STATISTICS CENTRE

Methodology

Culture Statistics

2025

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1. Introduction

The cultural indicators reflect the reality and performance of culture in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. These indicators assist in understanding and evaluating the performance of individuals in cultural and social fields, while also supporting the identification of areas requiring enhancement or improvement by providing accurate and reliable data. Through detailed analysis of these indicators, policymakers and relevant entities can make evidence-based decisions aimed at improving services and promoting culture and community development.

At the Statistics Center – Abu Dhabi, these indicators are documented and analyzed accurately and systematically to ensure their quality and validity, with the methodology regularly updated to keep pace with changes and developments in these statistics.

2. Statistical information

2.1. Importance and Objectives

Accurate Culture statistics are vitally important to inform and support with the cultural reality of society. They play an important role in policy formulation, supporting creativity, and guiding investments in the cultural sectors.

The main objectives of analyzing statistics on cultural include the following:

- Providing accurate and reliable statistical data and information for the entities responsible for the cultural sector.
- Monitoring cultural indicators.
- Supplying decision-makers and the government with the necessary data to assess community needs and develop future plans.
- Supporting policymakers in the development and direction of cultural policies.
- Promoting cultural identity and preserving heritage.
- Measuring cultural participation.

2.2. Key Outputs

Culture Statistics provides an integrated system of 27 statistical indicators aimed at describing the status of cultural trends in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. These indicators highlight multiple axes related to visitors and cultural events, libraries, printing presses, museums, heritage sites, cinema, and cultural lectures. These statistics provide an accurate and reliable database that supports evaluation processes, strategic planning, and the development of relevant public policies. The list of indicators is included in Appendix Table (1).

2.3. Concepts and definitions

Clear and precise concepts and definitions ensure consistency in interpretation and application across various cultural indicators. These concepts form the foundation for data collection and analysis, supporting a unified approach to assessing the characteristics of these groups and analyzing their conditions. The concepts and definitions adopted by the Statistics Center – Abu Dhabi are aligned with internationally recognized terminology. They include the following:

- **Cultural Events:** Organized activities, festivals, or exhibitions that celebrate the cultural heritage, traditions, and arts of a community or society. (Source: UNWTO (Adapted by SCAD))
- **Museum:** Anon-profitmaking, permanent institution in the service of society and of its development, and open to the public, who acquires, conserves, conducts, researches, communicates, and exhibits, for purposes of study, education and entertainment topics about people and the environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment. (Source: International Council of Museums (ICOM), Article 3, Statutes, 2007)
- **Library:** Organization, or part of an organization, whose main aims are to build and maintain a collection and to facilitate the use of such information resources and facilities as are required to meet the informational, research, educational, cultural or recreational needs of its users. (Source: ESCWA Glossary)
- **Cultural Exchange Programs:** Initiatives and activities facilitating the exchange of cultural ideas, traditions, and experiences between different communities or nations. (Source: UNESCO (Adapted by SCAD))
- **Cultural Centre:** Facility that provides services that are intended for the enrichment of the public through the enjoyment and appreciation of the arts, culture and/ or heritage. A cultural center acts as a hub of activity by addressing the needs of people and their social, cultural and environmental values. These include museums, arts/performing arts centers, galleries, visitor welcome centers and amphitheaters. (Source: DMT, Abu Dhabi Community Facility Planning Standard)

- **Cultural Services:** Services that provide access to cultural experiences, such as performances, exhibitions, and heritage tours. (Source: UNESCO)
- **Cultural Heritage:** The legacy of physical artifacts and intangible attributes of a group or society that are inherited from past generations, maintained in the present, and preserved for future generations. (Source: UNESCO (Adapted by SCAD))
- **Cultural Preservation** :The protection, conservation, and safeguarding of cultural heritage sites, artifacts, and traditions for future generations. (Source: UNESCO (Adapted by SCAD))
- **Base population:** The number of individuals in a given area (for example, a nation, emirate or city) determined from the Census data or population estimates, and It is the denominator used to calculate different rates or ratios in official statistics. (Source: ESCWA: Bulletin on Population and Vital Statistics in The Arab Region; Sixteenth Issue 2013)

2.4. Classifications and Standards applied

The purpose of using these sources is to ensure the adoption of accurate and standardized terminology and criteria in the classification and documentation of cultural data, thereby ensuring comparability and alignment with best local and international practices.

- **UNESCO Framework for Cultural Statistics 2025[1]:** This document aims to provide tools and guidelines for countries around the world in collecting and analyzing data related to culture. This framework is an important reference for comprehensive assessing the culture sector and includes a set of criteria and topics that countries must follow to provide accurate and reliable data on culture and its economic and social impacts.
- **Culture & Heritage Sustainability Guidelines[2]:** This is a set of principles and standards developed by UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) to promote the long-term preservation of culture and cultural heritage and ensure their sustainable interaction with contemporary challenges, whether economic, environmental, or social.
- **Environmental & Social Management System Standard on Cultural Heritage (ESMS)[3]:** This is a framework adopted to ensure the conservation and protection of cultural heritage within operations and projects that may impact the environment and local communities. This standard is part of broader environmental and social systems that aim to achieve a balance between economic development, environmental protection, and human rights.
- **Abu Dhabi Reference Data (ADRD)[4]:** is a strategic project aimed at the Statistics Centre – Abu Dhabi (SCAD) that aims to establishing a unified, structured, and technically sound framework for reference data governance, management, and usage across the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. It aims to provide a consistent basis for collecting, compiling, organizing and analyzing

data. It contributes to enhancing data integration, comparability, and the production of accurate and reliable statistical indicators, while fostering collaboration among all stakeholders within the Abu Dhabi data ecosystem.

2.5. Available Breakdown

The Statistics Center - Abu Dhabi - publishes a wide range of indicators related to Culture statistics. These are published according to the following levels:

Visitors to Dar Al Kutub:
- Gender
- Gender (per 1,000 population)

Visitors to Dar Al Kutub Portal

Visitors to events (per 1,000 population)

Visitors to cultural and heritage sites (per 1,000 population)

Number of titles available at Dar Al Kutub:
- Topic
- Topic and Language

Number of Copies Available at Dar Al Kutub
- Topic
- Topic and Language

Number of Borrowers:
- Unique from Dar Al Kutub
- Accumulated from Dar Al Kutub

Number of Borrowing Transactions:
- From Dar Al Kutub
- From Dar Al Kutub of Online Resources

Number of printing presses
- Region

Number of visitors to museums:
- Category and type
- Museum and month

Number of bookstores:
- Region

Number of cinemas:
- Region

Number of Live Programs that Broadcasted from Abu Dhabi Radio Station.

Sites:
- On the tentative world heritage list
- On the world heritage list

Cultural Lectures.

The main variables are also classified according to:

Region:
- Abu Dhabi Region
- Al Ain Region
- Al Dhafra Region

Gender:
- Male
- Female

Topic:
- Arts
- Education
- General Works
- History & Geography
- Language
- Law
- Literature
- Philosophy & Psychology
- Political Science
- Religion
- Science
- Social Sciences
- Technology

Month:
- January
- February
- March
- April
- May
- June
- July
- August
- September
- October
- November
- December

Language:
- Arabic
- Foreign

Category:
- Delegations
- General Visitors
- Students
- Teachers

Museum:
- Al Ain Museum
- Al Ain Palace Museum
- Dalma Museum
- Al Jahili Fort Museum
- Qasr Al Muwaiji
- Louvre Museum

(Note: The main variables are categorized by source)

2.6. Statistical population

The statistical population for cultural statistics in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi is divided into several sub-populations. The statistical population for indicators related to event visitors, cultural and heritage sites, Dar Al Kutub, Dar Al Kutub Portal, and museums includes all visitors (both Emiratis and non-Emiratis) who participate in visiting these sites. For indicators related to heritage sites, printing presses, bookstores, and cinemas, the statistical population comprises all heritage sites, printing presses, bookstores, and cinemas located within the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.

Regarding indicators for titles and copies at the Dar Al Kutub, the statistical population consists of all books available at the Dar Al Kutub. As for indicators related to live programs and cultural lectures, the statistical population includes all programs broadcast live by Abu Dhabi Radio Station and all cultural lectures organized within the Emirate.

2.7. Statistical unit

The statistical units adopted in this methodology include people who are interested in visiting cultural events and activities at various cultural sites: Dar Al Kutub, Dar Al Kutub portals, museums, printing presses, bookstores, and cinemas. In addition to the people concerned with borrowing books.

2.8. Geographical coverage

Culture statistics cover the three regions of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi (Abu Dhabi, Al Ain, and Al Dhafra).

2.9. Unit of measure

Culture statistics are presented using measurement units that correspond to the nature of each indicator, ensuring data clarity and ease of analysis. The main units include the following:

- **People:** This unit is used to measure indicators related to people participation in cultural events (Dar Al Kutub, Dar Al Kutub Portal, museums) as well as borrowing indicators.

- **Visitor per 1,000 population:** This unit is used as a measurement for indicators related to visitors to events, cultural and heritage sites, and the Dar Al Kutub.

- **Number:** This unit is used for other cultural statistics indicators related to the number of titles, Copies, printing presses, cultural lectures, cinemas, and live programs.

These units contribute to standardizing the presentation of data and ensuring comparability, thereby enhancing the accuracy of analysis and the effective use of indicators in decision-making.

2.10. Reference period

The reference period for cultural statistics indicators is divided into several timeframes. The reference period for indicators such as visitors to the Dar Al Kutub Portal, Copies Available at Dar Al Kutub, Accumulated Borrowers, and Borrowing transactions (Dar Al Kutub and Online Resources) is the previous quarter.

Meanwhile, the reference period for indicators including visitors to events, visitors to cultural and heritage sites, visitors to the Dar Al Kutub, titles available, unique borrowers, printing presses, museums, bookstores, cinemas, live programs, and cultural lectures is the latest calendar year for which data is available.

2.11. Timeliness

The Statistics Center – Abu Dhabi issues cultural statistics indicators at different intervals. Indicators for museum visitors, Dar Al Kutub visitors, available titles and copies, borrowers and Borrowing Transactions are published within 2 months after the latest reference period for which data is available.

Indicators for event visitors, visitors to cultural and heritage sites, printing presses, bookstores, cinemas, and cultural lectures are released within 12 months after the latest reference period for which data.

2.12. Frequency of dissemination

Cultural statistics are collected and published at different intervals, ensuring the provision of up-to-date data that reflects the cultural landscape within the community. This regular periodicity allows for tracking changes in key indicators, supporting policymakers in understanding cultural trends, measuring cultural diversity, planning, development, strategic decision-making, and guiding cultural initiatives based on accurate and current data.

Indicators related to museum visitors are published monthly, while those for visitors to the Dar Al Kutub, Dar Al Kutub Portal, titles and copies available, borrowers and Borrowing transactions are published quarterly.

Indicators for event visitors, visitors to cultural and heritage sites, printing presses, bookstores, cinemas, live programs broadcast by Abu Dhabi Radio, Sites on the tentative world heritage list, and cultural lectures are published annually.

2.13. Data Time Series

The length of the time series for available data related to cultural statistics varies by indicator, covering different time periods that reflect the development of data collection and the expansion of indicators over the years. The series begins in 2010 and extends to the most recent years up to 2024.

2.14. Abu Dhabi Special Considerations

The data collection is limited to the territorial boundaries of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. However, the administrative data sources used in this process are also structured to operate at the emirate level, ensuring data integrity and reliability.

3. Statistical processing

3.1. Data sources

Administrative data is the primary and sole source for cultural statistics, as it contributes to producing reliable statistical indicators that cover the various aspects related to these groups.

3.1.1. Administrative data

Most cultural statistics are produced from administrative data provided by various government entities through existing agreements and memoranda of understanding. These government entities either prepare official statistics according to the statistical standards agreed upon with the Statistics Center – Abu Dhabi or provide raw data from administrative records, which are then processed statistically by the Center.

The Statistics Center receives administrative data from several entities within the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, including the Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi and the Abu Dhabi Media Network. The Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi is considered the primary source for most cultural statistics indicators in the Emirate.

3.2. Data validation and editing

3.2.1. Data validation

The validation and editing process of raw data is important as it constitutes the basis for subsequent statistical analysis. SCAD implements various measures to ensure data accuracy and high-quality standards. All required data is verified for completeness and compliance with the Centre's requirements. Administrative data is regularly audited to detect, address, and properly document any errors. Data consistency with statistical definitions and classifications is verified, outliers are reviewed, and the logical coherence of the data is checked.

Culture data are reviewed and edited in relation to previous years and the data associated therewith, checking logicality by considering both internal (relationships, structure and correlations within the dataset) and external consistency (data supplied in previous years and other data associated therewith). In some cases, automated rules embedded in electronic data capturing platforms are also used to detect errors or determine unacceptable responses/entries. Reports on the errors are then submitted to the relevant parties.

SCAD may also implement or require government entities to implement the following types of data editing in specific cases, as is also outlined in the Statistical Data Editing Guide:

- **Validity and completeness of data:** The validity of the data refers to the correctness of the responses/entries, based on the possible options (number, percentage, etc.).
- **Range:** The range sets the minimum and maximum expected values of the variable.
- **Duplicate data entry:** Verifying that the data of each unit of the register or the database was entered only once, with no duplication, especially when there are variations in some index fields of the unit within the record.
- **Logical consistency:** Consistency is the presence of logical relationships and interdependence between the variables. This type of editing considers the connection between data fields or variables.
- **Outliers:** This type of editing follows other checks and is used for the detection of extreme values, based on the distribution of the current data and previous data series, which makes it easier to detect the values that can be considered unusual or extreme, so that they can be checked and verified.

3.2.2. Missing data adjustments

Addressing missing data is a critical aspect of ensuring the quality and accuracy of cultural statistical indicators. Since the adopted methodology is based on administrative data, the data provider makes every effort to deliver complete datasets to the Statistics Centre – Abu Dhabi. Submitted data undergoes thorough review during both the collection and processing stages, with corrective measures implemented in cases where gaps or inconsistencies are detected—either through direct coordination with the source entity or by validating against historical time series and relevant classifications. These processes aim to minimize data gaps and ensure the comprehensiveness of records.

For cases of non-response, different imputation methods are applied based on the type of missing data. In instances of item non-response, the carry-forward method is employed, using data from the previous period for the same entity. In cases of unit non-response, regional averages from comparable cultural institutions are used as substitutes. Where data is missing entirely and no response is available, administrative records are utilized to bridge the gaps.

Together, these procedures contribute to enhancing the accuracy and completeness of statistical outputs, thereby supporting the production of reliable and credible cultural indicators.

3.2.3. Data Limitations and Disclaimer

Cultural sector indicators face several coverage limitations that impact the comprehensiveness and accuracy of the available data. Key among these limitations are the infrequent updates of datasets and the varying methods of data recording and documentation across different entities, which complicate comparative analysis and hinder in-depth interpretation. Additionally, some indicators fail to capture the quality of participation or the nature of cultural engagement, and visits or activities are often counted repeatedly without distinguishing between unique users and recurring interactions. Furthermore, informal or digital cultural activities are, in some cases, excluded from measurement, which can result in an incomplete representation of the cultural landscape.

Visitor counting methodology is a critical factor in determining the accuracy and comprehensiveness of cultural indicators. Variations in the tools and methods used—such as electronic counters, ticketing systems, or manual registration—can lead to inconsistent results, including the potential overcounting of repeat visits or the omission of certain visitor groups. Moreover, some methodologies lack the ability to disaggregate data by visitor type, age group, or nationality, limiting the potential for detailed qualitative analysis.

3.3. Statistical Calculation Method

The computational methods used in cultural statistics ensure accuracy and consistency in data analysis and reporting. This methodology relies on direct calculations based on administrative data classified according to specific variables. The applied calculations include the following:

- **Visitors to events (per 1,000 population):** [Number of visitors to events/ Total number of populations] x 1000
- **Visitors to cultural and heritage sites (per 1,000 population):** [Number of visitors to cultural and heritage sites / Total number of populations] x 1000
- **Visitors to Dar Al Kutub:** Total number of visitors to Dar Al Kutub in the Abu Dhabi Emirate
- **Visitors to Dar Al Kutub by gender (per 1,000 population):** [Visitors to Dar Al Kutub by gender / Total number of populations] x 1000, Broken down by gender
- **Visitors to Dar Al Kutub Portal:** Total number of visitors to the Dar Al Kutub Portal in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi
- **Number of titles available at Dar Al Kutub by topic and language:** Total number of books available in Dar Al Kutub in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, Broken down by topic and language
- **Number of Copies of Available at Dar Al Kutub by Topic and Language:** Total number of copies available at Dar Al Kutub in the Abu Dhabi Emirate, Broken down by topic and language

- **Number of Unique Borrowers from Dar Al Kutub:** Total number of borrowers from the Dar Al Kutub in the Abu Dhabi Emirate

- **Number of Accumulated Borrowers from Dar Al Kutub:** Total number of accumulated borrowers from the Dar Al Kutub in the Abu Dhabi Emirate

- **Number of Borrowing Transactions from Dar Al Kutub:** Total number of borrowing transactions from the Dar Al Kutub in the Abu Dhabi Emirate

- **Number of Borrowing Transactions from Dar Al Kutub of Online Resources:** Total number of borrowing transactions of online sources from the Dar Al Kutub in the Abu Dhabi Emirate

- **Number of printing presses:** Total number of printing press shops in the Abu Dhabi Emirate

- **Number of visitors to museums:** Total number of museums visitors in the Abu Dhabi Emirate

- **Number of bookstores:** Total number of bookstores in the Abu Dhabi Emirate

- **Number of cinemas:** Total number of cinemas in the Abu Dhabi Emirate

- **Number of Live Programs that Broadcasted from Abu Dhabi Radio Station:** Total number of live programs broadcast by Abu Dhabi radio station in the Abu Dhabi Emirate

- **Sites on the tentative world heritage list:** Total number of sites that have been temporarily included in the World Heritage List issued by UNESCO in the Abu Dhabi Emirate

- **Sites on the world heritage list:** Total number of sites included in the World Heritage List issued by UNESCO in the Abu Dhabi Emirate

- **Cultural lectures:** Total number of cultural lectures held in the Abu Dhabi Emirate

These accounts contribute to providing accurate indicators that more precisely reflect the cultural landscape, enabling strategic decision-making that positively impacts cultural development. This helps in assessing efficiency, identifying challenges, and guiding cultural directions in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.

3.4. Seasonal Adjustment

Statistics Centre - Abu Dhabi - does not apply seasonal adjustments to culture-related statistics. This decision is based on the understanding that cultural statistics are not significantly affected by seasonal variations.

4. Methodology changes

Methodological changes in relation to administrative data may occur in line with changes in quality assurance and editing processes, organizational structures and systems in place. The methodology may also be amended bearing in mind factors such as policy objectives and indicator relevance. There have, however, been no recent methodology changes related to Culture statistics

5. Revision policy

The continuous improvement of data is mandatory to ensure the accuracy of the data and statistical products provided by Statistics Centre – Abu Dhabi. This process involves reviewing published official statistics through printed documents or approved dissemination channels. The policy outlines the general rules for reviewing and publishing statistics, informing users of potential reasons for revisions, classifying improvements, and documenting all aspects of the review process. This framework enables producers to determine revision mechanisms based on specific characteristics. The improvement policy covers all indicators, statistics, and time series with varying time intervals. In addition, Statistics Centre – Abu Dhabi publishes a general data revision policy that applies to all statistics under its responsibility, ensuring adaptability to the unique nature of different statistics and allowing for specialized improvement policies in alignment with the general policy.

6. Statistical quality

The quality of statistical data focuses on the concept of (data relevance for use) by preparing statistical data characterized by a set of traits and properties that meet and align with the data requirements of users and decision-makers. Thus, statistical quality exists within an institutional environment that is characterized by professionalism, integrity, and neutrality, closely related to the set objectives for the data and the needs of users. This is achieved through the use of a clear, standardized framework that ensures the data's reliability, realism, comparability, efficiency, accessibility, and flexibility, and that it is available to all within an appropriate timeframe and in an easily accessible and usable manner. Statistical product quality reports are prepared by the Quality Team in SCAD.

7. Appendix table

Table (1): List of statistical indicators

S.V. Code	Statistical Value (En)	اسم المؤشر
1833	Sites on the tentative world heritage list	المواقع المدرجة على القائمة المبدئية للتراث العالمي
1834	Sites on the world heritage list	المواقع المدرجة في قائمة التراث العالمي
1835	Visitors to events (per 1,000 population)	زوار الفعاليات (لكل 1,000 من السكان)
1836	Visitors to cultural and heritage sites (per 1,000 population)	زوار المواقع الثقافية والتراثية (لكل 1,000 من السكان)
1837	Visitors to Dar Al Kutub by gender (per 1,000 population)	زوار دار الكتب حسب النوع (لكل 1,000 من السكان)
1838	Number of printing presses	عدد المطابع
1839	Number of printing presses by region	عدد المطابع حسب المنطقة
1840	Number of bookstores	عدد مراكز بيع الكتب
1845	Number of cinemas by region	عدد دور السينما حسب المنطقة
1846	Number of cinemas	عدد دور السينما
1848	Cultural lectures	المحاضرات الثقافية
1849	Number of Live Programs that Broadcasted from Abu Dhabi Radio Station	عدد البرامج المباشرة التي تبث من إذاعة أبوظبي
1850	Number of bookstores by region	عدد مراكز بيع الكتب حسب المنطقة
5099	Number of titles available at Dar Al Kutub by topic	عدد العناوين المتاحة في دار الكتب حسب الموضوع
5101	Number of titles available at Dar Al Kutub by topic and language	عدد العناوين المتاحة في دار الكتب حسب الموضوع واللغة
5102	Visitors to Dar Al Kutub	زوار دار الكتب
5103	Visitors to Dar Al Kutub by gender	زوار دار الكتب حسب النوع

S.V. Code	Statistical Value (En)	اسم المؤشر
5104	Number of Unique Borrowers from Dar Al Kutub	عدد المستعيرون الفريد من دار الكتب
5105	Number of visitors to museums	عدد الزوار إلى المتاحف
5106	Number of visitors to museums by category and type	عدد الزوار إلى المتاحف حسب الفئة والنوع
5107	Number of visitors to museums by museum and month	عدد الزوار إلى المتاحف حسب المتحف والشهر
6115	Number of Copies of Available at Dar Al Kutub by Topic	عدد نسخ المتاحة في دار الكتب حسب الموضوع
6116	Number of Copies of Available at Dar Al Kutub by Topic and Language	عدد نسخ المتاحة في دار الكتب حسب الموضوع واللغة
6117	Visitors to Dar Al Kutub Portal	زوار بوابة دار الكتب
6118	Number of Accumulated Borrowers from Dar Al Kutub	عدد المستعيرون التراكمي من دار الكتب
6119	Number of Borrowing Transactions from Dar Al Kutub	عدد عمليات الإعارة من دار الكتب
6120	Number of Borrowing Transactions from Dar Al Kutub of Online Resources	عدد عمليات الإعارة من دار الكتب من المصادر الإلكترونية