + Bathroom Designer Middle East (English)

Building & Construction magazines:

1. Acari (Arabic & English)

2. Middle East Plant & Equipment (Arabic & English)
3. Construction Week (English)
Aviation magazines:
1. Aviation Business (English)
Transport & Logistics magazines:
1. Cargo & Trade (English)
2. Logistics Middle East (English)
3. Logistix Review (English)
4. Ports & Shipping News (English)
5. The Shipping Gazette (English)
Catering & Hospitality magazines:
1. Caterer Middle East (English)
2. Hotelier Middle East (English)
Military Security & Defence magazines:
1. Al-Jundi Journal (Arabic)
Medical & Health magazines:
1. Arab Health (English)
2. Challenge (English)
3. Healthcare Middle East (English)
4. MedLab Magazines (English)
5. Middle East Health (English)
6. Quintessence International Dental Journal (Middle East edition) (English)
7. Update Medical Journal (Middle East edition) (English)

Televisions		
Al-Arabiya Channel (Arabic News Channel)	Asianet News Channel (Arabic News Channel)	CNBC Arabiya (Business Channel)
BBC World Channel (Arabic News Channel)	ARY One World Channel (Arabic News Channel)	Arabian Travel TV (Business Channel)
Al-Aqariyah Channel (Real Estate Channel)	Al-Shasha Channel (Entertainment Channel)	Deera TV (Entertainment Channel)
Dubai TV (General)	MBC1 (Entertainment Channel)	Nojoom TV (Entertainment Channel)
Sama Dubai (General)	Infinity TV (Entertainment Channel)	MBC2 (Movies Channel)
MBC4 (Entertainment Channel)	One TV (Movies Channel)	PrimeTime (Hindi Channel)
Asianet (Malayalam Channel)	Middle East Television (Malayalam Channel)	Geo TV (Urdu Channel)
ARY Digital Middle East (Urdu & Hindi Channel)	The Filipino Channel (Filipino channel)	MusicPlus (Music)
Music Nation TV (Music)	Zee Arabiya (Music)	PMC – Persian Music Channel (Music)
The Musik (Music)	TXT TV (Interactive Games Channel)	Al-Majd Kids (Children's channel)

MBC3 (Children's channel)	Qanaty Channel (Children's channel)	e-Junior (Children's channel)
Space Toon Kids TV (Children's channel)	Dubai Sports channel	TEN Sports (Sports channel)
Al-Majd TV (Religious channel)	Citruss TV (Shopping channel)	Arab Digital Distribution (ADD) (Pay-TV Networks)
Showtime (Pay-TV Networks)	E-Vision (Pay-TV Networks)	

Radios

Al-Arabiya (Arabic)	Al-Khaleejiah (Arabic)	Sout Al-Asala (Arabic)
Dubai 92 (English)	Dubai Eye (English)	Emirates Radio 1 (English)
Emirates Radio 2 (English)	City FM (Hindi)	Awaaz 104.4 (Urdu & English)
Asianet Radio (Malayalam)	Hit 96.7 FM (Malayalam)	Radio Asia AM & FM (Malayalam)
MBC FM (Arabic)	Panorama (Arabic)	Radio Sawa (Arabic)

News and Photo Agencies

Dubai Bureau (Agence-France Press) – Independent news agency in French, Arabic, English
Dubai Bureau (Associated Pres) - Independent news agency
Dubai Bureau (Reuters) - Independent news agency
Dubai Bureau (Bloomberg) - Independent news agency
Dubai Bureau (Dow Jones) - Independent news agency
Dubai Press Agency (Regional) - Independent news agency – covers the gulf for newspapers and magazines around the world, particularly UK national papers
Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN) (Regional) - Independent news agency – humanitarian news agency operated by the UN office of humanitarian affairs
Press Trust Of India (PTI) Middle East Bureau (Regional) - Independent news agency in Hindi and English
Reuters TV – Gulf Bureau – (Reuters TV) – Television news agency
arabianEye – Stock Photo Library - provides cultural documentary photography and stock from the Middle East
CDI the image library - Stock Photo Library
Gallo Images - Stock Photo Library
Grapheast - Stock Photo Library
Gulfpics - Stock Photo Library – Motivate Publishing stock photograph library with over 10,000 images from the GCC
Image Solutions - Stock Photo Library
Imagebuyout - Stock Photo Library

Production companies

Aether Media Group FZ LLC (promotional films)	Alkarma Edutainment (TV production)	Allegrato FZ LLC
Animation Art (TV commercials)	Atlas Television (broadcast services)	Bareface Production (full production services)
Bluemoon Productions (pre and post production)	Broadcast Media Zone FZ LLC	Condor International (film and TV production)
Creative Management	Definitive Laser Company (special effects)	Digital Cinema Entertainment (post-production)
Dolce Vita Films	Don Productions Ltd	Eleventh Moon Productions
Filmworks (TV commercials)	Focus Advertising Productions (Audio visual production)	GTV-Broadcast Production (independent content provider)
Gulfart Production FZ LLC (TV productions)	Hot Spot Films FZ LLC (produces documentaries)	Independent Productions (TV commercials)
Intellvision & M.A.L. FZ LLC (TV commercials)	Movie Media (production house)	Network Productions
Nomads Land Films	Oryx Production & Publicity (TV programs)	Phil Blizzard Radio Productions (audio services)
Phoenix Film (rents equipments)	Profilms (production and post-production)	Rahbani Productions (Advertisement films)
Rajtaru Videosonic FZ LLC (special effects)	Real Image TV Production (film production)	Saher Contemporary Art Establishment (TV programs)
Seven Star Events & Productions	Specter Productions (documentaries)	Studio 52 (advertising)
The Fantastic Film Factory (production)	The Talkies – Dubai (TV commercials)	Valkieser Middle East (TV commercials)
VFX Productions (business videos)	VIP films Dubai (production)	Zeal Television (UK-based company)

New media

AME Info (news)	Arabic IT News Portal (news & portal)	CNN Arabia.com (news)
Strategy (news)	Zawya.com (news)	elSohof.com (media website)
Middle East Meddle Guide (media website)	Strategiy (media website)	eCompany (Etisalat) (internet service provider)

Advertising Agencies

3th Studios	ACE Worldwide	Acumen	Adventure Advertising & Marketing
Al-Hudhud Advertising & Marketing	Al-Khaleejiah International Advertising & Media	AMC – Dubai	Arabia Felix Advertising & Marketing services

B.E. International	Bates PanGulf Dubai	Blaze Advertising	Bluechip Marketing Communication
Brand Moxie	Bullseye Advertising	Client Advertising	Concept Today
Continent Advertising	Contrast Advertising	Corban Advertising FZ-LLC	Cosmo Advertising
CPD FZ LLC	Creative 24-7	Creative Flare	Creative Line Advertising
Creative Box	Drive Communication Dubai	E-media	Elite Network Advertising
Expression	ExtraCake P.R.A.	Face to Face Advertising	Fineline Advertising
Fortune Promoseven Dubai	Fusion Prime Advertising	FutureBrand HyperMedia	Genesis Next Advertising
GMASCO	Grafik International – Dubai	Grey Worldwide Dubai	Horizon-FCB Dubai
Ikon Advertising & Marketing services	Impact/BBDO Dubai	Intermarkets –Dubai	JWT Dubai
Leo Burnett	Light House Advertising	Lowe Dubai	Market Buzz International
Martin & Saldanha	Memac Ogilvy	Mercier Gray Dobbie	Middle East Media Group
Momentum	Partnership Advertising	Patson Middle East F-LLC	Percept Gulf
Pixeltec Advertising & Printing	Praxis Advertising	Publicis Graphics Dubai	RSVP Marketing & Communications
Saatchi & Saatchi Dubai	Salony Creations	Shuttle Advertising	Signature Advertising
Simm Group	Spear Advertising	T-1 Creative	Talent Advertising
TBWA/RAAD	Team/Young & Rubicam Duabi	The Banyan	The Chase – Advertising Design Consultants
Tonic Communications LLC	Total Marketing Solutions	Vogue FZ LLC	Wafi Communications
Watermelon Communications	XO Media	Zaman Marketing	3rd Eye Marketing Solutions
Al-Nadwah Advertising	Al-Shaer Advertising	Artaaj Events & Promotions	Asterix Advertising
BTL – Below The Line	Colours Advertising Agency	Connect Advertising	Creative Intelligence
Event Horizon	Illusions Advertising	North 55	Reactive Networks
The Advertiser	Assertiv eMedia	Cactimedia	Enterprise IG Dubai
Gregg Sedgwick Creative strategy	Propeller	The Image Works – New Media solutions	The Media House (TMH)
Tonic Design	Catch Interactive	Click2advertising	Flip Media

Concept Direct	Cyber Gear	Data Direct	Jacobsons Direct Marketing
Mailplus	Middle East Post Box	OgilvyOne Middle East	SmartDames
True Integrated Marketing	Wunderman	IAA UAE Chapter	GCC Advertisers Association

Media Buying Agencies

Garat Dubai	Initiative Dubai	Magna Global	MediaCom Dubai
Mediaedge:cia	MediaINSIGHT	Mindshare UAE	Neo Digital FZ-LLC
OMD Dubai (Regional Headquarters)	Optimedia Middle East	Starcom MediaVest Group Dubai	Tonic Media
Universal Media Seven (UM7)			

Outdoor Media

360 Degrees Advertising	3D Media	ACE Worldwide	Action View
Apollo Advertising	Arabian Outdoor	Backlite Media LLC	Channel 2001
Concept Outdoor	Digital Dynamics	DOM international	Future Media
GMI	GO Outdoor Media	Golden Neon	Group Plus – Dubai
Hills Advertising	Kassab Media	Live Ad	Media Exposure
Mediahub	Parapub International	Partnership Advertising	Road FZ LLC
Shoof	Site Global	Specialized Software services	Trinet Outdoor Advertising
Vistas Advertising			

PR Agencies

3rd Eye PR	Active	AMC – Dubai	Arabia PR
Asda'a PR – Duabi	Bates PanGulf PR	Bell Pottinger Communications	BIZ COM
Citigate Incepta Middle East	CommuniGate Middle East	Concept PR	D'Events PR
Delphine Productions	Ekadaa Public Relations	Euro Media	Euro RSCG Furness
Face to face PR	Fifth Ring Integrated Corporate Communications	Four Middle East	Gambate
Gmasco – Image Public Relation	GolinHarris	Gulf Waves PR and Promotions	Headline PR
Healthworld PanGulf	Hill & Knowlton	Holmes Saleh PR & Communications	IAS-Hanmer & Partners

Impact Porter Novelli	Insight Pharmacom	Insight Technocom	Landmark PR – Dubai
Manning Selvage & Lee (MS&L)	Matrix Consultancy	MCS/Action	MEMAC Ogilvy PR Dubai
Milestones Marketing Communications	Momentum	NettResults Media Relations and Inegrated Marketing	octopus
Orient Planet	Percept Profile Gulf	Polaris Public Relations	Promax Middle East – Dubai
Promosseven Weber Shandwick – Dubai	Rawaj International	Spot On Public Relations	Tamra C2
TBWA/RAAD	Tonic PR	Total Communications	TRACCS Dubai
Wallis Marketing	Watermelon PR		

Advertising Representatives

ADline Media Marketing & Representation	Adspace Sales Corporation	Al-Kgaleejiah Advertising and PR Company	Ara Media Services (AMS)
Arab Reach Media Services	BSA Consultants	Focus Media Services	Hurst Advertising
Integrated Advertising Services	Intermedia	International Advertising – Media Services	Mat Advertising
Media International Services	Media Seen	Mediapolis	MediaPro
Middle East Media Services (MEMS)	Motivate Val Morgan	Nutreema Advertising LLC	SMTC Media Services
Sterling Media			

Journalist Associations

Dubai Press Club: Established in November 1999. Provides business and social facilities for its members.

UAE Journalists Association: Representative body for journalists in the UAE.

Media Free Zones

Dubai Media City: Free trade zone for media companies and freelancers, specifically in broadcasting, publishing, advertising, public relations, research, music, new media, production and post-production – part of the Dubai Technology and Media Free Zone (TECOM)

Circulation Auditors

Dubai Consultancy Research and Media Center: Partners BPA Worldwide in the development of media

audit services in the GCC.

Media Research & Monitoring

Ipsos UAE	Pan-Arab Research Center (PARC) – Head Office	TNS – Middle East & Africa
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Newspaper & magazine distributors

Al-Nisr Distribution LLC	Dar Al-Hikma	Emirates Printing, Publishing & Distribution Company
Jabe Distributors for Newspapers & Magazines	Jashanmal National Company – Newspapers & Periodicals Division	Malik News Agency

Undergraduate Courses

American University in Dubai: Bachelor in Visual communications
Dubai Men's College: General Media studies certificate, diploma in advertising & promotion, diploma in applied media studies, higher diploma in applied media studies
Dubai Women's College: Higher diploma in applied media studies
Zayed University – Dubai Campus: BSc in communication and media sciences

Professional Courses

SAE Institute: Offers internationally accredited courses in audio engineering, digital film making and digital animation
Zayed University Media Center: Offers training courses and workshops for media and communication professionals in the UAE, as well as researching practical issues facing the media in the country and the region

Appendix 6: Service Providers & Workforce in Religion

Islamic Affairs and charitable activities Department
Holy Qur'an Centres
Dubai International Holly Qur'an Award
Mohammed bin Rashid Centre for Cultural Understanding
Dubai Tourist Department
Dubai Municipality
Women's Association
Jafariyya Awqaf
Department of Awqaf & Islamic affairs
College of Islamic Studies
Juma al Majid Centre for Research and Studies
Imam Malik College
Dar Al Bir Society
Ruwaq Ousha bint Hussain Centre
Dubai Indian Islamic Centre
Pakistan Association
Iranian Club
Churches
Temples

Appendix 7: Workshops & Interviews

Workshop 1	Name	Title & Organisation & Date: summer 2006
1	Ali Obaid	Board member of Dubai Cultural Council
2	Ibrahim Juma	Board member of Dubai Cultural Council
3	Abdul Hameed Ahmed	Editor in chief – Gulf News paper
4	Dr. Najat Makki	Board member of Dubai Cultural Council
5	Khaled Bader	Board member of Dubai Cultural Council
6	Abdil Ilah Abdul Qader	Manager - Al Owias Cultural Foundation
7	Ibrahim Al Hashimi	Manager - Emmar Property

Workshop 2	Name	Title & Organisation & Date: summer 2006
1	Aisha Juma	Manager - Arack Landscape
2	Laila Al Alami	Member - Dubai Media City
3	Bain Wilky	Head of Dubai Community Theatre
4	Brain Scudder	Reporter - Time Out Magazine
5	Linda Parker	Manager - Creative Art Center
6	Bill Brately	Member - Dubai Drama Group
7	Christopher Southcombe	Manager - Dubai Intl. Art Center
8	Suresh Kumar	Manager - Emirates Financial Center
9	Tala Badri	Musician - Music Industry
10	Aziz Merchant	Manager - Rangmanch Theater Academy

Interviews	Name	Title & Organisation & Date
1	Dr. Faliḥ Ḥanzal	Member - Emirates Heritage club, Abu Dhabi, UAE, on May 8, 2005
2	Dr. Ihsan Al-Rabbae	Head of Edification Heritage Unit, Dubai Municipality, on July 2006
3	Masoad Al Swaidi	Head of Aial Naser Folklore Association, April 2006.
4	Faod Bu Kush	Head of the Archaeology Department at Dubai Municipality, April 2006
5	Mohammed Al Mulla	Executive Manager of Dubai Media City, April 2006
6	Ms. Aisha Al Kash	Head of public relation at the Department of Islamic Affaires in Dubai, Feb 2006
7	Yousif Gharib	Chairman of AL Ahli theatre. August 2005
8	Omar Ghubash	Director of Dubai Arts Centre and the Theatre society. August 2005
9	Abdullah Saleh	Famous UAE actor and board member of Dubai Theatre Group. September 2005
10	Naji Al Hai	Chairman of Dubai National Theatre for Youth. September 2005

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