

The Role of Cultural and Artistic Institutions in Promoting the Values of Tolerance and Coexistence in the United Arab Emirates

Hani Yousef Jarrah^{†*} and Hussein Salem Serhan[†]

Abstract

This study aims at revealing the role of cultural and artistic institutions in promoting the values of tolerance and coexistence in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). In this research, the researchers followed the analytical descriptive method and used the questionnaire for data collection. The study sample consisted of 80 randomly chosen employees of the cultural and artistic institutions in the UAE. Results show there are no statistically significant differences ($\alpha = 0.05$) due to the effect of personal variables (gender, qualification, experience, type of work, nationality). The targeted institutions did not play their role appropriately in promoting the culture of dialogue and values of tolerance and promotion of human rights. It is recommended that there should be public relations programme aimed at developing a culture of tolerance and dialogue, allowing everyone to express their opinions and beliefs freely without hesitation or fear, and this is the case of those who are dealing with humanitarian affairs and democratic activities.

Keywords: Cultural and Artistic Institutions; Social, Intellectual, Religious and Cultural Tolerance; United Arab Emirates

[†] Al Ain University of Science and Technology, United Arab Emirates

*Corresponding Author, Email: yousefjarrah1984@gmail.com

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Introduction

There is an undeniable connection between the culture and moral development of a person growing within a specific cultural environment. However, there is deep disagreement on how this connection must be defined (Wainryb, 2006).

Human beings belong to various cultures and races, and thus the characteristics of people differ from one region to another (Balmaceda, 2018; Buzan, 2019). Hence, there should be tolerance and coexistence between individuals and groups. Recently, the world has witnessed a rapid development of the communications and information revolution in the context of globalisation (Tokareva, 2019), which has helped to overcome geographical boundaries, bringing people together and effectively linking different lifestyles and cultures. Therefore, the culture of tolerance and cohabitation has become a national and humanitarian necessity, both within the society that is intellectually, religiously, culturally diverse and even at the level of inter-state relations (Frank, 2016; Najjar & Abu Ghali, 2017).

The contrast between the individualistic and collectivistic cultures is well illustrative of how the alienation from the group goals affects the cultural coherence and consistency (examples include the United States of America, Canada, Western Europe, Australia, and New Zealand) (Wainryb, 2006). In collectivistic cultures (Africa, Asia, South America) social experience is structured around the family or the community (Killen & Wainryb, 2000).

Clearly, the concept of tolerance is more comprehensive than any definition, and the most comprehensive definition is the UNESCO Declaration of Principles on Tolerance of 16 November 1995 signed by 185 States:

Tolerance is respect, acceptance and appreciation of diversity the richness of the cultures of our world, the forms of our self-expression and the ways of manifesting human exclusivity.

This tolerance is enhanced by knowledge, openness, communication, freedom of expression, conscience and belief (Eriksen, 2001). Tolerance is not only a forgiving of the mistakes of others, but also coexistence with it, respect for its beliefs, ideas and attitudes, which contributes to the multiplicity of different visions and ideas, based on the principle of tolerance, equality, which gives everyone the right to take different positions on controversial issues (Tayeb, 2008). The United Arab Emirates (hereinafter – UAE) is one of the countries that foster the values of tolerance, coexistence and multiculturalism (Al Zu'abi, 2018). The state has international initiatives as well as several cultural and artistic institutions that consolidate the concept of tolerance and coexistence and ensure a decent life for all. Such cultural and artistic institutions have massive initiatives to promote the dialogue of civilisations and to combat extremism and racial discrimination among all peoples. The diversity of religious, ethnic, intellectual, and sectarian differences have cast a shadow over security, tolerance and peaceful coexistence in societies. The UAE society is one of the societies of the Arab world, which is witnessing a diversity of races and sects from different countries of the world. Hence, tension and social congestion and culture of intolerance and exclusion and non-acceptance of the others and the absence of dialogue have emerged. The latter may lead to violence, extremism, conflicts and schism between individuals and groups (Tayeb, 2008).

As cultural and artistic institutions continuously seek to spread a culture of coexistence and tolerance by various means, this study intends to reveal the role of cultural and artistic institutions in promoting the values of tolerance and coexistence in the UAE. The study aims at examining the significance of differences in the promotion of cultural and artistic values of tolerance and coexistence in the UAE, according to variables of gender, scientific qualification, experience, type of work and nationality.

Areas of Tolerance and Coexistence

There are many areas, which require a great deal of tolerance and co-existence, taking into account that the values of tolerance and coexistence in all fields are intertwined with each other. These areas are explained in detail as follows:

- First: values of intellectual and cultural tolerance. These values include the intellectual and philosophical system among individuals, which are homogeneous with faith in the values of diversity, existence security, stability, proper coexistence among individuals, in addition to progress and advancement.
- Second: values of tolerance and political coexistence. The values of tolerance and political coexistence are complementary to each other. The values of political tolerance include political participation, recognition of political pluralism, respect for others, positive attitudes, freedom of opinion and expression, justice and equality, respect for human rights, flexibility, sacrifice, freedom, alliance and solidarity (Abu Lamzi, 2000).
- Third: values of tolerance and social coexistence. The values of tolerance and co-existence contribute to the support of compassion among people, the spread of affection, familiarity and closeness, and the elimination of intolerance, hatred, mistrust of others, violence, envy and gossip and other social problems (Najjar & Abu Ghali, 2017).
- Fourth: values of tolerance and religious coexistence. Tolerance and religious coexistence are the coexistence of religions, the free exercise of religious rites, the abandonment of religious and racial intolerance, intellectual openness and respect for different religions and religious beliefs, respect for freedom of expression, constructive dialogue, effective communication, good faith, humility, mercy and peace (Sari & Indartono, 2019).

This research aims at examining the role of cultural and artistic institutions in promoting the values of tolerance and coexistence in the UAE. The following section reviews literature buttressing this research.

Literature Review

In their study Najjar and Abu Ghali (2017) tried to identify the role of Al-Aqsa University in enhancing the value of tolerance amongst students and faculty members. The results of this study showed that there are no differences in the role of Al-Aqsa University in developing tolerance values according to gender and political affiliation for students, as well as for faculty members. The results of this study is somewhat different to the study by Ajami and Al-Enzi (2014) conducted to examine the level of tolerance of the students at the Faculty of Basic Education in the State of Kuwait. The findings of this study unfolded that the students were highly tolerant, based primarily on cultural tolerance, then religious, followed by the political. There were also no differences due to gender and scientific specialisation while there existed significant differences amongst governorate.

Likewise, Khairi (2013) conducted a study on the reality of the role of Islamic education teachers in developing the value of tolerance among secondary students in Al-Leith governorate. The teachers do bear a significant role in spreading the values of tolerance, while the findings revealed no statistically significant differences according to the variables of gender, age, scientific qualification and degree. However, there were differences according to years of experience, especially for ten years and more.

Earlier in 2011 Sahin conducted a study on teachers' perceptions of tolerance in education in the University of Canakkale Unskis; the findings of this study recognised the need for tolerance and coexistence, both in society and within educational systems.

This finding bear resonance to the research findings as put forwarded by Shamshudinova et al., (2019). Indeed, religious tolerance is regarded as a basis of social unity, public security, and internal stability. The critical tasks

of Islamic, Orthodox Christian and Catholic religious associations include the prevention of intolerance or xenophobia in any form among their believers, the formation of respect to beliefs of different ethnic groups, to national traditions and customs, the non-admission of radicalisation of religious teachings and fundamentalist ideas, opposition to any form of religious extremism and terrorism (Balpanov et al., 2018). This research, however aims to probe the cultural and artistic institutions' role in promoting the values of tolerance and coexistence in UAE. The methods and methodological issues are outlined in the following section.

Methods

This research was conducted during 2017-2018. To accomplish the research objectives, we prepared a questionnaire covering all the variables of the study. The final version of the questionnaire consisted of two parts:

The first part was devoted to unravelling the demographics of the samples (gender, academic qualification, experience, type of work, nationality).

The second part covered the study variables and consisted of five areas:

- The first area: the values of intellectual and cultural tolerance consisted of 10 items, measured from (1-10).
- The second area: the values of political tolerance consisted of 9 items, measured from (11-20).
- The third area: values of social tolerance consisted of 8 items, measured from (21-28).
- The fourth area: the values of religious tolerance consisted of 9 items, measured from (29-37).

Sample

After preparing the questionnaire, we selected a random sample of the employees of the cultural

and artistic institutions in the UAE. The sample consisted of 80 employees of cultural and artistic institutions in the UAE, who were given to fill in questionnaires. Table 1 highlights the demography of the participants.

The five-point Likert scale was adopted to correct the study tools by giving each of its items one of its five degrees—strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree and digitally represented using—5, 4, 3, 2, 1 respectively. The following measure has been adopted for analysing the results:

From 1.00 to 2.33= low

From 2.34 to 3.67= average

From 3.68 to 5.00= large

Validity and Reliability

To verify the validity of the questionnaire, the researcher showed it to a group of experts in the same field to verify the following: 1) The appropriateness of the items; 2) The clarity of the items; 3) Suggestion of new items. The final version of the questionnaire was amended after reviewing the suggestions from the experts and then the questionnaires were distributed amongst the samples. To verify the reliability of the results of the questionnaire, the researcher used the internal consistency test by calculating the Cronbach α factor, because the Cronbach alpha test is based on the consistency of individual performance from one item to another. The reliability of the results stands at 90%, which indicates that the results are reliable. It is worth noting here that for the data analysis, mean and standard deviation were used in the statistical analysis program (SPSS) for data analysis.

Limitations

The application of the present study was limited to workers in artistic and cultural institutions of UAE. The results of the study are outlined in the following sections.

Table 1: Demographics of the Participants

Variables	Types	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	43	53.8
	Female	37	46.2
	Total	80	100
Experience	Less than 5 years	27	33.75
	From 6 to 15 years	35	43.75
	More than 15	18	22.5
	Total	80	100
Qualification	Secondary and above	12	15
	Diploma	13	16.25
	Bachelor	25	31.25
	Master	20	25.0
	Doctorate	10	12.5
	Total	80	100
Work type	Worker	10	12.5
	Administrative employee	30	37.5
	Head of section	25	31.25
	Manager	15	18.75
	Total	80	100
Nationality	Emirati	40	50
	Arabs	25	31.25
	International	15	18.75
	Total	80	100

Source: Questionnaire Survey

Results

In order to answer the question ‘What are the values of tolerance and coexistence that can be promoted and disseminated in the UAE?’, means and standard deviations were calculated for each of the scale items as shown in Table 2.

Table 2 illustrates the responses of the research participants on the terms of cultural tolerance values, the mean averages of this variable ranged between (2.3500 - 2.8750), and the standard deviations ranged from (40174 - 69537). Item (7), “Cultural and artistic institutions purify communities of superstition and misconceptions”, ranked the highest item with average of 2.8750 and a standard deviation of (04831), whereas item (1) “values and means of cultural dialogue” ranked the lowest item with an average of (2.3500) and a standard deviation (69537).

Values of Political Tolerance

The mean averages of this variable ranged (1.6000 - 2.9125), and the standard deviations ranged (40174 - 67400) on the Likert scale. The highest value is for item 8, “Cultural and artistic institutions shall promote freedom of opinion and constructive criticism” with an average of (2,9125) and a standard deviation (36261). The lowest value is for item 5, “Cultural and artistic institutions spread the culture of opposition committed to rejecting corruption” is at an average of 1.6000 and a standard deviation of 83590.

Table 3 paints the responses of the research participants on the terms of the values of social and religious tolerance, the mean averages of this variable ranged in between 2.8625 - 2.9500 and the standard deviations ranged from 26505-50566 . Item 5, “Cultural and artistic institutions instil the values of social cohesion among

members of society” ranked the highest with an average of 2.9500 and a standard deviation of (.27096). By contrast, item 8, which stipulates, “Cultural and artistic institutions develop values

of cooperation and teamwork” ranked the lowest with an average of (2.8625) and a standard deviation (.47049).

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Values of Intellectual and Cultural Tolerance

	Items	Discrepancy	Standard Deviation	Error	Mean	Range
1	Cultural and artistic institutions provide the society individuals with the values and means of cultural dialogue	.484	.69537	.07775	2.3500	2.00
2	Cultural and artistic institutions develop individuals’ awareness of cultural communication mechanisms	.161	.40174	.04492	2.8750	2.00
3	Cultural and artistic institutions contribute to the purification of the culture of society from manifestations of intolerance	.420	.64815	.07247	2.6875	2.00
4	Cultural and artistic institutions develop individuals’ awareness of the basics and requirements of civilised interaction	.263	.51312	.05737	2.8000	2.00
5	Cultural and artistic institutions deepen the values of intellectual and cultural tolerance among individuals	.522	.72216	.08074	2.6000	2.00
6	Cultural and artistic institutions disseminate awareness for individuals against flattening and cultural distortion	.373	.61095	.06831	2.7375	2.00
7	Cultural and artistic institutions purify communities of superstition and misconceptions	.187	.43210	.04831	2.8750	2.00
8	Cultural and artistic institutions protect the culture of individuals from extreme ideas and mental closure	.382	.61829	.06913	2.6500	2.00
9	Cultural and artistic institutions spread intellectual awareness in villages and remote places	.221	.47049	.05260	2.8625	2.00
10	Cultural and artistic institutions seek to eliminate ignorance and illiteracy through its programs	.247	.49667	.05553	2.8625	2.00

Source: Questionnaire Survey

Table 3: Average and Standard Deviation of Values of Social and Religious Tolerance						
	Items	Discrepancy	Standard Deviation	Error	Mean	Range
1	Cultural and artistic institutions develop the values of solidarity and social cohesion among the members of society	.070	.26505	.02963	2.9250	2.00
2	Cultural and artistic institutions contribute to the support of society and the welfare of its members	.177	.42078	.04704	2.8875	2.00
3	Cultural and artistic institutions promote the spirit of social responsibility in the minds of members of society	.106	.32584	.03643	2.9125	2.00
4	Cultural and artistic institutions instil social etiquette in the minds of members of society	.256	.50566	.05653	2.8500	2.00
5	Cultural and artistic institutions instil the values of social cohesion among society members	.073	.27096	.03029	2.9500	2.00
6	Cultural and artistic institutions foster a sense of common interest	.142	.37653	.04210	2.9000	2.00
7	Cultural and artistic institutions promote the values of sacrifice for the other and society	.212	.46046	.05148	2.8750	2.00
8	Cultural and artistic institutions develop values of cooperation and teamwork	.221	.47049	.05260	2.8625	2.00
	Items	Discrepancy	Standard Deviation	Error	Mean	Range
1	Cultural and artistic institutions renounce violence and religious intolerance in societies	.142	.37653	.04210	2.9000	2.00
2	The cultural and artistic institutions spread good morals and good treatment of individuals	.212	.46046	.05148	2.8750	2.00
3	Cultural and artistic institutions promote the principle of equality among individuals in society	.221	.47049	.05260	2.8625	2.00
4	Cultural and artistic institutions promote religious values among individuals in society	.202	.44986	.05030	2.8875	2.00
5	Cultural and artistic institutions promote the principle of	.131	.36261	.04054	2.9125	2.00

	respecting others regardless of their beliefs					
6	Cultural and artistic institutions promote the principle of affiliation and humanity among individuals in society	.187	.43210	.04831	2.8750	2.00
7	Cultural and artistic institutions support constructive religious dialogue	.212	.46046	.05148	2.8750	2.00
8	Cultural and artistic institutions call for respect for religions and religious beliefs within the limits of individual freedom in society	.073	.27096	.03029	2.9500	2.00
9	Cultural and artistic institutions seek to deliver religion in its proper and legitimate form to various communities	.062	.24873	.02781	2.9625	2.00

Source: Questionnaire Survey

Values of Religious Tolerance

The second part of the Table 3 shows terms of religious tolerance values, the mean averages of this variable ranged from 2.8625 - 2.9625, and the standard deviations ranged from .24873-47049 . The item 9, “Cultural and artistic institutions seek to deliver religion in its proper and legitimate form to various communities” ranked the highest with an average of (2.9625) and a standard deviation (.24873). On the other hand, item 3, “Cultural and artistic institutions

promote the principle of equality among individuals in society” ranked the lowest with an average of 2.8625 and a standard deviation of .47049 (see Table 3).

The values of mean and standard deviation were calculated to find the significance of the differences between the scores of the two groups (males and females) on the extent to which cultural and artistic institutions applied in promoting the values of tolerance in UAE as illustrated in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Differences between the Mean of Male and Female Scores and the Type of Nationality			
Gender	Number	Mean	Standard deviation
Differences between the means of male and female scores			
Females	37	2.66	0.51
Males	43	2.83	0.36
Differences between the means of the type of nationality			
Nationality	Number	Mean	Standard deviation
Emirati	40	2.99	0.59
Arabs	25	2.66	0.51
International	15	2.60	0.36

Source: Questionnaire Survey

Table 4 shows that the female mean value stands at 2.66 and the male mean value at 2.83. The second part of Table 4 shows that the mean value of the nationality of the UAE is 2.99 and that the mean value of foreign nationality is

2.60, while for the Arab nationality, it is 2.66. In order to illustrate the significance of the statistical differences between the means, the variances were analysed.

Table 5: Differences between the Averages of Degrees of Academic Qualification and the Means of the Type of Work

Qualification	Number	Mean	Standard deviation
Differences between the Averages of Degrees of Academic Qualification			
Secondary and below	12	2.46	0.31
Diploma	13	2.56	0.33
Bachelor	25	2.66	0.51
Master	20	2.83	0.36
Doctorate	10	2.36	0.29
Differences between the Means of the Type of Work			
Work type	Number	Mean	Standard deviation
Worker	10	2.36	0.31
Administrative employee	30	2.95	0.58
Head of section	25	2.66	0.51
Manager	15	2.60	0.36

Source: Questionnaire Survey

Table 5 presents the average of the master’s degree as the highest value (2.83) and the doctorate as the lowest value with mean of (2.36). The second part of the Table 5 shows that the mean of an Administrative employee (2.95) is higher than that of the worker (2.36).

From the analysis of variations in the impact of gender, scientific qualification, type of work and nationality using the variables of tolerance and coexistence, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- There were no statistically significant differences ($\alpha = 0.05$) due to the gender variable, with a value of 0.104 and a statistical value of 0.748.
- There were no statistically significant differences ($\alpha = 0.05$) due to the variable of the scientific qualification, with a value of 0.651 and a statistical value of 0.422.
- There were no statistically significant differences ($\alpha = 0.05$) due to the variable

of the type of work, with a value of 0.504 and a statistical value of 0.605.

- There were no statistically significant differences ($\alpha = 0.05$) due to the variable of nationality, with a value of 0.504 and a statistical value of 0.605.

Discussion

Findings of the study revealed that the cultural institutions have succeeded in promoting the values of cultural tolerance through their success in purification of the society from spreading misconceptions and fables. Further, the findings are consistent with Mazeau (2009) and Al-Ajami and Al-Enzi (2014) studies. Moreover, it was found that cultural and artistic institutions have sensitised individuals to the process of political awareness, freedom of expression, constructive criticism, and ways of expressing opinion and respect for the other opinion by promoting the values of political tolerance. The findings of this research is similar to the findings of the study of Al-Ajami and Al-

Enzi (2014). In addition, Emirati cultural institutions adhere to the Emirati's customs and traditions and promote the spirit of social cohesion among the members of society through social activities aimed at increasing social cohesion and excellent work among the members of society.

Shamshudinova et al. (2019) argue that the model of interconfessional tolerance in modern, multiethnic societies should also stem from the increase of professional responsibility for selection and level of materials concerning the religious sphere, the problems of interconfessional relations in mass media. The consequences caused by the publication of caricatures of the Islamic prophet Muhammad can serve as an example.

One can note that the Emirati's cultural and artistic institutions disseminate the concepts of Islam properly to the members of the study sample. The cultural and artistic institutions have succeeded in promoting the process of intellectual openness and the presence of a large number of learners. These findings bear resonance with the studies of Al-Ajami and Al-Enzi (2014) and Tayeb (2008).

As for the impact of cultural and artistic institutions in promoting the values of tolerance and coexistence in the UAE, it was found that the cultural and artistic institutions in the UAE have significantly promoted the values of tolerance of all kinds in the UAE society and the consolidation of those values. Concerning the influence of the variables of the study, there are no statistically significant differences of the personal variables (gender, qualification, experience, employment type, nationality) (≤ 0.05) in strengthening the values of tolerance and coexistence in the UAE by the cultural and artistic institutions. This might indicate that the UAE has justice and does not differentiate between citizens according to their different backgrounds. Overall the findings of this research bear similarity with the studies conducted by Najjar & Abu Ghali (2017), Khairi (2013) and Al-Ajami and Enzi (2014).

Conclusion

Tolerance can be regarded as an ethical, social and psychological virtue practised by all religions in spreading their messages in order to elevate humankind to excellence. Not all institutions played their role as expected in promoting the culture of dialogue, the values of tolerance and the promotion of human rights, as stipulated by the constitutions of human rights in the world. The various media have great importance in disseminating the critical topics and proposals that will put in place appropriate solutions and positive proposals in order to restore confidence and development to the values of tolerance and the culture of dialogue with others. The cultural and artistic institutions in the UAE have significantly promoted the values of tolerance of all kinds in the UAE society and the consolidation of those values.

Recommendations

In light of the results, the researchers recommend the following:

- Supporting public relations programmes that address the issues of society, especially in the development of the values of tolerance and the promotion of a culture of dialogue with each other, as an alternative to the culture of intolerance and its consequences.
- Building bridges of cooperation and networking for more meetings, dialogues and forums to discuss the disputed issues and establish standards by all parties, to end the state of hostility through ongoing dialogues to achieve a satisfactory outcome for all parties.
- Identification and selection of the appropriate means of communication, which contribute to building a public relations programme aimed at developing a culture of tolerance and dialogue with each other

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