



تريندز للبحوث والاستشارات  
TRENDS RESEARCH & ADVISORY



# The Impact of the Publishers Association on Supporting the Cultural Publishing Movement in the United Arab Emirates

The UAE and GCC countries as a model

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## Executive Summary



The publishing and printing industry in the UAE is a new addition to the diversification of income sources in the framework of the economic development strategy, which aims to build a knowledge-based society as a main income stream. Despite fierce competition from social and virtual media, the publishing industry has successfully overcome various challenges and proved its capacity for sustainability and growth.

This study aims to examine the impact of the Emirates Publishers Association on the publishing industry in the UAE and the other Arab Gulf countries, identify key challenges and opportunities for the UAE publishing sector, and provide recommendations to enhance the publishing industry in the UAE.

## Section One: The Role of the Publishers Association in the Development of the Publishing Industry in the UAE



1

### UNITED ARAB EMIRATES - EMIRATE OF SHARJAH

This section addresses several aspects, including the development of the publishing industry in the UAE, Sharjah's significance as a global cultural hub, the future outlook for the UAE's publishing industry, the active role of the Emirates Publishers Association in the country's cultural scene, the Emirates Publishers Association's main activities, and the major challenges facing the publishing industry in the UAE.



2

### BOOK FAIRS AND LITERARY AWARDS

In recent years, the UAE has successfully captured global attention and attracted publishers, thanks to its remarkable interest in organizing book fairs and literary awards.



3

### CAPITAL OF ARAB CULTURE

In recognition of Sharjah's prominent role and its distinguished contributions in the fields of culture, knowledge and intellectual creativity, UNESCO chose it as the Capital of Arab Culture in 1998 and the Capital of Islamic Culture in 2014. UNESCO also awarded Sharjah the title of World Book Capital in 2019, in appreciation of its well-known role in supporting books, promoting the culture of reading, and establishing knowledge as an option in the dialogue of human civilizations.

## Section One: The Role of the Publishers Association in the Development of the Publishing Industry in the UAE



4

### **SHEIKHA BODOUR BINT SULTAN AL QASIMI**

Sheikha Bodour bint Sultan Al Qasimi, President of the International Publishers Association, has dedicated all her resources to supporting the publishing industry and publishers at both local and global levels and has succeeded in developing and stimulating the publishing industry in the UAE.



5

### **STATISTICS**

Statistics, published in 2019, show that the UAE's publishing industry sector is expected to grow from \$260 million to \$650 million by 2030.



6

### **REGIONAL AND GLOBAL PUBLISHING HUB**

Given its strategic advantages, ease of access, supportive business environment, and thriving cultural landscape, the UAE is well-positioned to become a regional and global publishing hub.

## Section One: The Role of the Publishers Association in the Development of the Publishing Industry in the UAE



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### THE EMIRATES PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

- The Emirates Publishers Association believes that setting a shared vision among all stakeholders in the publishing and writing sector and strengthening their cooperation in an increasing and integrated manner will make the publishing industry a significant tool of global influence for the UAE.
- The Emirates Publishers Association actively contributes to the societal, cultural, educational, and economic development of the UAE.
- The Association has participated in numerous national, international, and regional events and exhibitions, launched various initiatives, and held dozens of sessions and projects across different levels on a permanent basis.



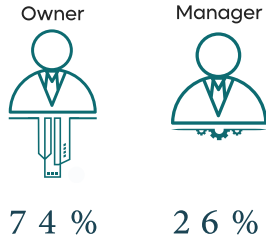
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### PUBLISHING INDUSTRY CHALLENGES

The publishing industry in the UAE faces many challenges, including those related to financing, distribution, logistical support, and digital publishing.

# Section Two: Report of the findings of the survey on “The Impact of the Emirates Publishers Association on Supporting the Cultural Publishing Industry in the UAE”

distribution of positions



1

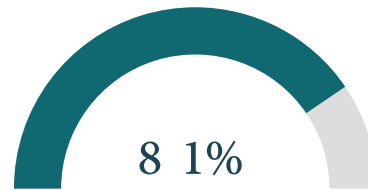
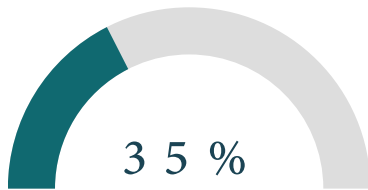
The aim of this survey is to determine the impact of the work and achievements of the Emirates Publishers Association on publishers, distributors, and writers in the UAE. Additionally, it seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of the Association's initiatives and shape its future direction to better serve the needs of the publishing industry.

They see material and moral support for publishers as the main mission of the association.

3

level of awareness of the EPA's Mission.

2

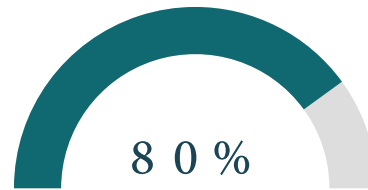
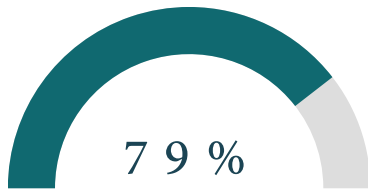


They see the effectiveness of the Emirates Publishers Association in achieving its stated goals in the UAE publishing industry.

5

Level of satisfaction with the initiatives and programs implemented by the Emirates Publishers Association.

4

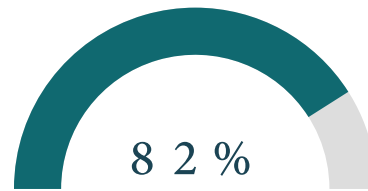
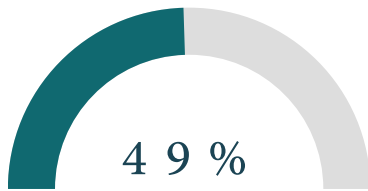


They believe that the Emirates Publishers Association should focus in the future on the need to improve distribution and retail.

7

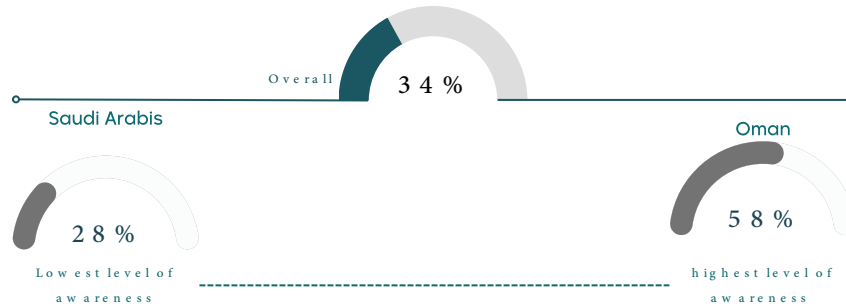
Overall rating of copyright level from the Emirates Publishers Association.

6

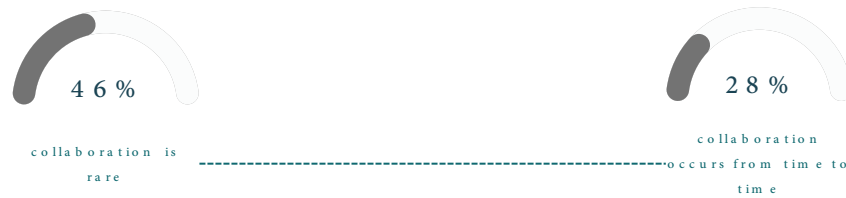


# Section Three: Report of the findings of the survey on "The Impact of the Publishers Association on Supporting the Cultural Publishing Industry in the Arab Gulf countries"

Percentage of knowledge of the activities and initiatives of the Emirates Publishers Association.



In terms of engagement with the Emirates Publishers Association.



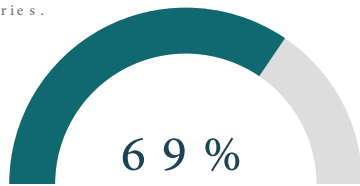
Regarding the interaction of owners and managers of publishing houses in the Arab Gulf countries with the Emirates Publishers Association.



## Section Three: Report of the findings of the survey on “The Impact of the Publishers Association on Supporting the Cultural Publishing Industry in the Arab Gulf countries”

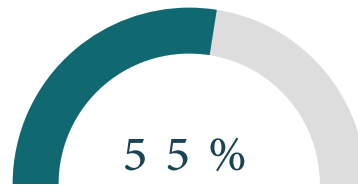
The effectiveness of the Emirates Publishers Association in enhancing cooperation between publishing associations in the Arab Gulf countries.

5



How effective is the Emirates Publishers Association in promoting the publishing industry in the Arabian Gulf region?

4



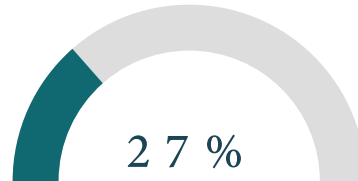
The most important proposals of the managers and owners of publishing houses in the Gulf to enhance cooperation between the Emirates Publishers Association and their associations were in the areas of:

7

1. Collaboration and communication
2. Support and facilities
3. Exhibitions
4. Awareness and development

One of the main strengths of the Emirates Publishers Association is its “regional and international networking”.

6



The study proposed 15 recommendations to enhance the publishing industry sector in the UAE, including the following:



## DETAILED REPORT

# The Impact of the Publishers Association on Supporting the Cultural Publishing Industry in the UAE and the other GCC Countries



## The Impact of the Publishers Association on Supporting the Cultural Publishing Movement in the United Arab Emirates

The book industry in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) represents a new addition to the diversification of income sources within the framework of the country's developmental economic strategy, which aims to create a knowledge-based society and prepare for a phase in which reliance on oil as the primary source of income is phased out. In fact, the country has made significant and important strides in diversification by developing non-oil industries, encouraging small and medium-sized enterprises, and supporting talents, gifted individuals and inventors. Statistics related to these efforts are available on the relevant government platforms.

The publishing industry is relatively new compared to other industries, particularly in terms of the private sector entering the publishing field. The sector remained hesitant until a number of intellectuals, creatives, and those interested in books and culture took the initiative and established publishing and printing houses, or publishing and distribution companies. Previously, the local publishing industry—meaning the production and distribution of books—was limited to public benefit associations, unions or ministries.

However, today Emirati publishing houses are engaging in real publishing activities, contributing to the broader strategy of income diversification. These houses have attracted, and continue to attract, both male and female writers from the UAE, offering them support for their creative work—whether in terms of artistic and intellectual development, marketing, or promotion. This comes after many authors previously had to publish their works outside the UAE. Like any other industry, publishing seeks to achieve profit, which is a legitimate goal. However, this field has a unique nature, closely tied to cultural values and creativity.

This report aims to explore the impact of the Emirates Publishers Association on the publishing industry in the UAE, the major challenges and opportunities facing the Emirati publishing sector, and the proposed recommendations to enhance the publishing industry in the UAE.

In this context, this report is divided into three main sections, as follows:

**Section One: The role of the Emirates Publishers Association in the development of the publishing industry in the UAE**

- I. The development of the publishing industry in the UAE
- II. Sharjah: The genius of its global cultural status
- III. Future prospects for the publishing industry in the UAE
- IV. The active role of the Emirates Publishers Association in the UAE's cultural landscape
- V. Key activities of the Emirates Publishers Association from 2018 to 2023
- VI. Challenges facing the publishing sector in the UAE

**Section Two: Results of a survey on the impact of the Emirates Publishers Association in supporting the cultural publishing movement in the UAE**

**Section Three: Survey Report on the Impact of the Publishers Association on Supporting the Cultural Publishing Movement in the Arab Gulf States**

**Conclusion: Proposed recommendations to strengthen the publishing sector in the UAE.**



## ◆ Section One:

### **The Role of the Emirates Publishers Association in the Development of the Publishing Industry in the UAE**

This section of the report addresses several key areas: the development of the publishing industry in the UAE, Sharjah's genius in securing its global cultural status, the future prospects for the publishing industry in the UAE, the active role of the Emirates Publishers Association in the UAE's cultural landscape, the key activities of the Emirates Publishers Association from 2018 to 2023, and the major challenges facing the publishing sector in the UAE.

#### **I. The Development of the Publishing Industry in the UAE**

The UAE is one of the leading countries in supporting culture, promoting the arts, and encouraging reading. It places paramount importance on enhancing cultural identity and elevating content in all its forms. In recent years, the country has made significant strides in the publishing industry, successfully attracting Arab and international publishers through organizing book fairs and launching various literary awards.

##### **1- From Traditional to Digital Publishing in the UAE**

Since the founding of the UAE on December 1971<sup>2</sup>, traditional publishing has dominated the landscape. Existing publishing houses played a crucial role in promoting local and regional literature, with a focus on books written in Arabic to cater to the interests and preferences of the local population. Printed books were the primary medium, and physical libraries were the main distribution channels.

However, with the advent of the internet and the growing popularity of e-reading and smartphones, digital publishing gained momentum in the UAE. Publishers began to adopt digital platforms, making content accessible to a wider audience. E-books became increasingly popular due to their convenience and cost-effectiveness, allowing readers to access a vast range of books with just a few clicks on their devices.

The rise of e-books in the UAE also led to the emergence of audiobooks, offering an alternative way to consume literature, especially for those with busy lifestyles. The UAE's publishing industry recognized the potential of this format and began producing high-quality audiobooks in multiple languages, opening new avenues for authors and narrators and creating diverse storytelling experiences.

As the publishing landscape continued to evolve, innovative distribution channels emerged in the UAE. Online marketplaces and platforms allowed publishers and independent authors to reach a global audience. Major e-commerce platforms and dedicated book apps provided seamless purchasing experiences and recommendations based on readers' preferences, revolutionizing how books are marketed and distributed, making them more accessible than ever. In recent years, self-publishing has also gained significant traction in the UAE. The country's multicultural social fabric has encouraged publishers to focus on multilingual publishing.



## 2- The impact of book fairs and awards on the UAE publishing industry

In recent years, the UAE has captured global attention and attracted publishers due to its exceptional focus on organizing book fairs and literary awards. These awards have served as motivation for both authors and publishers, ultimately benefiting the local publishing industry, which has strived to improve its operations and diversify its publications, even during the COVID-19 pandemic that adversely affected many publishers. The UAE took the initiative to establish the Emirates Publishers Emergency Fund, which guided the local publishing industry towards stability. The fund acted as a lifeline for the sector, with an allocated budget of approximately AED 1.2 million to support Emirati publishers.

The UAE's strong presence and increasing participation in international book fairs have also played a significant role in the development of the country's publishing industry. This has led to an 11% increase in the production of best-selling Arabic books in the UAE. In this context, it is worth highlighting the literary achievement of the Emirati publishing house "Kalimat", which won the Bologna Children's Book Fair award in 2016.

### II. Sharjah: The genius of its global cultural status

Under the leadership of His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi, Member of the Supreme Council and Ruler of Sharjah, the emirate has achieved a prestigious global standing in the cultural landscape. It has been a leader in supporting intellectual and literary creativity in all its forms, promoting the culture of reading, and emphasizing the importance of books in raising societal awareness and instilling a love for knowledge and learning in everyone. Additionally, Sharjah plays a crucial role in highlighting the civilizational and humanitarian roles of Arab and Islamic culture.

In recognition of Sharjah's outstanding contributions to the cultural, intellectual and creative fields, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) designated it as the Arab Cultural Capital in 1998 and the Islamic Culture Capital in 2014.

Sharjah has been honored as the guest of honor at several international book fairs. Most recently, it was the guest of honor at the Thessaloniki International Book Fair in Greece from May 16 to 2024 ,19. In previous years, it was the guest of honor at numerous other international book fairs, including the LIBER International Book Fair, held in Madrid, Spain, from October 9 to 2019 ,11, with the participation of over 50 countries. Sharjah presented a glimpse of the UAE and Arab cultural scenes to Europe and the rest of the world, showcasing the shared history between Spanish and Arab cultures and opening doors for further cooperation in the publishing sector.

Sharjah was also the distinguished guest of honor at the 23rd edition of the Moscow International Book Fair in September 2019, the Turin International Book Fair in Italy in May 2018, and the 27th edition of the New Delhi International Book Fair in January 2018. Prior to that, it was the first-ever guest of honor at the 25th São Paulo International Book Fair in Brazil in August 2018.

Sharjah was crowned the World Book Capital in 2019 by UNESCO in recognition of its pivotal role in promoting books, fostering a culture of reading, and positioning knowledge as a cornerstone in the dialogue of human civilizations.

A report issued by the Sharjah Government Media Office, published across various platforms to celebrate this accolade, stated that all these global cultural achievements are the natural result of the pioneering efforts led by His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi, in his cultural mission. In a speech delivered on the occasion, he said: "We have worked with sincerity, honesty and perseverance over many years so that Sharjah, in all its aspects, would have a deep connection with books and knowledge".

These achievements demonstrate that Sharjah is writing a new chapter in the history of Arab culture, reflecting the depth of intellectual and creative efforts it has led over the past five decades, guided by the vision and directives of His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi.



### III. Key features of the future of the publishing industry in the UAE

Although the publishing industry in the UAE is relatively young, the country has the potential to become a global hub for publishers, distributors and other creative sectors, both regionally and internationally. It is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate of %12 until 2030. There are even more promising opportunities for additional growth if industry concerns are addressed. Despite the existence of several government-supported initiatives, such as granting translation rights, more comprehensive support programs similar to Canada's National Book Fund could further boost the international competitiveness of local publishers and help address the challenges hindering export capabilities.

Sheikha Bodour bint Sultan Al Qasimi, who served as President of the International Publishers Association from 2021 to 2022, has spearheaded several initiatives, leveraging all her resources to support both local and global publishing. She has been instrumental in developing and energizing the UAE's publishing sector.

Despite its relative infancy compared to other nations, the UAE's publishing industry has grown rapidly, with more than 166 publishing houses currently operating. Statistics from Sharjah Publishing City in late 2019 indicated that the publishing sector in the UAE is expected to increase from \$260 million to \$650 million by 2030.

The key features of the future of publishing in the UAE include:

- **Global and regional hub:** The UAE is well-positioned to become a global and regional publishing center due to its strategic advantages, accessibility, supportive business environment, and thriving cultural scene. The Publishers Association, in collaboration with the UAE Media Council and other entities, is working on a strategy to encourage investment and attract regional and international publishers to UAE free zones, fostering partnerships with local companies.
- **Unified vision:** The UAE Publishers Association believes that creating a shared vision among all stakeholders in the publishing and authorship sectors and strengthening collaboration will elevate the publishing industry to a major player at the regional, Arab and global levels.
- **Legal framework development:** Enhancing the legal framework for the publishing sector will contribute significantly to the UAE's ambition of becoming one of the most innovative countries in the world. In this context, the Association is advocating for reforms in copyright laws to better protect authors, content creators and publishers.
- **High-quality Arabic education materials:** Developing quality educational materials for teaching and learning the Arabic language.
- **Promoting reading:** Encouraging a love for reading to improve educational success and academic achievement.
- **Adapting public libraries:** Supporting public libraries to evolve in line with the digital age and artificial intelligence.
- **Creative industry development:** Promoting the creative industries and nurturing artistic talent, recognizing that the creative and cultural industries are an increasingly significant part of the economy.
- **Artificial Intelligence in publishing:** Emphasizing the importance of utilizing AI in the publishing sector.



## IV. The role of the UAE Publishers Association in the cultural landscape

### 1. Founding and membership

The UAE Publishers Association will celebrate its 16th anniversary on February 2025, marking over a decade and a half of cultural and intellectual leadership in supporting the UAE's publishing sector. It was founded in Sharjah on February 2009, by Sheikha Bodour bint Sultan Al Qasimi. Over the past 15 years, it has contributed to the development of the publishing industry and supported the UAE's scientific, literary and cultural output, positioning the country on the global cultural map. Sheikha Bodour Al Qasimi serves as the honorary president of the Association, which currently has 344 members.

### 2. Mission and vision

From its inception, the UAE Publishers Association has strived to represent Emirati publishers locally, regionally and internationally, providing them with the necessary support to participate in cultural forums and international book fairs. Its mission is to elevate the UAE's publishing industry through training programs and a supportive environment that attracts investment in the sector. Key goals include:

- **Support and funding:** The Emirates Publishers Association supports Emirati publishing efforts by promoting the works of Emirati authors at cultural forums and international book fairs.
- **Increasing knowledge production:** Facilitating the dissemination of more cultural, scientific and literary content to readers in the UAE, thus consistently striving to expand the business of Emirati publishers locally, regionally and internationally.
- **Cultural development leadership:** The Emirates Publishers Association leads and helps contribute to the social, cultural, educational, and economic development of the UAE.
- **Providing an attractive environment for the publishing sector in the UAE:** The Emirates Publishers Association focuses on strengthening the legal framework in the UAE related to intellectual property rights and copyright protection, aiming to provide global protection for publishers' intellectual property rights. It promotes creativity in the UAE and fosters an encouraging and attractive environment for international investors in the publishing and authorship sectors.
- **Enhancing collaboration between publishers:** Through a series of diverse programs and activities, the Association aims to foster collaboration among publishers and enhance their professional skills. It organizes conferences, workshops and seminars at both regional and global levels in cooperation with international institutions such as the British Publishers Association and the International Publishers Association. Recently, it launched the Publisher Training Program, the first of its kind in the Arab region. The Emirates Publishers Association, which gained membership in both the Arab Publishers Association and the International Publishers Association during its first year, actively participates in international conferences focused on the future and sustainability of publishing. It also establishes fruitful partnerships to raise awareness and promote knowledge exchange within the publishing community, providing essential support to produce intellectual content that aligns with the cultural advancements in the UAE. This, in turn, enhances the country's position on the global cultural map.
- **Global promotion of Emirati culture:** In addition to its local efforts, the Association actively participates in international cultural events and book fairs, thereby contributing to the global visibility of Emirati publishers. These ongoing efforts not only open doors to enriching the publishing, translation and distribution landscape in the UAE, but also extend to regional and international platforms. By doing so, the Association plays a vital role in promoting the presence of Emirati culture and literature in the global publishing and cultural arenas.



- **Enhancing creative economy:** The Emirates Publishers Association plays a pivotal role in realizing an ambitious vision that enhances the UAE's creative economy by offering a wide range of knowledge products that reflect the country's rich and diverse cultural heritage. Through these efforts, the Association underscores its leadership in promoting the UAE's cultural legacy on prestigious international literary platforms. Sheikha Bodour Al Qasimi, the honorary president of the Emirates Publishers Association, has tirelessly worked to support the publishing sector in the UAE, creating a fertile environment for local publishing houses to contribute positively to the cultural scene, benefiting both society and humanity. Her tenure as president of the International Publishers Association (2022-2021), the first Arab woman and only the second woman globally to hold the position since its founding in 1896, has had a significant positive impact on the publishing industry in the UAE and globally. In celebration of the 15th anniversary of the Emirates Publishers Association, Sheikha Bodour Al Qasimi launched the Sharjah Publishing Sustainability Fund (Onshor/Publish) with a value of AED 10 million, aimed at supporting and sustaining the publishing sector in the UAE.

### 3. Main roles of the Association

- Encourage the publishing sector to contribute to the social, cultural, educational and economic development of the UAE.
- Support Emirati publishing efforts by promoting Emirati authors at various local, Arab and international cultural events.
- Bring more intellectual works and beneficial books to readers in the UAE.
- Work on expanding the market share of Emirati publishers locally, regionally and internationally.
- Focus on strengthening the existing legal framework in the UAE to provide global protection for intellectual property rights, publishing, and authorship rights, as well as freedom of publishing, thereby fostering creativity within the UAE.

### 4. Main objectives of the Association

- Advance the publishing industry in the UAE and elevate it to higher levels through a comprehensive range of services, insights, training, and providing facilities to increase investment in this vital sector.
- Promote and defend the rights of publishers.
- Strengthen the protection of intellectual property rights, as well as publishing and distribution rights.
- Support Emirati publishers locally, regionally and internationally.
- Enhance the global standing of Emirati publishers.
- Assist publishers in participating in international book fairs.
- Provide a high-level, stimulating environment for the publishing industry within the UAE.
- Foster communication between publishers and distributors.



## V. Major activities of the UAE Publishers Association (2023-2018)

Between 2018 and 2023, the Association actively participated in various national, regional and international events, initiated numerous projects, and conducted several workshops. These efforts aimed at reinforcing the role of the UAE's publishing sector both domestically and globally.

### A. Local Activities:

- 1. Book fairs:** The Association has participated in numerous local fairs on an ongoing basis, including Abu Dhabi International Book Fair, Sharjah International Book Fair, Emirates Airline Festival of Literature, Sharjah Children's Reading Festival, Emirati Book Fair, Al Ain International Book Fair, Written in Half a Century, and Al Ain Book Festival.
- 2. Conferences:** The Association participated in the 8th Regional Conference on Intellectual Property Crimes, the 5th Arab Publishers Conference, and the 6th Arab Publishers Conference in Sharjah.
- 3. Projects:** The Association has implemented numerous national projects, including the launch of the Integrated Services Center and the Platform project; signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Sharjah Publishing City; held a meeting on the future of Emirati publishing; met with the Public Benefit Associations Department, conducted an introductory workshop on the Meet the Emirati Publisher program, launched the Publishers Training Program, met with the Ministry of Education, hosted an open meeting for Emirati publishers with the Ministry of Education, launched the website for Menassah Distribution Company to enable electronic payment for membership renewals, collaborated with the Kalimat Foundation, signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Emirates Libraries and Information Association, worked with the organizers of the Book Adaptation Rights Market in Venice, Italy, and signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the UAE Writers Union.
- 4. Initiatives:** The Association has launched numerous initiatives, including the annual Suhoor event of the Emirates Publishers Association, hosting the Educational Publishing Seminar, welcoming Armenia's First Lady, Nune Sarkissian, during her visit to Sharjah Publishing City, organizing the "We All Read" festival, launch of the Crisis Fund for Emirati Publishers, held the "Contemporary Poetry" evening, held the "From Idea to Book" workshop, the "Buying and Selling Rights" workshop, a virtual workshop on the basics of contract creation, and a series of Young Writers workshops, and organized a visit to the Mohammed Bin Rashid Library with member publishers, produced a video celebrating International Mother Language Day, and held a Suhoor evening on the "Importance of Trade Exchange in the Publishing Industry for Global Reach".
- 5. Meetings:** The Association held numerous sessions and meetings with various national entities, including a meeting with the Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Library Foundation, a brainstorming session on the future of publishing, a session with the Bahraini Intellectual Property Association delegation, a Future of Publishing session in collaboration with Ingram Content Group, a meeting with the Ministry of Culture and Knowledge Development, the first meeting of the Educational Publishing Committee, a session on "The Role of Women in the UAE Publishing Sector", a brainstorming session with a group of Emirati publishers to discuss their suggestions and opinions on establishing a new distribution company as a subsidiary of the Association, a virtual session on creative attraction in the field of publishing, a session on "The UAE Efforts in the Publishing Sector", and a session on the benefits of membership in the Arab Publishers Union.



## B. International and regional participation:

1. **Book Fairs:** The Association has participated in several international and regional book fairs, including Paris International Book Fair, Riyadh International Book Fair, Bologna Children's Book Fair, London Book Fair, São Paulo International Book Fair, Beijing International Book Fair, Nairobi Book Fair, Frankfurt International Book Fair, Shanghai International Children's Book Fair, New Delhi World Book Fair, Cairo International Book Fair, Casablanca Book Fair, Moscow International Book Fair, Amman International Book Fair, Madrid Book Fair, Seoul International Book Fair, Shanghai Book Fair, Turin International Book Fair, Hong Kong Book Fair, Guadalajara International Book Fair (Mexico), Muscat International Book Fair, Ghana International Book Fair, Madinah Book Fair, Kuwait International Book Fair, Jeddah International Book Fair, and the 6th Istanbul Arabic Book Fair.
2. **International conferences:** The Association has participated in various international conferences, including the International Publishers Association (IPA) Conference in Nairobi, the IPA Conference in Amman, the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), World Library and Information Congress, the Annual Conference of the International Federation of Reproduction Rights Organizations (IFRRO) in Edinburgh, and the 33rd IPA Congress in Jakarta.
3. **International projects:** The Association engaged in several international projects, such as a workshop for Emirati publishers in collaboration with Nielsen for data measurement and analysis, the Educational Publishing Forum in Hungary, and the Educational Publishing Forum in Milan.
4. **Meetings:** A meeting with a delegation from the Guadalajara International Book Fair.
5. **Initiatives:** The Association collaborated with the UAE Board on Books for Young People (UAEBBY) for the "Kan Yama Kan" initiative, and donated, through the participation of 13 publishing houses 237 books, totaling 2,409 books, which were distributed to villages in Fayoum Governorate in Egypt.

## VI. Challenges facing the publishing sector in the UAE

There are several challenges facing the publishing industry in the country, including:

1. **Funding challenges:** The most significant challenge for the publishing industry is securing funding for book production. There is difficulty in finding reliable sources of financial support for publishing books, coupled with the high cost of printing locally, which increases the burden on local publishers compared to the cheaper cost of importing books. Consequently, the lack of funding has hindered the ability to obtain high-quality publishing services and fulfill contracts with international publishing houses for new books. Moreover, there is a lack of support from various institutions for the publishing and distribution industry.
2. **Distribution challenges:** Distribution companies often take up to %50 of book sales profits, leaving the remainder to be divided between authors and publishers. Additionally, the decline in print sales due to high printing and publishing costs, combined with difficulties in participating in international book fairs, has weakened communication between distributors and local publishing houses. There is also a lack of distribution outlets, exacerbated by high rental and operational fees, and a decline in demand from cultural and educational institutions for purchasing printed materials.
3. **Logistical support challenges:** These challenges include the lack of affordable book storage facilities and the absence of certified translation offices offering reasonable prices to facilitate the translation of publications. Furthermore, there is a shortage of affordable design and production companies as well as high-quality, certified printing houses. Additionally, there is a lack of affordable design and printing services, along with a shortage of high-quality certified printing presses. Finally, a significant challenge lies in the slow process of issuing circulation permits.
4. **Digital publishing challenges:** There is a lack of reliable and certified software companies to assist publishers in the digital transformation process. This includes setting up online stores, producing e-books, and managing social media platforms.



## ◆ Section Two:

### Survey Report Results

## The Impact of the Publishers Association on Supporting the Cultural Publishing Industry in the UAE

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### Purpose of the survey

The aim of this survey is to determine the impact of the Publishers Association's work and achievements on publishers, distributors and authors, to assess the effectiveness of the Association's initiatives, and to shape its future direction toward serving the needs of the publishing industry.

### Methodology of Work

#### Mechanism:

A quantitative study by conducting telephone interviews (contacts) with managers and owners of publishing houses in various regions of the UAE.

#### Sample Size:

A comprehensive survey of 344 affiliates was used, and 115 affiliates (managers and owners) responded, with a response rate of %33.4.

#### Duration of the survey:

The process of completing the questionnaire took an average of 15 minutes.

The questionnaire was delivered in both Arabic and English.

#### Work Time Frame:

Work on this study took 10 days during the month of July, and three researchers worked on the data collection.

#### Analysis methodology

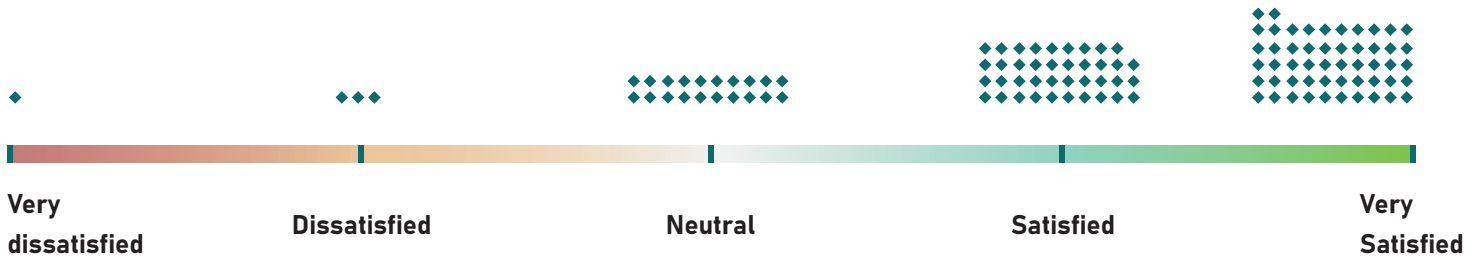
The arithmetic mean or weighted mean method was used, given the importance of some answers in measuring the elements (satisfaction/evaluation/knowledge/ contribution), and each answer was given a weight according to the Likert scale. Then, the relative importance of the answers was calculated according to their frequency, and each ratio was multiplied by the corresponding weight to obtain the weighted mean.

The sum of the weighted means expresses the average percentage of each of the elements (satisfaction/evaluation/knowledge/contribution).



The following examples illustrate the calculation method:

Likert scale	Code	Weight	Frequency	Significance %	Weighted mean
Very dissatisfied	1	0 %	1	1 %	0 %
Dissatisfied	2	25 %	3	3 %	1 %
Neutral	3	50 %	20	17 %	9 %
Satisfied	4	75 %	39	34 %	25 %
Very Satisfied	5	100 %	52	45 %	45 %
Total			115	100 %	80 %



Likert scale	Code	Weight	Frequency	Significance %	Weighted mean
Very Low	1	0 %	0	0 %	0 %
Low	2	25 %	5	4 %	1 %
Good	3	50 %	41	36 %	25 %
Very Good	4	75 %	28	24 %	19 %
Excellent	5	100 %	41	36 %	36 %
Total			115	100 %	81 %

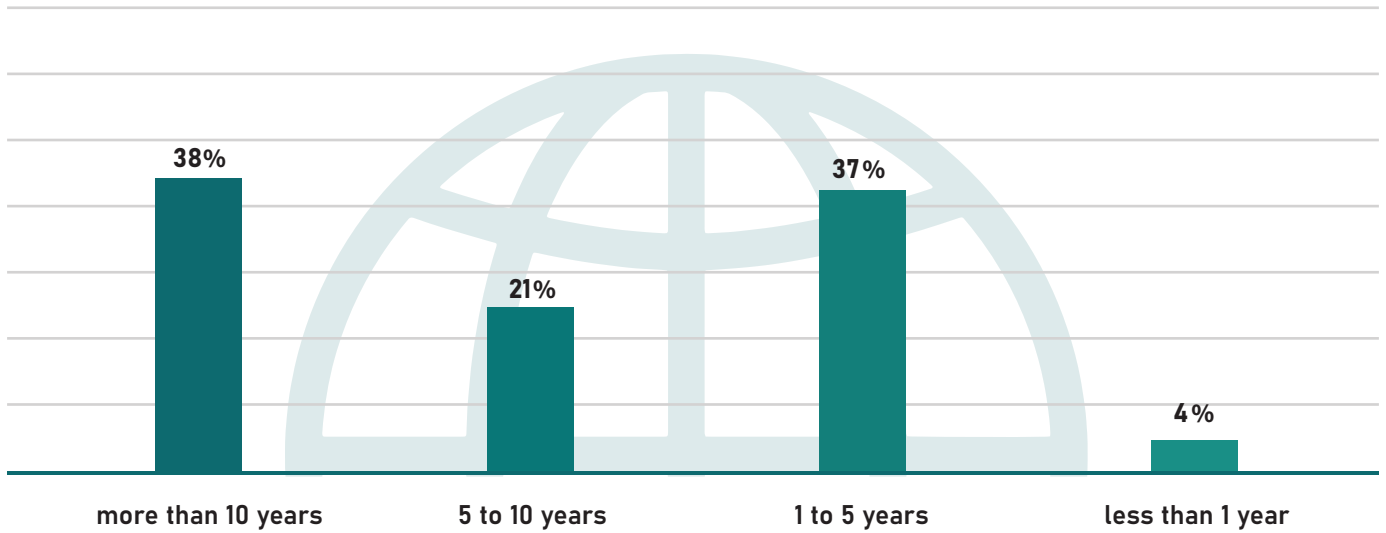






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## How long have you been involved in the publishing industry?



### Executive Summary

The owners and managers of publishing houses in the UAE were asked about their knowledge of the Emirates Publishers Association (EPA). The survey found that their level of knowledge about it was (%81).



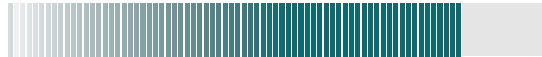
Level of knowledge of the UAE Publishers Association (%81)



The surveying team asked the owners and managers of publishing houses in the UAE about the extent of their knowledge of the message of the Emirates Publishers Association. It was found that their level of knowledge about it was (%81).



Level of awareness of the UAE Publishers Association's Message (%81)



Regarding the extent of awareness by the owners and managers of publishing houses in the UAE of the vision of the Emirates Publishers Association, it was found that their level of knowledge about it was (%81).



Level of awareness of the Emirates Publishers Association's Vision (%81)



Regarding the extent of awareness by the owners and managers of publishing houses in the UAE of the objectives of the Emirates Publishers Association, it was found that their relevant level of knowledge was around (%80).



Level of awareness of the Objectives of the UAE Publishers Association (%80)



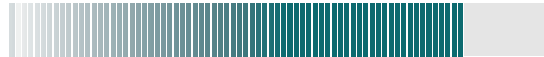
The owners and managers of publishing houses in the UAE were asked about their understanding of the mission, vision and objectives of the Emirates Publishers Association. Just over a third of the respondents (35%) believe that soliciting material and moral support for publishers is the main mission of the Association. Slightly less than a fifth of respondents (18%) consider the promotion of publishing and books to be one of the crucial objectives. Meanwhile, (15%) of the respondents believe that supporting publishers in communicating and participating in book fairs is one of the Association's tasks. The remaining points illustrated in the following figure present the respondents' opinions on their understanding of the mission, vision and objectives of the Emirates Publishers Association:



With regard to the level of satisfaction of the owners and managers of publishing houses in the UAE with the initiatives and programs implemented by the Emirates Publishers Association to achieve its mission and objectives, the results revealed that their level of satisfaction reached (%80).



Level of satisfaction with the initiatives and programs implemented by the Emirates Publishers Association (%80)



Assessment of the extent to which owners and managers of publishing houses' institutions in the UAE benefited from the services, resources and support by the Emirates Publishers Association revealed that the level of benefit reached (%68).



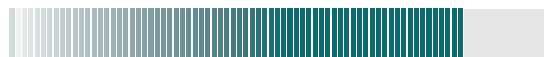
The level of benefit from the services, resources and support provided by the Emirates Publishers Association (%68)



Regarding the evaluation of the owners and managers of publishing houses in the UAE of the effectiveness of the Emirates Publishers Association role in achieving its stated objectives in the UAE publishing industry, the results showed that their evaluation rate reached (%79).



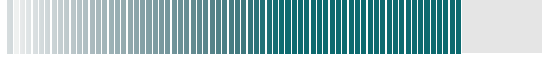
Level of achievement of the Publishers Association's declared objectives in the UAE's publishing industry (%79)



The assessment of the UAE's owners and managers of the publishing houses' level of intellectual property rights protection for Emirati publishers and authors revealed that the rate reached (%81).



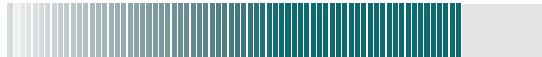
The Emirates Publishers Association member's assessment of the protection of the publishers and authors' intellectual property rights (%81)



Asked about their assessment of the level of copyright protection by the UAE's Publishers Association, the rate given was about (%82).



The Respondents' Assessment Rate of Copyright Protection (%82)



Asked about their rating of the level of promotion of Emirati authors by the Emirati Publishers Association, the managers of publishing houses in the UAE gave the rate of (%82).



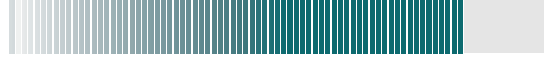
Respondents' assessment of the level of promoting Emirati authors (%82)



Asked about their assessment of the level of publication freedom observed by the Emirates Publishers Association, the owners and managers of publishing houses in the UAE rated it at (%80).



Respondents' assessment rate of publication freedom (%80)



Regarding the owners and managers of publishing houses in the UAE assessment of the level of supporting creativity in the Emirates Publishers Association, the results revealed a rate of (%82).



The respondents' rating of supporting creativity (%82)



Regarding the assessment of owners and managers of publishing houses in the UAE of the level of dissemination of Emirati culture and values by the Emirates Publishers Association, the survey found that their assessment rate was (%84).



Level of dissemination of Emirati culture and values (%84)





Responding to a question about their assessment of the level of the Emirates Publishers Association's contribution to the promotion of literacy, cultural diversity and education, the owners and managers of publishing houses in the UAE rated it at (%80).

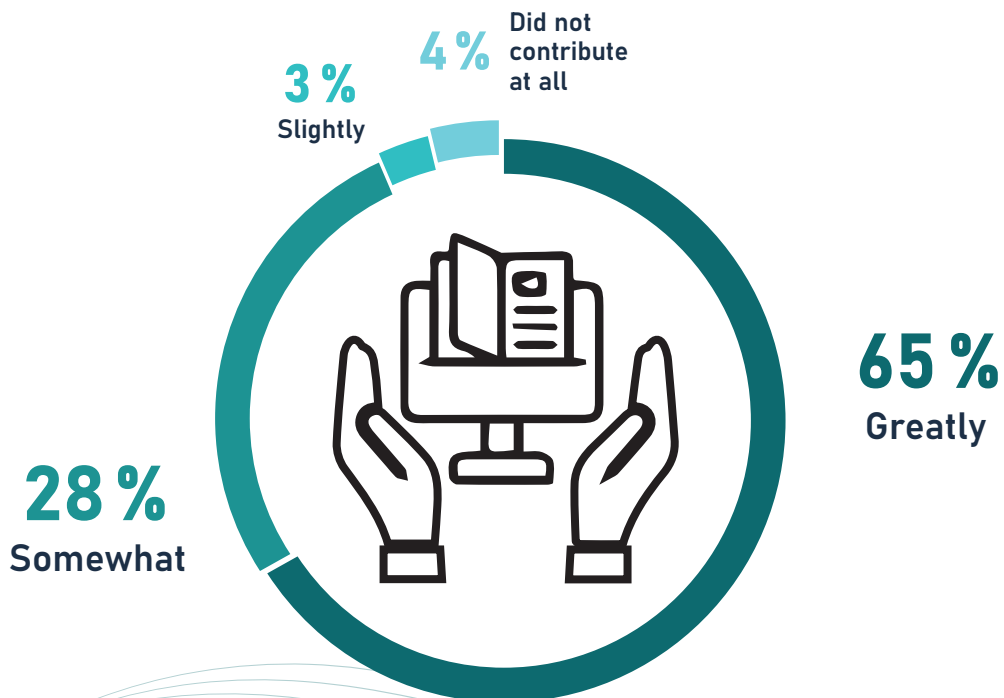


Level of the Emirates Publishers Association's contribution to the promotion of literacy, cultural diversity and education (%80)



On the assessment of the owners and managers of publishing houses in the UAE of the Emirates Publishers Association's contribution to the growth and development of the publishing environment system, the result revealed that the largest percentage of the respondents (%65) believe that the EPA has contributed "a lot" to the development of this system. On the other hand, (%28) of the respondents believe that the Association contributed "somewhat" positively, while (%4) believe that it contributed "slightly", and (%3) only believe that the association "did not contribute at all".

### To what extent the Emirates Publishers Association contributed to the growth and development of the publishing ecosystem?

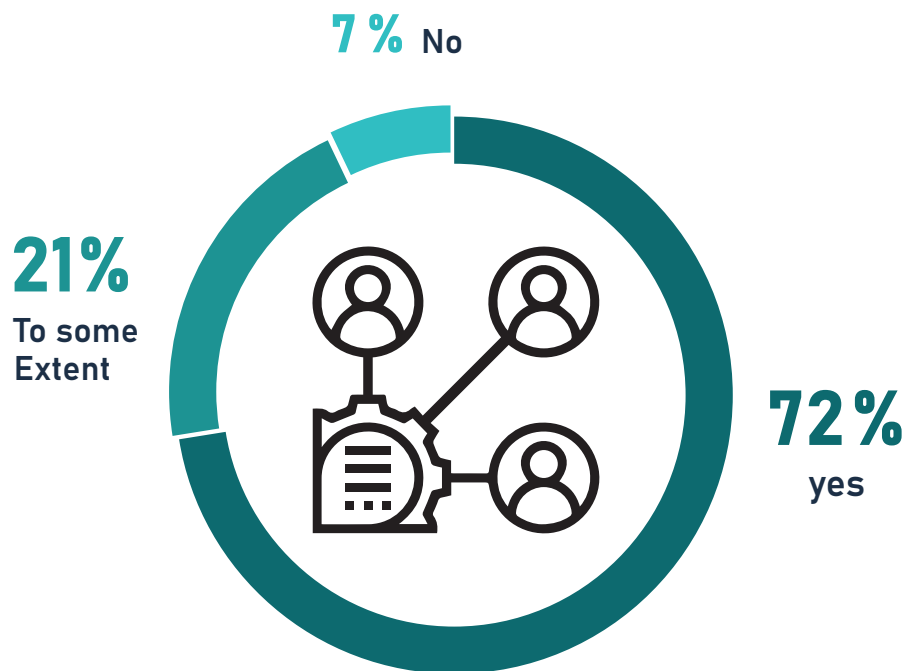




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The owners and managers of publishing houses in the UAE assessment for the effectiveness of the Emirates Publishers Association's role in representing the interests of publishers, distributors and authors revealed that slightly more than two-thirds (72%) of the respondents believe that the Association effectively represents the interests of publishers, distributors and authors.

### Do you believe that the Emirates Publishers Association effectively represents the interests of publishers, distributors and authors?

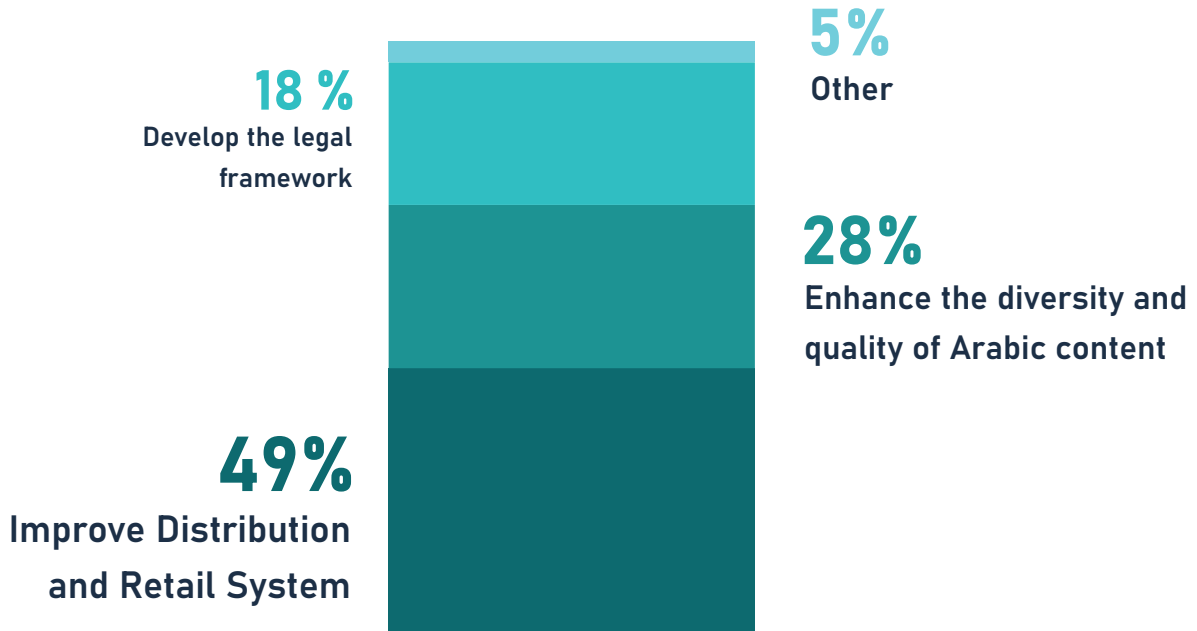




On the future areas and issues on which the Emirates Publishers Association should focus to enhance its support of publishers, distributors and authors, the owners and managers of publishing houses in the UAE opinion results revealed that half of the respondents (%49) believe that it is necessary to focus on improving distribution and retail systems. However, more than a quarter of the respondents (%28) focused on the importance of diversifying and enhancing Arabic content, while less than a third (%18) believe that the focus should be on developing the legal framework. In addition, some owners and managers of publishing houses referred to the following areas and issues:

- ✓ Provision of financial support to Emirati and UAE-based publishers through the organization of local exhibitions that offer discounted prices.
- ✓ Holding book fairs during the summer season to distribute the remaining stock of books.
- ✓ Providing financial public grants to the publishers.
- ✓ Focus on the reduction of online sales costs.
- ✓ Strengthening links between the Emirates Publishers Association and government agencies to ensure preferential treatment for local publishers.
- ✓ Building and providing book storage warehouses.
- ✓ Improving the infrastructure of the publishing sector's information system.
- ✓ Enhancing communication with schools to publish children's books.
- ✓ Motivating schoolchildren to read, author and develop creative writing skills.

### What are the future areas and issues which the Emirates Publishers Association should focus on to further support the publishers, distributors and authors?



Surveying the opinion of the owners and managers of publishing houses in the UAE on the main challenges and opportunities that should be prioritized by the Emirates Publishers Association in its future endeavors, the results showed that (%16) of the respondents consider that the main priority is to provide financial support to publishers to reduce publishing and distribution costs. However, (%13) of the respondents believe that improving the distribution system and providing bookshop outlets is a priority, while (%11) of the respondents emphasized the significance of supporting participation in international book fairs to boost the publicity of Emirati publishers.



On the future areas and issues on which the Emirates Publishers Association should focus to enhance its support of publishers, distributors and authors, the owners and managers of publishing houses in the UAE opinion results revealed that half of the respondents (%49) believe that it is necessary to focus on improving distribution and retail systems. However, more than a quarter of the respondents (%28) focused on the importance of diversifying and enhancing Arabic content, while less than a third (%18) believe that the focus should be on developing the legal framework. In addition, some owners and managers of publishing houses referred to the following areas and issues:

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**What are the future areas and issues which the Emirates Publishers Association should focus on to further support the publishers, distributors and authors?**



## Key challenges and opportunities that the Emirates Publishers Association should prioritize in its future endeavors:





### ◆ Section Three:

## Survey Report on the Impact of the Publishers Association on Supporting the Cultural Publishing Movement in the Arab Gulf States

### Purpose of the Survey:

The primary aim of this survey is to assess the impact of the Publishers Association in the Arabian Gulf on supporting the cultural publishing movement in the region. The survey seeks to measure the influence of the Association's work and achievements on publishers, distributors and writers, as well as evaluate the effectiveness of the Association's initiatives and how they can better serve the needs of the publishing industry in the future. This objective reflects the desire to enhance and develop the Association's role in fostering cooperation and communication among publishers and providing necessary support to various publishing houses in the Arab Gulf states.

### Methodology of Work

#### Mechanism:

A quantitative study conducted through telephone interviews with managers and owners of publishing houses in the Arab Gulf states.

#### Sample Size:

A comprehensive survey approach was used, targeting 124 managers and owners, with 74 responding, resulting in a %60 response rate.

#### Duration of the survey:

- The questionnaire took no more than 10 minutes to complete.
- It was offered in both Arabic and English.

#### Project Duration:

The study was conducted in August and took 10 days to complete.

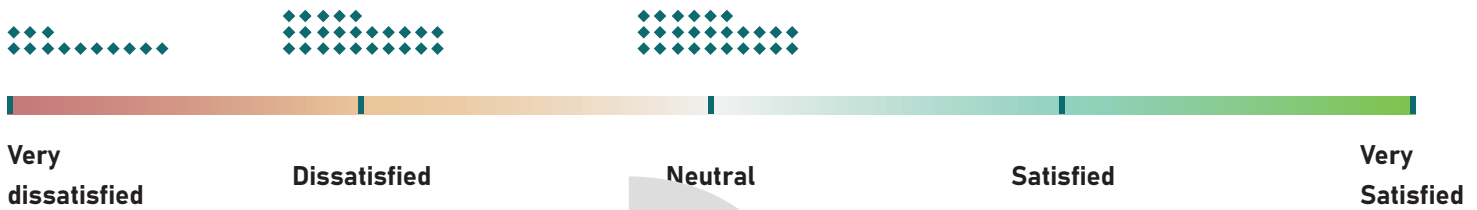
#### Analysis methodology

The weighted arithmetic mean method was used due to the significance of certain responses in measuring knowledge/evaluation. Each answer was assigned a weight based on the Likert scale, and the relative importance of the responses was calculated according to their frequency. Each percentage was multiplied by the corresponding weight to obtain the weighted mean. The sum of the weighted means represents the overall knowledge/evaluation percentage. The following example illustrates the calculation method:



The following examples illustrate the calculation method:

Likert scale	Symbol	Weight	Frequency	Importance %	Weighted Average %
I do not know at all	1	0 %	13	18%	0%
Little knowledge	2	20 %	25	47%	9%
Moderate knowledge	3	70 %	26	35%	25%
Extensive knowledge	4	80 %	0	0%	0%
Complete knowledge	5	100 %	0	0%	0%
Total			115	100 %	80 %



### Sample Distribution

The results related to the distribution of positions in publishing houses in the Arabian Gulf region, among the survey participants, showed that the majority (%59) of the positions are occupied by publishing house managers, totaling 44 managers, while owners hold about %41 of the positions, totaling 34 owners.

### Position in publishing house

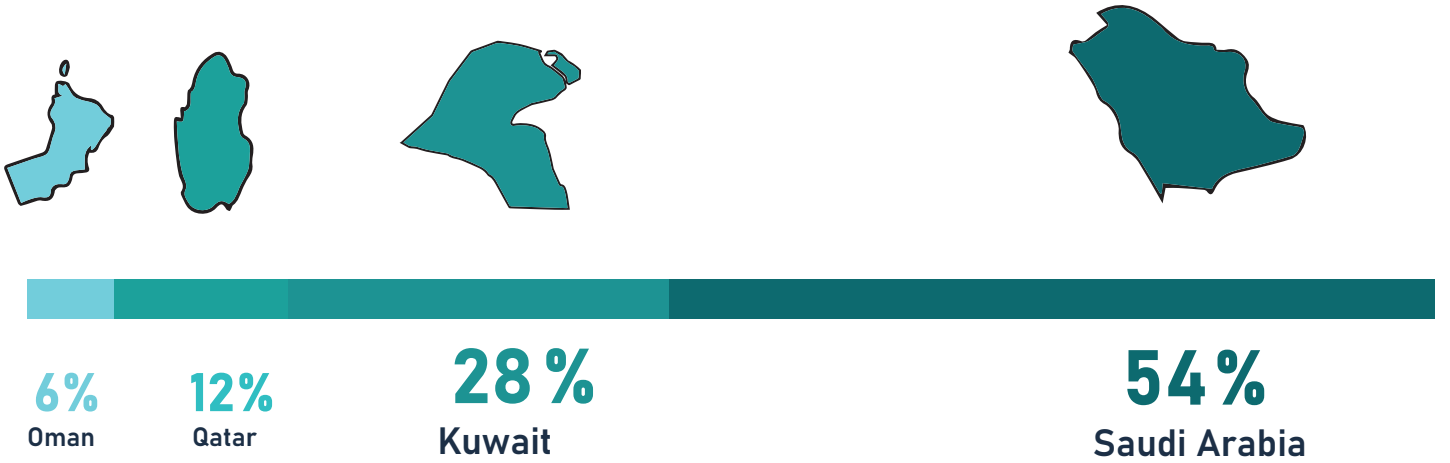
41%  
owner



59%  
Manager

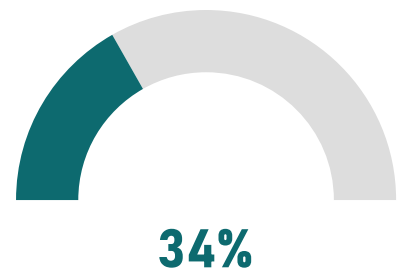
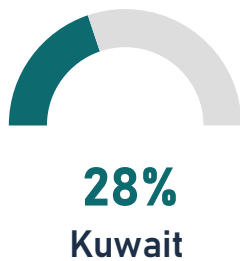
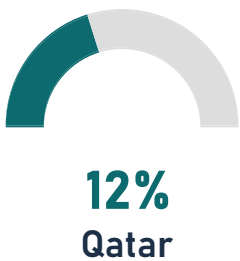
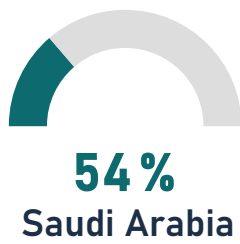
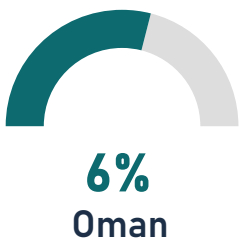


The results related to the distribution of managers and owners of publishing houses in the Arab Gulf countries, according to geographical region, show that the largest proportion of managers and owners is concentrated in Saudi Arabia, representing %54 of the total, with 40 managers and owners. This is followed by Kuwait with %28, totaling 21 managers and owners, while Qatar ranks third with %12, comprising 9 managers and owners. Oman comes in fourth place with only %6, totaling 4 managers and owners.



### Executive Summary

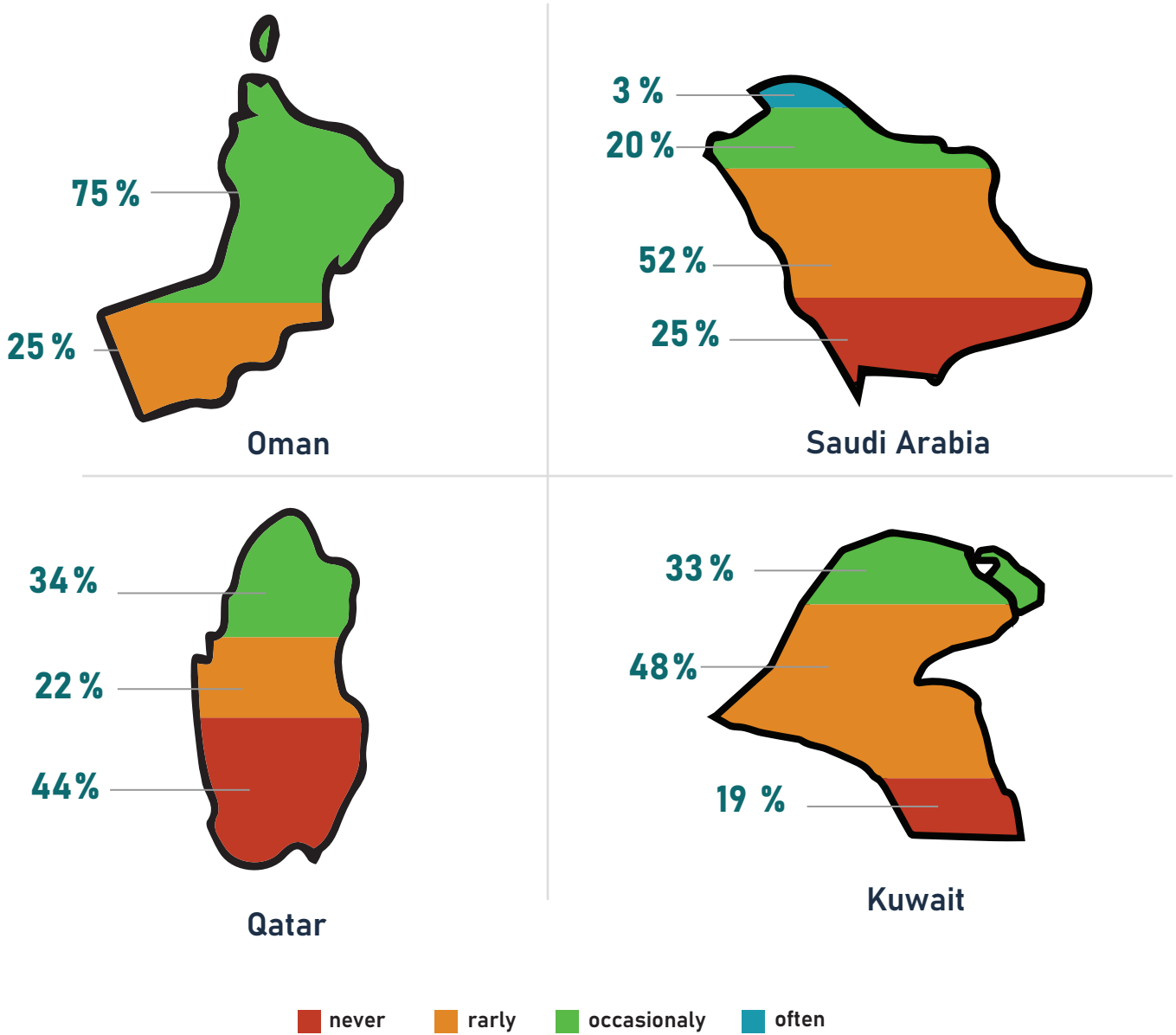
When asked about their awareness of the activities and initiatives of the Emirates Publishers Association, the results showed that their level of knowledge was %34. Oman recorded the highest level of awareness at %58, while Saudi Arabia had the lowest level of awareness at %28.



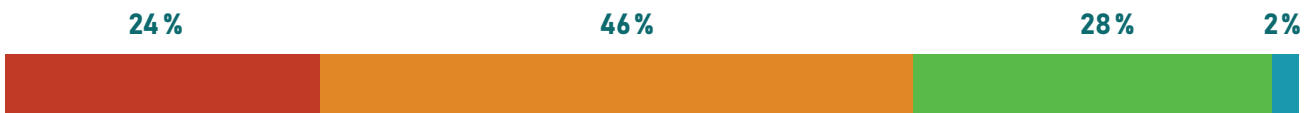
Extent of publishing houses' awareness of the activities and the initiatives of the Emirates publishers associations

In terms of the interaction of publishing house owners and managers in the Arab Gulf countries with the Emirates Publishers Association, less than half of the participants (%46) reported that cooperation

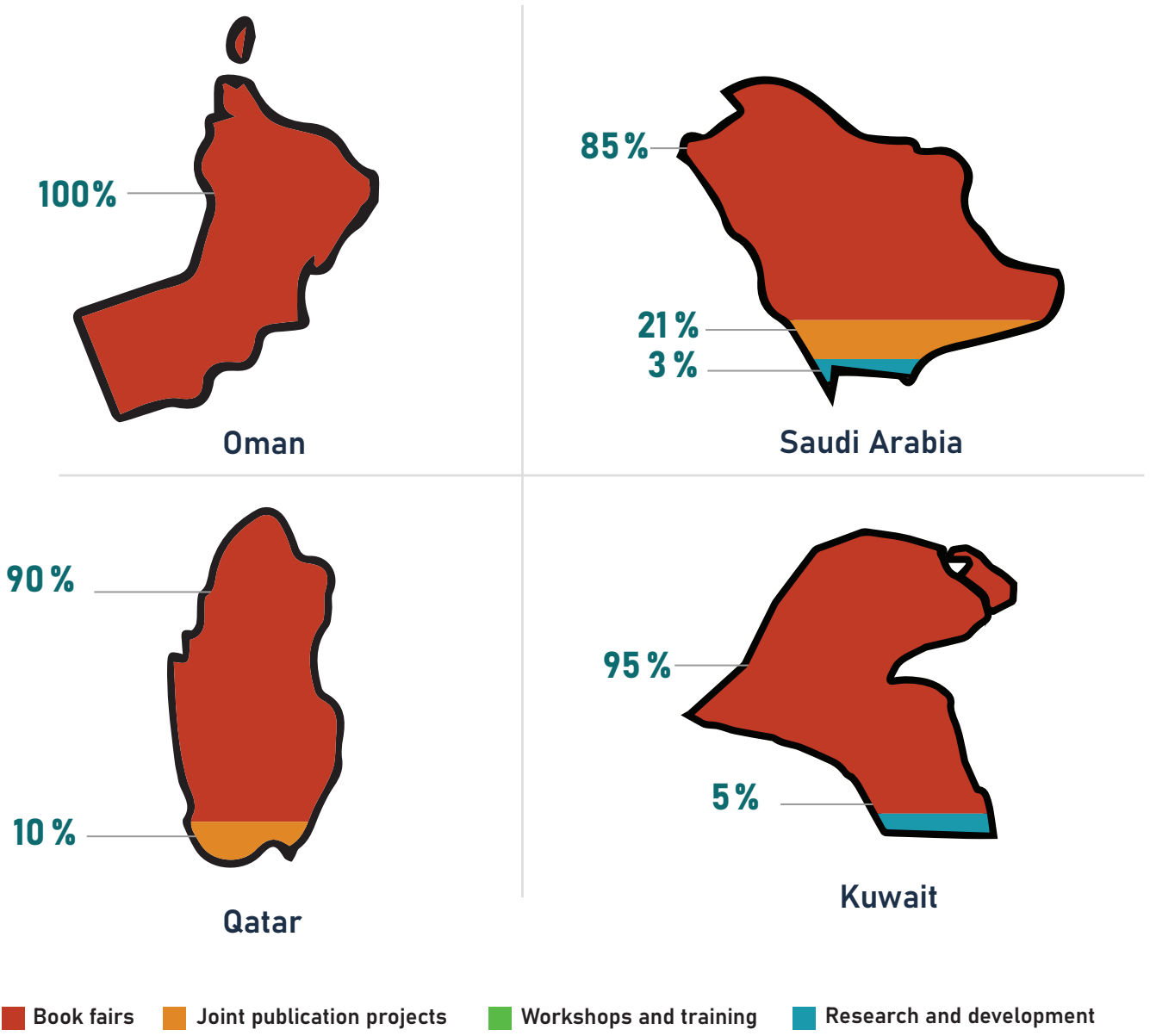
with the Association is rare. More than a quarter (%28) mentioned that cooperation occurs occasionally. In contrast, about a quarter of the participants (%24) stated that there is no cooperation with the Association, while only a very small number of participants (%2) indicated that cooperation is ongoing.



how often does your association interact with the Emirates publishers association?



In terms of the areas of collaboration between publishing house owners and managers in the Arab Gulf countries and the Emirates Publishers Association, the vast majority of participants (%89) reported collaborating in the area of “book fairs”. Some participants (%8) indicated collaboration in “joint publishing projects”. In contrast, only a very small number of participants (%3) mentioned collaboration in “research and development”.



what are the fields of cooperation between publishing houses in the Gulf and the Emirates publishers association?

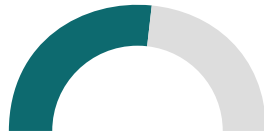




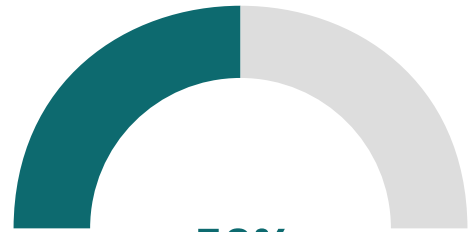
In terms of the evaluation by publishing house owners and managers of the effectiveness of the Emirates Publishers Association in promoting the publishing industry in the Arabian Gulf region, the results showed that their evaluation level reached %55. Oman recorded the highest evaluation level at %95, while Kuwait had the lowest evaluation level at %50.



**95%**  
Oman



**52 %**  
Saudi Arabia



**50%**

how effective is the Emirates publishers association in promoting the publishing industry in the Gulf region?



**60 %**  
Qatar

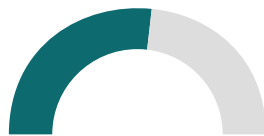


**50%**  
Kuwait

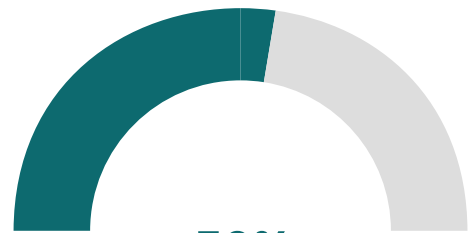
In terms of the evaluation by publishing house owners and managers in the Arab Gulf countries of support for regional publishing initiatives by the Emirates Publishers Association, the results showed that their evaluation level reached %53. Oman recorded the highest evaluation level at %67, while Qatar had the lowest evaluation level at %48.



**67%**  
Oman



**52 %**  
Saudi Arabia

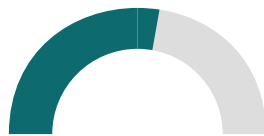


**53%**

how do you evaluate the support of the Emirates publishers association for regional publishing initiatives?



**48%**  
Qatar

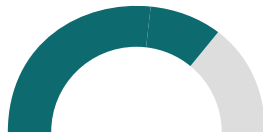


**54%**  
Kuwait

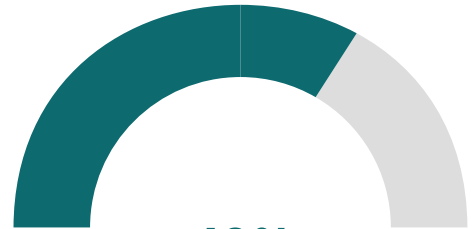
When publishing house owners and managers in the Arab Gulf countries were asked about the effectiveness of the Emirates Publishers Association in enhancing cooperation among publishing associations in the Gulf countries, the results showed that the effectiveness level reached %69. Oman recorded the highest effectiveness level at %85, while Kuwait had the lowest effectiveness level at %66.



**85%**  
Oman

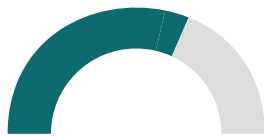


**70%**  
Saudi Arabia

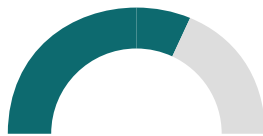


**69%**

effectiveness of the emirates publishers association in the strngthening coperation between publishing associations in the Gulf countries

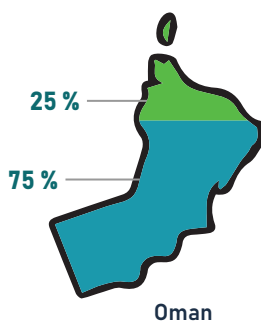


**67%**  
Qatar

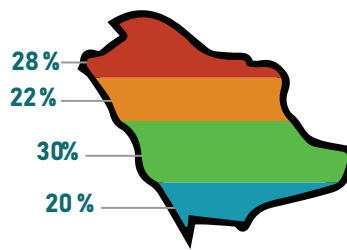


**66%**  
Kuwait

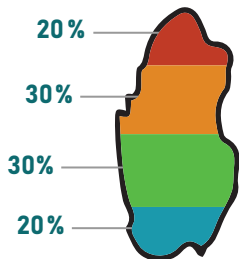
When exploring the opinions of publishing house owners and managers in the Arab Gulf countries on the main strengths of the Emirates Publishers Association, more than a quarter of the participants (%27) stated that “regional and international networking” is the most significant strength. In contrast, no one considered “advocacy and policy influence” to be a strength.



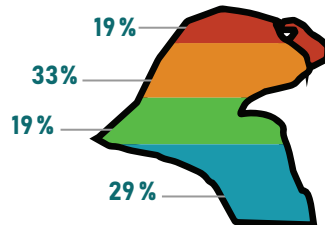
Oman



Saudi Arabia

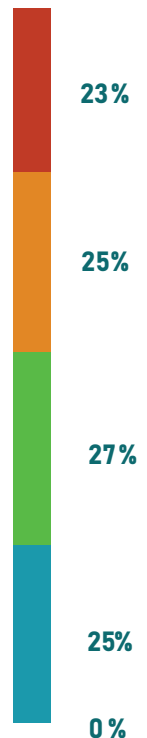


Qatar



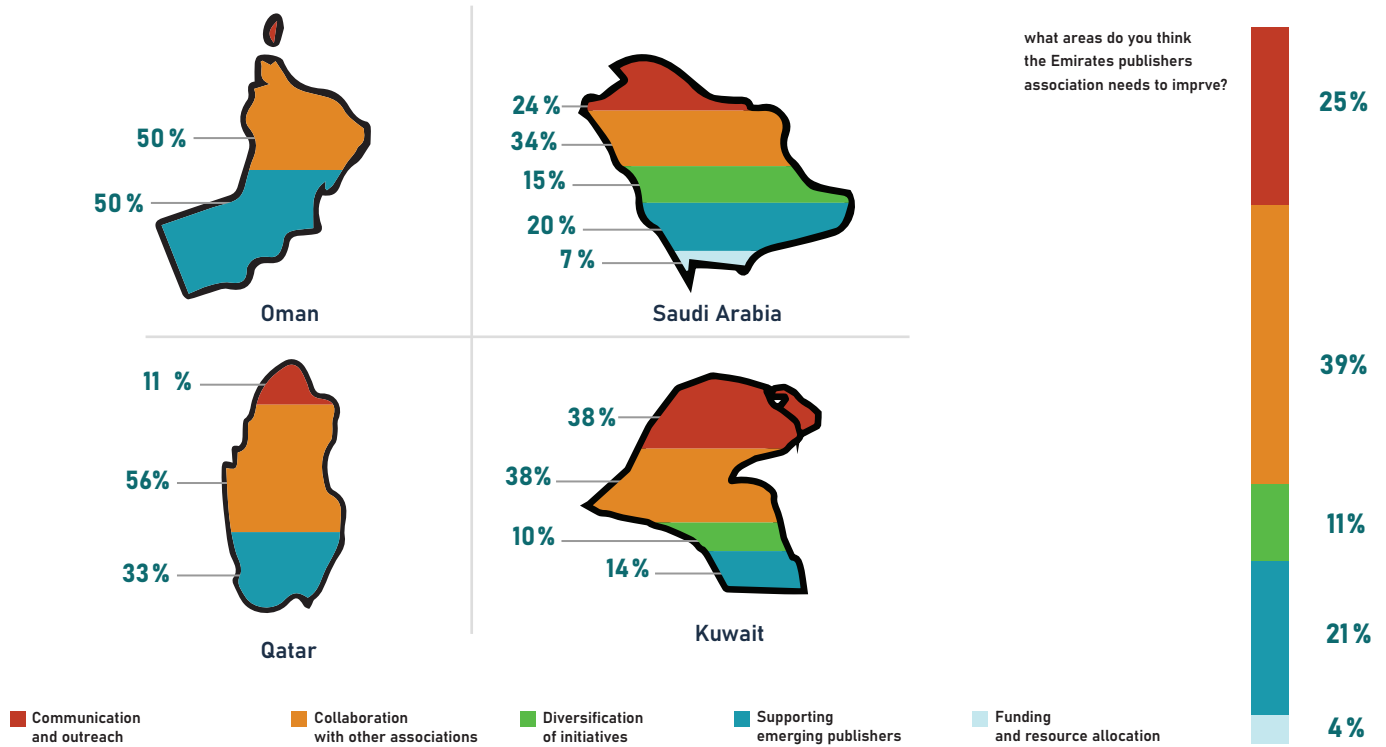
Kuwait

in your opinion, what are the main strengths of the Emirates publishers association from following?



■ Leadership and vision ■ Innovation in publishing ■ Regional and international networking ■ Training and development programs ■ Advocacy and policy influence

When publishing house owners and managers in the Arab Gulf countries were asked about areas for improvement in the Emirates Publishers Association, more than a third of the participants (%39) indicated that “collaboration with other associations” needs improvement, while a quarter of the participants (%25) believed that “communication and outreach” also require enhancement. In contrast, only a very small number of participants (%4) mentioned that “funding and resource allocation” need improvement.



The following suggestions represent a collection of opinions provided by publishing house managers and owners in the Gulf to enhance cooperation between the Emirates Publishers Association and their own associations. The suggestions focus on four main areas:

**1. Collaboration and Communication:**

- ✓ Strengthening cooperation among publishers.
- ✓ Increasing communication with new publishing houses.
- ✓ Continuous communication to meet the needs of publishers.
- ✓ Enhancing communication within book fairs.
- ✓ Expanding cooperation in publishing development between the UAE and Gulf countries.

**2. Support and Facilitation:**

- ✓ Providing financial support and contributing to printing costs.
- ✓ Supporting new publishing houses and offering services to them.
- ✓ Providing financial support and marketing for books.
- ✓ Simplifying procedures related to publishing.
- ✓ Supporting publishers across the Arab world and creating opportunities for them.



### 3. **Book Fairs:**

- ✓ Organizing book fairs every six months.
- ✓ Improving attendance at book fairs.
- ✓ Extending the duration of book fairs.
- ✓ Enhancing the experience of the Abu Dhabi International Book Fair.

### 4. **Awareness and Development:**

- ✓ Increasing awareness and general knowledge in the field of publishing

## **Proposed recommendations to strengthen the publishing sector in the UAE:**

1. Eliminating customs duties and other fees imposed on the publishing and distribution industry, in line with Reading Law No. 18 of 2016.
2. Providing storage facilities for imported publications or those printed locally for long periods in various emirates at nominal fees or free of charge.
3. Creating a government-funded Financial Support Fund to offer financial facilities to local publishers.
4. Allocating financial support for local publishers during book fairs in the UAE and waiving rental fees at those book fairs.
5. Encouraging government entities to purchase books and publications year-round, not just during book fairs.
6. Improving distribution and retail operations by providing additional channels to sell books and publications, aside from book fairs.
7. Organizing summer book fairs in various emirates to sell excess books and publications stored by local UAE publishers at nominal prices.
8. Establishing a modern printing press with global standards and subsidized prices for local and foreign publishers to attract investors in this sector.
9. Creating sales points at petrol stations across the UAE for publications with nominal fees or free of charge.
10. Supporting and encouraging the shift to digital and electronic book publishing and the use of modern technologies and artificial intelligence in the publishing industry.
11. Fostering partnerships between publishers and prominent cultural centers in the UAE to provide high-quality translations of books and publications into different languages.
12. Enhancing the legal framework to protect the rights of publishers and intellectual property, with the Emirates Publishers Association playing a key role in this area.
13. Facilitating the transition to digital publishing by supporting publishers to shift from traditional print-based business models to digital ones while ensuring the availability of high-quality Arabic digital content across various scientific and knowledge fields.
14. The Emirates Publishers Association should actively communicate with official entities to ease difficulties faced by local publishers and provide full support to elevate the publishing industry in the UAE to global levels.
15. Building a national culture that elevates the importance of reading as a lifelong habit in the UAE, ensuring that the implementation of VAT does not negatively impact the publishing sector.



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The UAE and GCC countries as a model