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Contents

Tourist, Local, and Broker Perceptions of Abu Dhabi and Dubai, United Arab Emirates: Tourist Gazes, Ultra-Artifacts, and Hyperreality

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The globalization of tourism has dramatically influenced the construction of destinations, as well as the demand for novel experiences in such places as the Emirate of Abu Dhabi and Dubai in the United Arab Emirates. As tourism providers work to immerse visitors in innovative tourism sites characterized by wondrous architecture with extreme technological enhancements, it becomes critical to develop a new and comprehensive understanding of experiential travel. This study employs a mixed-methods research design to develop insights on concepts of tourist gazes, ultra-artifacts, and hyperreality by delving into processes and interactions between brokers, locals, and tourists within natural and built environments. Tourism in Abu Dhabi and Dubai entails a dynamic interaction between ultra-artifactual components and travelers in the pursuit of contrast. Tourism gazes facilitate immersive experiences of hyper-real tourism spaces. This research contributes to Urry's sociological studies on tourist gazes by introducing a new set of 'hyper-gazes' that capture individuals' stimulating encounters that redefine reality. Findings underscore the importance of perceptions in understanding the design of hyperreal productions and tourism development in the future.

Keywords: Tourist gaze, hyperreality, ultra-artifacts, globalization, development, innovation, United Arab Emirates

Introduction

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is a federation of seven emirates founded in December 1971. Although a relatively young country, the region has garnered significant attention due to its explosive growth from a barren desert to an urban epicenter internationally recognized. In contrast to most western cities, where urban transformation is a slow process, the UAE and its major cities of Abu Dhabi and Dubai have been categorized as rapidly urbanizing cities or 'instant cities'. Although the growth of the region is primarily associated with the discovery of oil and gas reserves, development and expansion today transcend sectors of international trade, business, real estate, technology, construction, and manufacturing. As a result, the region and its emirates are beginning to

position themselves internationally as a gateway between newly emerging centers of the East and the West.

Camble (1999) describes tourism in the UAE as "a sleeping giant on the verge of awakening to tourism", the emirate possesses natural and cultural attractions, modern infrastructure, and local and contemporary accommodation sectors, alongside the delivery of high-class quality services, safety, and stability which have built the foundation of its tourism sector (Sharpley 2002, 222).

Despite traditionally being characterized as a region known for its wealth accumulated through oil production; today, the rapid expansion of tourism has led to the emergence of the Middle East and regions such as Abu Dhabi and Dubai as "instant cities" (Elsheshtawy 2008) and competitive destinations in the international tourism market with the strongest growth in tourist arrivals since 1990. The exponential development of tourism in these emirates has led to a consumer-centric form of development that not only encompasses traditional activities of tourism, but expanded to include luxury, leisure, and other man-made structures that are surreal in their existence in the once-barren landscape.

The mixture of natural, cultural, and artifactual components has led to tourist attractions such as the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, Saadiyat Cultural District, Emirates Palace, etc. in the emirate of Abu Dhabi, and Burj-Al-Arab, Burj Khalifa, Ski Dubai, Global Village, Dubai Mall, etc. in the emirate of Dubai, which are some examples of the tourism sites.

The different facets of development in the UAE have gained scholarly attention in coordination with multiple fields such as economy, business, history, arts, culture, architecture, and more. At the intersection of economic diversification and culture, Amrousi (2019, 2) remarks on the development of projects in Abu Dhabi:

> As part of Abu Dhabi's expansion of cultural projects in Al-Saadiyat Island, these have acclaimed visibility and manifest the emergence of Abu Dhabi on the Global City network map especially through rebranding its image via culture and leisure waterfront epicenters. Projects such as the Desert Louvre, the Abu Dhabi Guggenheim, and forthcoming Zayed National Museum are all part of Abu Dhabi's strategies to create a resilient city that addresses sustainability and cultural identity.

One sector receiving much attention is tourism, an integral component of international business ventures and economic investments in the UAE, with each emirate showcasing its attributes as Alhousani and Zaidan (2014, 67) state:

Forty years ago, Dubai was one of the least developed regions in the world. Today its landscape contains luxury residences, the world's largest shopping complex, the world's tallest steel tower (Burj Khalifa), possibly the world's most luxurious hotels (Burj Al Arab), the first large scale man-made islands ("Palm" and "The World"), theme parks, international sporting events, concert, private bridges, double-decked highway flyovers, air-conditioned bus stops, a monorail system, and entertainment complexes. Modern Dubai has already been identified as well positioned on the international tourism map as a destination.

From a social perspective, scholars such as Elsheshtawy have also remarked on the unique population dynamics of the region whereby growth and development are also associated with the migrant, transient, and multicultural community comprising expatriates and native Emiratis, in addition to its megaprojects:

> The new citizens of the global economy - one might call them 'the foot soldiers of globalization' - appropriate such public settings by connecting to the local while at the same time maintaining ties to their homelands. In that way, vibrant settings are created in which one finds an intermingling of different nationalities supported by the structure of the built environment (Elsheshtawy 2008, 275).

The composition of the community in the region and its impact on development and rapid urbanization is further reiterated by Al Fahim (2015):

> We couldn't have built our own country ourselves. We didn't have the manpower nor the resources or the know-how. We had to invite people from abroad to the extent that today we are the minority in our own country. We have never from the beginning expected or even thought that we could without the expatriate community who are helping us to develop our country and take us to the future because Sheikh Zayed from the beginning told us, we are a host country, and we have to accept foreigners as guests. We must treat all those who come and live with us as guests and respect them so. We believe in the saying of live and let live, and so we have nothing against the expatriate or people living with us, working in different jobs because they are our teachers. Without them, we would not be where we are today.

From the above statements, it is clear that this region can no longer be ignored and presents both a unique and surreal urban imagery for researchers, visitors, residents, etc. These remarks of some keen observers portray the growth of UAE and its cities as the ultimate vision other coun-

tries seeking international recognition and stature must aspire to. A major component of this vision is situated in its tourism ventures that cater to the diverse interests of visitors at the intersection of luxury and leisure through exciting and stimulating experiences. Despite the benefits and positive reactions, the paradoxical nature of development in the region can also present unintended consequences of tourism development that lead to debates on the extent of this model of urbanization. Hence, this study raises touristic questions having to do with what is it like to visit a place as exotic as the UAE and what kind of a destination or home is this?

Conceptual Frameworks

Tourism has become an interesting component of human behavior consisting of interactive processes and practices. Components of the tourism system are increasingly fluid in their interactions within mobile societies, ultimately creating environmental, cultural, social, and economic networks (Urry 2011, 64). This has led to the development of theories within tourism research to better understand these interactions and processes within the system. This section introduces several conceptual tourism models to better understand perspectives, relationships, and processes that have informed the development of Abu Dhabi and Dubai as international tourist destinations. These include: The Broker-Local-Tourist (BLT) System; the Human-Artifactual-Natural System (HANS); Ultra-Artifacts and Ultra-Artifactual Tourism; the Tourist Gaze; Hyperreality.

Tourism as a System

The democratization of the travel industry today has led to the development of a more nuanced perspective of tourism as "the sociology of mobilities beyond societies":

> "Tourist places come to existence through relationships. Places float around within mobile, transnational networks of humans, technologies, objects, risks, and images that continuously connect and disconnect" (Urry 2011, 64).

As a result, scholars such as Urry (among others) describe tourism destinations as a "constellation of relations at a particular locus" (Massey 1994, 217 as cited in Urry 2011, 64) which enables the understanding of tourism as a 'system'. A system thinking approach calls attention to the complexity of social-natural-built systems found in tourism destinations and societal behaviors. This approach goes hand in hand with understanding tourism as a practice in which human and non-human elements

are continuously enacting, assembling, and reorganizing. To this end, systems thinking reveals different perceptions of stakeholders, and values that prevail through its interacting components, alongside contextual factors that may not have been captured in alternate views of the tourism industry. Hence, the conceptual theories encompassed in the sections that follow seek to capture the diversity and complexities associated with destinations, motivations of contrast, and collaborative components, ultimately enabling researchers to predict behaviors and manage the development of tourism resources.

The Broker-Local-Tourist (BLT) Model

A sociological framework to better understand tourism dynamics is the BLT model introduced by Miller et al., 2002. The BLT model of the tourism system differentiates individuals into three categories - brokers, locals, and tourists.

Brokers are those stakeholders directly involved in the management and development of tourism services pertinent to visitors' motives for indulging in tourism behavior. This group can be further categorized into three subcategories: 1) private sector brokers, 2) public sector brokers, and 3) social movement brokers. Private sector brokers include businesses and individuals that supply tourist services and profit from tourism (such as tour guides, retail entrepreneurs, etc.). Public sector brokers include governmental entities that manage, develop, and regulate the tourism industry (such as policymakers, managers, scientists, authoritative agents, etc.). Social movement brokers include organizations and individuals operating in non-governmental, non-profit, and environmental organizations addressing tourism issues and agendas.

Locals comprise individuals that reside within the vicinity of the tourist destination who may or may not directly engage in the supply and management of tourist services but may benefit from activities that can form part of their culture and social lifestyle. An example of this may be locals who take part in activities such as visiting museums, nature walks, shopping, and other recreational activities. Brokers and locals together form the on-site community in the destination.

Tourists are those individuals who travel to a particular destination in search of contrast for a short period and return home. Their search for contrast results in a wide variety of motivations for travel, making them domestic or international in their origin (Miller et al., 2002). This relationship is one that is dynamic in nature whereby some locals may move on to form part of the tourism industry, brokers who may be individuals who are local to the region, and in some cases tourists, may become residents (locals) who can also take part in providing tourism services

(brokers). These processes can become manifest throughout the course of an individual's life.

FIGURE 1

The Broker-Local-Tourist (BLT) Model (Adapted from Miller et al., 2014; Miller et al., 2002) illustrates the human component of the tourism system within a destination and comprises interactions with social and ecological factors (as discussed further in the HANS model).
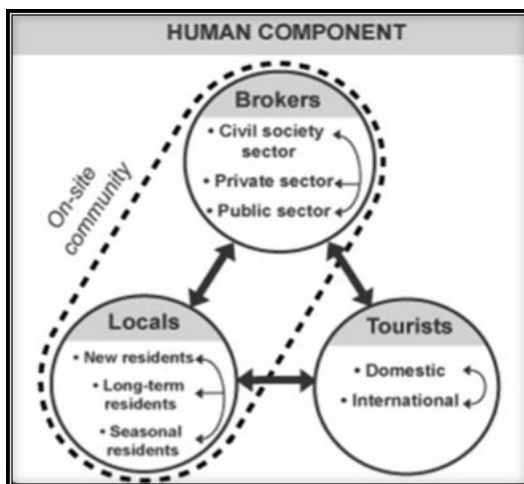
The Human-Artifactual-Natural System (HANS) Conceptual Framework

The HANS model is a modified framework of the two-part 'natural and human system, and socio-ecological systems' by integrating the third element of artifacts complementary to human and natural components (Miller et al., 2014). The Human component comprises brokers, locals, and tourists that form the BLT model (discussed above).

The Artifactual component of the HANS model encompasses "all elements of the material culture that are products of human innovation, as well as natural and non-natural objects created or utilized by non-human organisms" (Miller et al. 2014, 262). Human artifacts can be categorized as hard artifacts that include physical objects or things that can be studied apart from people and nature; or soft artifacts such as concepts and ideas that take the shape of policies, laws, cultures, myths, etc. On the other hand, natural artifacts created by non-human organisms through biotic and abiotic factors can engineer characteristics unique to destinations. Some examples include dams built by beavers, nests and hives of birds, spiders, and bees, or coastline barriers created by mangrove forests (Miller et al. 2014, 263).

The Natural component comprises biotic and abiotic processes in the environment that directly impact the tourism system or its external environment. This may include surroundings created by natural elements in the environment such as climatic conditions, biodiversity, etc.

The final components of the HANS model are Global drivers that

can be further differentiated as: 1) Biotic processes are biological and ecological processes influencing changes in biodiversity (such as disease outbreaks, bubonic plague, predation, etc.); 2) Abiotic processes are physical and chemical processes that change current environmental conditions (such as the effects of climate change, pollution, extreme weather events, etc.); 3) Globalization processes include social, cultural, economic, political, ethical, and informational processes that influence changes in society (such as the development of AI, wars, infrastructure development, etc.) (Miller et al., 2014).

FIGURE 2

The Human-Artifactual-Natural Systems (HANS) Model (Adapted from Miller et al. 2014) illustrates the human component (BLT model) of the tourism system within a destination and its interactions with artifactual and natural components.
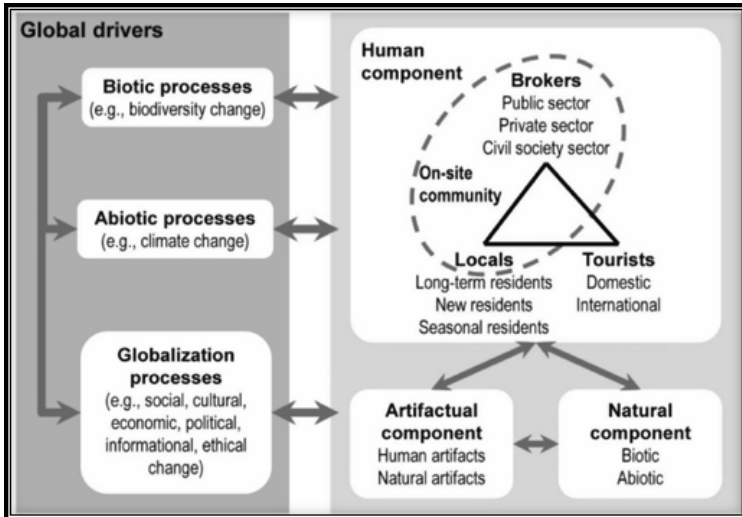
Ultra-Artifacts and Ultra-Artifactual Tourism

In addition to the components of the tourism system discussed in the sections above, this paper recognizes an additional component of 'ultra-artifacts' consequently paving way for 'ultra-artifactual tourism.' As seen, humankind has enabled the modification of the physical and cultural world by leveraging the use of diverse artifacts (hard and soft) and creating nuanced experiences that cater to their search for contrast.

As life (or reality) progresses, new technologies become common and less new, and then are displaced when old. The novelest and innovative artifacts of the present time are simply referred to as 'ultra-artifacts or hyper-artifacts.' Some examples of artifacts include things such as flight simulators, sports simulators, inland surf parks, smartphones, virtual

tour guides, virtual reality gaming, drones, augmented reality, scuba equipment, etc. The creation of such artifacts has allowed tourists to enhance their travel experiences by allowing for activities that were once considered impossible for humankind. The invention of such innovative objects today has allowed such activities to become part of humankind's common experience.

'Ultra-artifactual tourism' can be defined as a form of tourism in that it is a system in which tourists travel in the pursuit of contrast to interact with people, places, and things for a short period of time and then return home. In addition to recognizing the components of the BLT and HANS models within the tourism system, the ultra-artifact component identifies tourism artifacts as being dramatically notable for their innovativeness, technological sophistication, and/or aesthetics (such as beauty and sublimity).

Ultra-artifacts function as touristic attractors in motivating tourists to visit destinations and engage in activities linked to these artifacts. This form of tourism can be imagined, designed, marketed, and evaluated with multidisciplinary attention to broker production and touristic consumption measured by both the physicality and sociology of ultra-artifacts. The physicality component comprises 1) the built environment (involving the destination and attraction design), 2) ultra-artifact equipment, and 3) ultra-artifact products. The sociology component comprises services that link artifacts and industry of brokers to tourists and the activities they wish to partake in.

The Tourist Gaze

The tourism system can further be analyzed from a sociological perspective concerning human behavior and its underlying reasons for the pursuit of contrast. For example, tourism implies an individual's (or collective group of individuals) journey whereby the nature and purpose of the journey vary by time and across boundaries. This suggests that tourism is an activity rooted in the psyche of individuals seeking to explore encounters and the components associated with it (Reid 2003, 103). British sociologist John Urry conceptualizes the social behavior of tourism through the 'tourist gaze' or perceptions composed by the collection and interaction of signs (Urry 2011, 4). The tourist gaze heightens the act of seeing as:

> When we go away, we look at the environment with interest and curiosity. It speaks to us in ways we appreciate, or at least we anticipate that it will do so. In other words, we gaze at what we encounter. This gaze is socially organized and systemized. People gaze upon the world through a particular filter of ideas, skills, desires, and expectations, framed by social class, gender, nationality, age, and education (Urry 2011, 2).

Consequently, the gaze or act of gazing is a socially organized and systemized activity seeking to explore the 'discursive determinations' of social experience and consciousness. People gaze upon the world through their subjective filters that can comprise ideas, skills, desires, and expectations, framed by the social class, gender, nationality, age, education (Urry 2011, 2). The act of gazing seeks to organize the encounters of travelers by providing a sense of competence, pleasure, and structure framed by their diverse cultural styles, images, memories, and personal experiences (Urry 2011, 2). Within the tourism system, the course of sightseeing is shaped by society and the tourism industry:

> There is no single tourist gaze as such. It varies by society, by social group, and by historical period. Such gazes are constructed through difference. What makes a particular tourist gaze depends on what is contrasted with; what the forms of non-tourist experience happen to be (Urry 1990, 1-2).

According to Urry (2011, 4-5), the tourist gaze encompasses a complex social and psychological relationship between individuals and society, consequently informing social practices of tourism through the following key characteristics:

- Tourism is a leisure activity as opposed to the nature of work
- As people cross boundaries, relationships arise across space and time
- The journey occurs in sites outside of one's usual places of residence or work with the clear intention to return home in a short period of time
- The places gazed upon are for the purposes of contrast distinct from work-related activities
- Rapid mobilization has led to new socialized forms of provision to cope with the mass character of the tourist gaze
- The places individuals travel to are chosen because there is anticipation through dreams, fantasy, pleasure, etc. resulting in a stimulating and sensory experience
- There is greater sensitivity towards visual elements (such as landscapes, townscapes, photographs, postcards, film, etc.)
- Tourism involves the collection of signs
- Tourism providers are challenged with keeping the visitor motivated by re-producing ever new objects to cater to the gaze (which are complex and cut cross socio-economic-cultural characteristics)

Urry recognized that the gaze depends semiotically on signs (the

signifiers) and the referents (the signified). Despite its subjective character that varies across individual groups (or collective group of individuals), spatial, and temporal factors. Urry introduces a preliminary list of 5 forms of the tourist gaze characterized (Urry 2011, 1-26):

Types of Gazes	Gazing Unit (individual / group)	Encounter	Gazing Components
Romantic	Solitary	Sustained immersion	Gaze involving vision, awe, aura
Collective	Communal	Series of shared encounters	Gazing at the familiar
Spectatorial	Communal	Series of brief encounters	Glancing and collecting different signs
Environmental	Collective organization	Sustained and didactic	Scanning to surveil and inspect
Anthropological	Solitary	Sustained immersion	Scanning and active interpretation

Hyperreality

The concept of 'hyperreality' in tourism spaces was introduced as an outcome of the postmodern perspectives attributed to scholarly studies primarily by Umberto Eco, Jean Baudrillard, and Albert Borgmann. The Oxford English dictionary defines 'hyperreality' as a "state of reality that is (or is depicted as) an exaggerated or enhanced version of reality itself. Relative to tourism spaces, something is said to become hyper-real when it appears to be real, although it is not (in reality) (Steiner 2010, 244-245). In this scenario, as tourism continues to develop to meet the needs of tourist motivations and multiple gazes, hyper-real tourism spaces can be considered as imitations of reality that conceal the difference between the real and unreal, or the original and the copy (Steiner 2010, 245).

In relation to tourism, the concept of hyperreality is tailor-made for tourist destinations and developments, working not only through the non-fictional motivations of tourists but also through fictional elements of dreams and fantasies. The primary role of hyperreality in tourism is the sphere of 'more real than real' whereby these visual representations and manipulations conceal the fine line between reality and dreams. It convinces visitors to believe 'it is real' even though they know these environments are man-made, fabricated, and simulated (Lichrou et al. 2008; Steiner 2010; Buchmann et al. 2010). In tourism, some examples of hyper-real spaces emerge through immersive tour guides, using virtual reality headsets, and other technological advancements as an outcome of globalization forces today. Similar to the concept of the 'tourist gaze' (discussed earlier), these simulation-based environments seek to enhance the visitor's multisensory experience not only through sight, but alongside other dimensions (visual, audio, tactile, olfactory, and taste related senses) (Chen 2019).

The three scholars—Umberto Eco, Jean Baudrillard, and Albert Borgmann—have each developed their own interpretations of the concept of hyperreality. Despite some similarities, the three scholars widely differ in their attitude about its desirability.

1 Eco is bemused by hyperreality and considers it to be a remarkable characteristic of the way consumers demand imaginative and tasteful experiences. In efforts to make imaginative demands real, the "boundaries between game and illusion are blurred" by enhancing imitations in the present and preserving the authenticity of past components (Eco 1986, 9).
2 Baudrillard is distressed by hyperreality and has no hope it will regress. Architectural elements alongside other signs (simulacra). For example, Disneyland and the totality of Los Angeles are not anchored in real-world referents (real people, real things, historical realities), but instead are rooted in a fractal assemblage of other signs. Hence, the meaning of signs is not determined by real events and phenomena, but by the agendas of consumerism focused on mass media, advertising, and entertainment institutions. According to Baudrillard, these signs do not invoke the idea of anything at all and instead exist as signs that have no referent. He contends this notion for its developments has ruined the pure appreciation of the honest facts of life and history (Baudrillard 1994, 2-12; Baudrillard 1994).
3 Borgmann sees hyperreality as extreme yet imagines a better future. 'Hyper-modernism' tends to produce hypertrophic versions of the three developments that are distinctive of the postmodern economy - information processing, flexible specializations, and informed cooperation (Borgmann 1992, 82). The new and superior reality is one that is defined by power and control and is virtually omnipresent.

The conceptual frameworks introduced through the tourist gaze and hyperreality concepts above can help researchers develop other forms of gazes as tourism evolves over time. This paper introduces a new category of gazes called the 'hyper-gaze' relative to tourism sites explored in the emirates of Abu Dhabi and Dubai in the UAE.

Research Questions and Setting

This study was designed to better understand the dynamics of tourism through the concepts of gazes, hyperreality, and ultra-artifacts. Using a mixed-methods research design, the study explored these characteristics through perspectives gathered from brokers, locals, and tourists. As

tourism is still a relatively new field, it has the potential to evolve through new insights into processes and interactions that occur between these groups and their environment. This study tackles the following interactive research questions (RQs):

RQ1: What kinds of artifacts exist in the study area?
RQ2: What kinds of tourist gazes do brokers, locals, and tourists have in Abu Dhabi and Dubai?

This research was conducted in the emirates of Abu Dhabi and Dubai in the UAE. The research sites within these cities include public spaces such as entertainment parks, beaches, supermarkets, business offices, architecture, government buildings, and a variety of tourism destinations.

Sample and Data Collection

Data in this study were collected from society members of Abu Dhabi and Dubai and included brokers from various fields, such as businesses, government agencies, tourism management sectors, etc., alongside other residents (locals), and tourists. The research plan was positively reviewed by the University of Washington Institutional Review Board (IRB) to protect human subjects. Four methods were used to collect data in this study: 1) semi-structured interviews (N=10), 2) social surveys (N=102), 3) limited participant observation, and 4) secondary source resources.

Interview Procedure and Implementation

Semi-structured interviews comprise open-ended questions to elicit detailed responses from subjects on topics of interest (Dexter 2006; Kvale 1996). Aligning with the research goals, the interview component comprised participants who are subject matters with research interests in the management and development of the tourism sector in the UAE.

Participants for interviews were identified through local contacts and internet searches and were contacted via their affiliated work emails through purposive and snowball sampling techniques. Upon receiving their consent to participate in the study, interview times were scheduled according to their availability. Due to COVID-19 regulations, all interviews were conducted through the zoom video platform. All participants consented to record interviews by both video and audio options. Interviews ran between twenty minutes and one hour, with all notes and quotes recorded in a notebook. Participants also had the option of skipping questions they did not wish to answer. Over the course of this study, ten interviews (N = 10) were conducted with experts who were primarily brokers that comprise the onsite community of the BLT model.

The questions proposed for this interview fall under the categories of research questions (RQs) and posed questions (PQs). RQs were intended to be scientific in terms relevant to research goals and language not commonly used by the general public. PQs were designed to address and answer the RQs, but in a vernacular that would be best understood by the interviewee. Since the interview participants were experts, terminology, and language pertaining to their research interests were not a challenge. An example of how PQs intended to answer RQs in an interview is as follows:

> RQ: What kinds of tourist gazes do brokers, locals, and tourists have in Abu Dhabi and Dubai?
> PQ1: What is it like to live here today?
> PQ2: What was it like before? What do you think it will be like in the future?
> PQ3: What types of interactions do residents and visitors have at these tourist sites?
> PQ4: What types of attractions are tourists most excited to see?
> PQ5: How do residents contribute to tourism in Abu Dhabi and Dubai?
> Social Survey Procedure and Implementation

The survey component of this research was administered to the general public comprising residents and/or tourists. The procedure involved filling out an online survey developed on the Survey Monkey platform.

Participants for the survey were identified through four distribution channels that used simple random sampling and selective oversampling techniques to better embody characteristics that were representative of the population demographics. Figure 3 summarizes the primary distribution channels employed for survey rollout in this study.

The purpose of these four distribution chains was to capture responses from participants that span a wide range of demographic characteristics of age, sex, ethnicity, etc. The Venn diagram in Figure 4 depicts secondary demographic characteristics captured in the survey sample.

FIGURE 4
Secondary demographic characteristics of survey participants across four distribution channels.

Participants accessed the survey through hyperlinks or QR codes and were expected to complete it between fifteen and twenty-five minutes. Participants were not asked for any sensitive information that may feel like an invasion of privacy and it was created to be respectful and mindful of all participants. The survey was also translated into Arabic and was made available in written form both in English and Arabic. This would

FIGURE 3
Organizational chart depicting survey distribution and sampling technique.
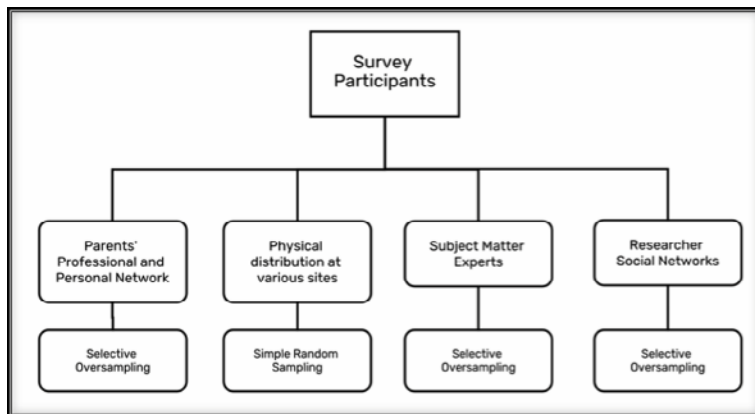
FIGURE 4
Secondary demographic characteristics of survey participants across four distribution channels
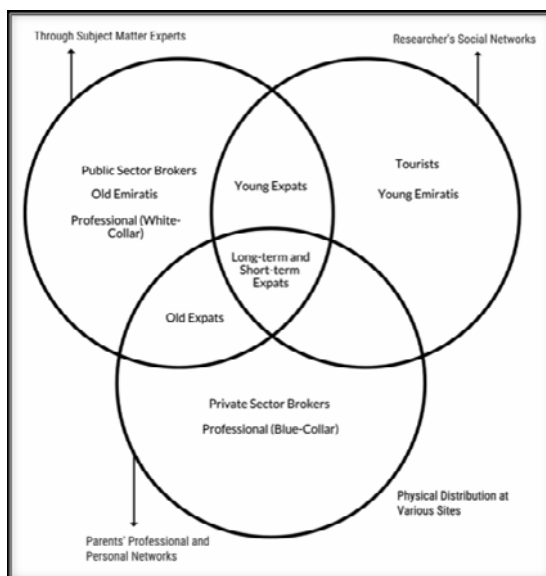
allow the participation of old expats and Emiratis who may not be comfortable with online platforms and is a culturally appropriate research protocol. Over the course of this research, 102 survey responses (N = 102) were recorded.

The survey for this study was composed of two sections - 1) demographic characteristics of participants comprising gender, age, the emirate of residents, residency status, length of residency, and

nationality; 2) image perceptions in which eight photos of tourism attractions in Abu Dhabi and Dubai were presented alongside five posed questions for each image to elicit participants' feelings, preferences, opinions, and perspectives. If questions in the survey were sensitive to people and caused any stress, the participants had the option to skip any questions at any point in time or withdraw from participating in the study at any time.

Limited Participant Observation

Limited Participant Observation (LPO) in this study was conducted by observing, documenting, and interpreting both verbal and nonverbal cues of human subjects. During interviews, the interviewee's behavior, reactions, and body language, alongside quotes, were recorded in a notebook for the duration of the interview. In addition, LPO was recorded by observing local, tourist, and broker interactions at each of the tourism sites through photographs and field notes.

Secondary Source Information

Five types of secondary source information were used for this research. These include articles from newspapers in Abu Dhabi and websites, documentaries, travel guides, government reports, and books.

Analysis

This section examines how the data collected from interviews and surveys were analyzed to explore the dynamics of gazes and hyperreality in tourism across two research questions: RQ1 What kinds of artifacts exist in the study area? and RQ2 What kinds of tourist gazes do brokers, locals, and tourists have in Abu Dhabi and Dubai? With the two research questions in mind, interview content analysis and word cloud analysis (Draper, 2001) consisted of matching the responses of those interviewed and surveyed to the various kinds of gazes and hyper-reality/artifactual distinctions.

Interviews

The subject matter experts interviewed for this study form the on-site community as brokers and residents in Abu Dhabi with expertise in areas of: tourism and marketing; tourism management; cultural and anthropological studies; and policy.

Upon completion of the interviews, notes and recordings for each interviewee were transcribed, compiled, and analyzed using MAXQDA 2022 software. Each interview transcript was read once first to identify

and categorize codes by marking texts, keywords, and participant reactions. The second read-through of transcripts categorized codes as principal codes and subcodes with descriptions that aimed to finalize the inclusion or exclusion of associated texts.

The purpose of coding interview transcripts was to identify patterns, relationships, and characteristics alongside positive and negative responses to explore the theme of each research question. Once the coding process for all interview transcripts was complete, selected texts were identified and categorized across the two research questions and their associated codes and/or combination of codes in Microsoft Excel. To visualize the themes associated with each research question, word clouds were produced to highlight keywords and phrases that appear in participants' responses.

Surveys

The survey allowed participants to provide their perspectives on the images presented. The responses to questions pertaining to participants' perspectives, feelings, and emotions, in relation to tourist sites and activities were visualized through a word cloud. A word cloud analysis is a visual representation of the frequency of keywords. The more commonly the term appears, the larger the word appears in the image. Furthermore, this method can reduce the text to the fundamental meaning of specific words and/or phrases to identify patterns and make comparisons (Draper 2001).

Results

Touristic images below were presented as stimuli to both people who were interviewed and to those who participated in the social survey. The images served to elicit cognitive, behavioral, and affective attitudes and reactions. Each image explored the respondents' feelings/emotions about the picture, what activities they associated with the picture, attributes they liked or disliked, and what the pictures made them think of. Their responses generate the following results. Touristic artifacts in the study area include both commonplace artifacts (i.e., found throughout the world) and 'ultra-artifacts' (i.e., those that have dramatic technological features).

Research question RQ1 concerned the range of artifacts to be found in the study area. While Abu Dhabi and Dubai have a great many commonplace artifacts, the study focuses on the extraordinary (or hyper-artifactual) artifacts that have made the area touristically compelling. A selection of artifacts is seen in the figures below. Research question RQ2 explored the kinds of gazes associated with the artifacts depicted in the figures. Touristic gazes in the study area illustrate all the gazes identified by Urry, and in addition, some of the gazes possess a hyper quality.

Image 1

Artifact Type (RQ1): Image 1 depicts an ultra-artifactual touristic site and activity in Dubai. In contrast to conventional tennis courts used by people in their day-to-day activities, the tennis court qualifies as an ultra-artifact because it is built on a helipad of the Burj Al Arab at a height of 56 storeys and does not resemble any other tennis court on earth.

Image 1
Helipad Tennis Court
at Burj Al Arab in
Dubai

Tourist Gaze (RQ2): Figure 5 depicts survey participants (locals and tourists) responses and reactions to Image 1 presented through a word cloud. In relation to feelings and emotions, most participants had positive reactions to the image and described feelings of bravery, power, amazement, surprise, and thrill. Of the 102 participants, 78 respondents said they would like to go there, and the activities they would partake in included playing tennis, touring the Burj Al Arab, enjoying the views, and enjoying the luxuries offered in the vicinity, such as a staycation or fine dining. In addition, most respondents were amazed by attributes that contributed to the ambiance, view, and unique experience of the activity itself.

The word cloud and interview results revealed two prominent types of gazes associated with Image 1. The first is Urry's 'romantic gaze', and the second is a 'hyper-sport gaze'.

Local and Tourist Responses: It can be inferred from the responses that "playing tennis, touring the site, enjoying the views", and so forth are activities entailing the romantic gaze which can be enjoyed by visitors in solitary and conducted privately relative to one's motives for visiting the site. However, as participants also discuss "enjoying the luxuries" in the

FIGURE 5
Word cloud for Image 1

image, it denotes the activity to be more significant and lavish for the participant supporting the notion of a hyper-sport gaze.

Furthermore, respondents remarked on the exponential growth of the region, which has led to the development and management of tourist attractions by transforming an everyday activity into a visionary and innovative enterprise, underscoring the prevalence of a hyper-sport activity and its associated gaze. Negative connotations of the image were associated with the wasteful use of resources, concerns about safety, and the staged nature of the activity.

Broker Responses: Brokers generally had a positive reaction to the image presented. A common theme evident in broker responses was that of "tourism development" in the UAE, where one broker stated:

> The UAE (specifically Abu Dhabi and Dubai), whilst being a sort of modest small country punches above its weight and I think is really recognized for that….it is creative and adaptive, and this has led to develop and integrate unique and innovative elements into the design of structures for tourism to attract a global audience. (Public Sector Broker, male).

The motivations for tourism development rooted across global scales, diverse nationalities, and unique activities not found in many parts of the world entail a hyper-sport gaze to engage and motivate visitors to experience these activities.

A second theme evident in broker responses was that of "touristic experiences". Some brokers emphasized the significance of these experiences in keeping tourists motivated to visit the region. The example below

depicts both the romantic and hyper-sport gaze whereby the experiences of visitors entail either one depending on their motivations for visiting the site, whereas the innovative designs integrated with the sport entail the hyper-gaze:

> The tourism industry has helped create unique and dynamic experiences for locals, residents, and tourists, enhancing their lifestyles and well-being through unraveled experiences. Through collaborative efforts across industries and authorities, we were able to expand our tourism offerings by introducing new innovative assets and establishments, while delivering safe and globally renowned events and experiences. (Public Sector Broker, male).

The third theme presented by brokers was that of "touristic characteristics," where responses indicated the significance of touristic attributes in juxtaposition with positive experiences for visitors signifying the importance of ultra-artifacts in tourism experiences. For example, one broker stated:

> Tourism and touristic components are dynamic, always changing, and updating itself. One common denominator is that our visitors tend to expect a high level of professionalism and service, and a high standard of accommodation and amenities, and have started to pivot towards entertaining activities that have allowed it to distinguish itself as a world-class destination. (Public sector broker, male).

Image 2

Artifact Type (RQ1): Image 2 depicts an ultra-artifactual touristic site and activity in Dubai. In contrast to conventional day-to-day activities, the image portrays a collective experience of skydivers diving over 'The Palm' islands in Dubai. Unlike most natural islands, the collection of islands that make up 'the palm' is man-made and houses numerous attributes of interest to tourists and residents, such as waterfront properties, luxury hotels, marinas, spas, shopping centers, cinemas, sporting activities, etc.

Tourist Gaze (RQ2): Figure 6 depicts survey participants (locals and tourists) responses and reactions to Image 2 presented through a word cloud. In relation to feelings and emotions, most participants had positive reactions to the image and described feelings of excitement, amazement, passion, freedom, thrill, and happiness. The majority of the respondents (82 recorded responses) said they would like to go there, and the activities they would partake in included enjoying the collective nature of the activity with family and friends, experiencing the adrenaline rush, and

Image 2
Skydivers over 'The Palm' islands in Dubai

FIGURE 6
Word cloud for Image 2

reminiscing in the scenic beauty of the views provided by the coast and desert landscapes, or enjoying a staycation. In addition, respondents remarked on the engineering marvel of the region, which has led to modern infrastructure, technological assets, and limitless activities for visitors.

The word cloud and interview results revealed two prominent types of gazes associated with Image 2. The first is Urry's 'collective gaze', and the second is a 'hyper-adventure gaze'.

Local and Tourist Responses: It can be inferred from the responses that "skydiving, experiencing an adrenaline rush, enjoying views of the landscapes", and so forth are activities entailing Urry's collective gaze as it is a common trend in the region enjoyed by many visitors together. However, as participants also discuss "engineering marvel" in the image across the activity and site through modern artifactual components, it denotes the activity to be more daring in experience, entailing a hyper-adventure gaze.

Negative connotations of the image were associated with the wasteful use of resources, detrimental impacts on coastal and marine resources, and the fear of some participants taking part in such activities.

Broker Responses: Brokers generally had a positive reaction to the image presented. A common theme evident in broker responses was that of "regional identity" in relation to tourism, emphasizing the collective gaze relative to why people visit the touristic site, where one broker stated:

> The image of the country and the city is really important. This is what attracts people. You need to be able to show identity somehow, and I think 'The Palm' in Dubai does that not only rooted in innovative man-made inventions, but also through the fact that tourism developers have used cultural elements (the date palm tree being native to the region) in a modern setting to situate its cultural identity within a global landscape. (Public sector broker, female).

One theme that brokers indicated in contrast to survey participants was that of "cultural elements" presented in the image, as one broker stated:

> Tourism has started to integrate elements of culture and entertainment. There is no problem in taking traditional elements and embedding them in modern design to create something new and fresh. By combining these elements, visitors get to experience our rich traditions in a way never seen before because you would never consider learning something new about the region's culture through an activity such as skydiving! (Public sector broker, male).

The above response also depicts the "hyper-adventure gaze" whereby man-made innovations using cultural elements of 'The Palm' seek to enhance the nature of the activity for visitors.

A final theme common throughout brokers, locals, and tourist responses was the "collective" nature of the activity in enhancing touristic characteristics, as one broker stated the following:

I particularly liked the group aspect of the image which can create new experiences relative to those that are solitary. Furthermore, since we get a lot of tourists from around the world similar to our expat community, these experiences also allow the opportunities to meet unique individuals, learn from them, and develop cross-cultural awareness, which has led to preserving our Emirati assets while remaining forward-thinking in development, applying new ideas, matching varied interests, and exceeding expectations. (Private sector broker, female).

Image 3

Artifact Type (RQ1): Image 3 depicts an ultra-artifactual touristic site and activity in Dubai. In contrast to a conventional shopping center, the image portrays visitors shopping at 'Global Village', a shopping festival that occurs once a year for three months. It is a unique cultural and entertainment destination for visitors to experience cultures from around the world through performances, cuisines, shopping, entertainment, theme parks, and other leisure activities. The diversity and scale of the touristic site and amenities available reminds one of an exaggerated Disneyland or Las Vegas.

Image 3
People shopping at 'Global Village' in Dubai

Tourist Gaze (RQ2): Figure 7 depicts survey participant (locals and tourists) responses and reactions to Image 3. In relation to feelings and emotions, most participants had positive reactions to the image and described feelings of joy, unity, diversity, and celebration. The majority of the respondents (90 recorded responses) said they would like to go there,

and the activities they would partake in included enjoying the collective nature of the activity with family and friends, shopping, trying new experiences, and watching performances from around the world. In addition, respondents remarked on themes of cross-cultural dialogue, socialization and exploration, the authenticity of activities, and associated experiences.

> The word cloud and interview results revealed two prominent types of gazes associated with Image 3. The first is Urry's 'collective gaze', and the second is a 'hyper-amusement gaze'.

Figure 7
Word cloud for Image 3

Local and Tourist Responses: It can be inferred from the responses that "spending time with family and friends, shopping, trying new forms of entertainment and experiences", and so forth are activities entailing Urry's collective gaze, as it is a common trend in the region enjoyed by many visitors together. However, participants also emphasized the numerous worldly components integrated into one space in the image across activities and the site, and hence denoted the activity to be highly experiential relative to the respondent's motive for visiting the site. This can span numerous activities such as shopping, watching performances, learning about different cultures, etc. entailing a hyper amusement gaze. Negative connotations of the image were associated with the crowded nature of the activity, noise, and exploitation of cultural experiences due to artificial components.

Broker Responses: Brokers generally had a positive reaction to the image presented. One theme brokers pointed out was the "Guggenheim effect"

taking place in the region:

> I am sure you have heard of the Guggenheim effect, and we are effectively trying to integrate this here in a unique way. We aim to make tourism broader than just simply having a cultural district, because now we also have fun places to go like theme parks, fun family activities, so it's not just the same old retail shopping malls you know some people I think previously stereotyped here. (Public sector broker, male).

The above quote depicts the hyper-amusement gaze as the broker emphasizes the wide range of activities for visitors that take place in a singular site by catering to various touristic motivations.

A second theme evident in brokers' responses in relation to the Guggenheim effect was "the diversity of experiences" as brokers' motivations for tourism development in the region. For example:

These touristic expansions provide an opportunity to uplift our profile as a global tourism destination. We aim to be on top of developing tastes and interest, and through forward thinking and the freedom to dream big and apply new ideas, the emirate has been able to match interests, exceed expectations, and enhance lifestyles and well-being through activities that cater to all interests. (Public sector broker, male) ... I think in Dubai, it is all about having everything and the state of the art of everything. (Private sector broker, female).

The above response depicts aspects of both the collective and hyper-amusement gazes. The amalgam of touristic services offered creates a collective experience for visitors while simultaneously meeting individual interests of leisure, underscoring broker motivations for the industry and region to be unique relative to other destinations. In addition, the emphasis on aspects of "forward-thinking, exceeding expectations, enhancing lifestyles, and state of the art of everything" depicts the 'hyper' elements brokers seek to integrate into the industry in efforts to create a form of leisure that is extraordinary whereby visitors can only experience such activities and services in Dubai.

Image 4

Artifact Type (RQ1): Image 4 depicts an ultra-artifactual tourist site in Abu Dhabi. In contrast to conventional hotels, the image portrays the 'Emirates Palace' hotel, a five-star hotel located on a private beach along the corniche pier. It is the epitome of luxury, showcasing Islamic architecture and Arabian hospitality at its finest. The suites are furnished with the highest levels of comfort, with panoramic views, 24-hour butler service, a variety of cuisines prepared by world-renowned chefs, lavish spas, pools,

marinas, and so forth. The scale of hospitality and services offered at this location far exceeds other hotels locally and globally.

Image 4
Emirates Palace hotel in Abu Dhabi

Tourist Gaze (RQ2): Figure 8 depicts survey participants (locals and tourists) responses and reactions to Image 4. In relation to feelings and emotions, most participants had positive reactions to the image and described feelings of happiness, surprise, grandeur, royalty, etc. The majority of the respondents (85 recorded responses) said they would like to go there, and the activities they would partake in included enjoying a stay-cation with family and friends, partaking in beach activities such as jet skiing and swimming, enjoying different cuisines, enjoying the views, and taking a tour around the site. In addition, respondents remarked on themes of features of architectural design, a strong relationship with Islamic iden-tity, professionalism, and services of the hospitality sector in UAE.

The word cloud and interview results revealed two prominent types of gazes associated with Image 4. The first is Urry's 'romantic gaze', and the second is a 'hyper-luxury/service gaze.'

Local and Tourist Responses: It can be inferred from the responses that "enjoying a staycation with family and friends, going to the beach, trying new cuisines," and so forth are activities relating to Urry's romantic gaze whereby visitors take part in these leisure activities privately. Furthermore, participants also emphasized the grand architectural

FIGURE 8
Word cloud for Image 4

components integrated with Islamic culture across the site, alongside "royal" services offered to visitors entailing a hyper-service gaze.

Negative connotations associated with the image followed from the expensive pricing of the hotel and its activities. This hyper-reality hotel experience is, of course, associated with a hyper-cost. We note that the majority of participants in this study were generally of the middle and upper middle class, and most were able to visit the hotel, even if they were unable to stay over and take complete advantage of its amenities.

Broker Responses: Brokers generally had a positive reaction to the image presented. One theme evident in broker responses was the "level of hospitality" offered to visitors in the region:

> Through collaborative work across the tourism industry and coopera-
> tion with key authorities, we were able to expand our services offered
> by introducing the next level of assets and establishments, while deliv-
> ering globally renowned service …. We want to offer visitors an experi-
> ence that will marvel at, and one that is not offered anywhere in the
> world, a man-made wonder in the hospitality sector, something like an
> Arabian fairytale (Public sector broker, male).

The above quote depicts the hyper-service gaze as the broker empha-sizes an advanced level of comfort, impeccable royal service, and unique experiences coming together to create a surreal experience. Similar to Image 3, these activities can be considered 'hyper' in essence, as the services and amenities available surpass conventional ways of leisure.

A second theme evident in the broker's responses was "Islamic iden-tity" in relation to traditional Arabic architectural elements incorporated into the design of the hotel, such as the dome-shaped ceilings, geometric

shapes, calligraphy, etc. For example:

> The design of the hotel comprises a mix of Islamic architectural
> themes such as balance, geometry, proportion, and rhythm, alongside
> modern methods of design and construction. The Arabic culture rests
> on treating everyone with respect and tolerance, and we offer that at a
> grand level to our visitors. When you walk in, you will find a sense of
> deep relaxation and tranquility washing over you…By integrating
> these components and activities, we hope to boost the region's cultural
> presence and identify while enhancing cultural connectivity by
> welcoming visitors from around the world" (Public sector broker,
> female).

The above quote depicts aspects of both the romantic and hyper-service gazes. The emphasis on aspects of Arabic cultural elements strongly ties to aspects of the romantic gaze. However, aspects of enhancing Arabic identity and Abu Dhabi as a global cultural destination with a heightened level of leisure services depict 'hyper' elements.

Image 5

Artifact Type (RQ1): Image 5 depicts an ultra-artifactual tourist component in Abu Dhabi. In contrast to conventional beaches, the image portrays a camel on the corniche beach with a view of skyscraper buildings in the background. Most beaches do not have camels in the vicinity, and this image depicts the unique experiences for visitors as a result of a city surrounded by desert landscapes.

Tourist Gaze (RQ2): Figure 9 depicts survey participants (local and tourist) responses and reactions to Image 5 presented through a word cloud. In relation to feelings and emotions, most participants were surprised and excited to encounter such experiences in the region. The majority of the respondents (80 recorded responses) said they would like to go there, and the activities they would partake in included relaxing on the beach, playing sports, talking to locals, interacting with the camel, and reminiscing about the scenic views of the coast, desert, and city landscapes.

The word cloud and interview results revealed three prominent gazes associated with Image 5: Urry's 'collective and romantic gazes', and a 'hyper-cultural' gaze.

Local and Tourist Responses: It can be inferred from the responses that

Image 5
A camel on the
Corniche public beach

FIGURE 9
Word cloud for Image 5

most of the activities described above entail Urry's collective gaze, as most take place in collective groups. However, this assumes that most of the activities include more than one person. In contrast, some people may partake in these activities solitarily, which then depicts Urry's romantic gaze. In addition, most participants marveled at the juxtaposition of modern and traditional elements (such as the camel in the desert) entailing a "modern Arabia" that takes pride in its culture while thinking forward in terms of development projects for the future. The coexistence of cultures over time ties in with the hyper-cultural gaze. Negative conno-

tations of the image were associated with potential impacts on biodiversity and the natural environment due to human interactions.

Broker Responses: Brokers generally had a positive reaction to the image presented. A common theme evident in broker responses was the "cultural preservation" in tourism development through novel approaches, depicting characteristics of a hyper-cultural gaze. For example:

> We try to develop and integrate unique approaches to tourism development. Preserving our culture is of the utmost importance to us. Without our rich traditions and cultural identity, Abu Dhabi is just another destination. What makes us special is our unique fusion of old and new, heritage and modernity, tradition, and innovation. DCT Abu Dhabi, therefore, focuses on both aspects – our programmes concentrate on preserving and promoting Emirati heritage and the Arabic language, delivered through cutting-edge, innovative initiatives (Public sector broker, male).

A second theme evident in broker responses was "the diversity of landscapes" used to engage visitors with culture in unique ways in the region, unlike most other destinations, reiterating the hyper-cultural gaze. For example, one broker states:

> We focus on developing a broad-ranging approach to appreciating cultural connections. We have a wide range of landscapes, with something for every kind of visitor, from the adventurer to the cultural venture. Abu Dhabi is where stunning desert landscapes, city skylines, traditional Arabic culture, and global cultures of diverse populations merge to create unforgettable experiences and engage travelers with residents. I think by creating this sort of new identity for the destination, we can attract more visitors (Public sector broker, male).

Image 6

Artifact Type (RQ1): Unlike Images 1-5, Image 6 depicts a commonplace artifact that is found in most regions around the world. The image depicts a traditional Arab sailboat (dhow) generally made of wood, forming part of traditional cultural activities of shipbuilding in the UAE. Similar sailboats are also found in many regions across Asia but are referred to by their local names. Since these types of sailboats are not unique to the region, they are not considered an ultra-artifact.

Tourist Gaze (RQ2): Figure 10 depicts survey participant (locals and tourists) responses and reactions to Image 6 presented through a word

Image 6
A traditional Arab
sailboat (dhow)

cloud. In relation to feelings and emotions, most participants had positive reactions to the image and described feelings of peace, tranquility, and serenity. The majority of the respondents (92 recorded responses) said they would like to go there, and the activities they would partake in included fishing, relaxing, and reminiscing about the national history and scenic views provided by the coast. In addition, respondents remarked on the traditional lifestyles of Bedouins and tribes in the UAE by mentioning activities such as pearl diving, shipbuilding, fishing, etc.

The word cloud and interview results revealed Urry's romantic gaze to be most evident in local, tourist, and broker responses.

FIGURE10
Word cloud for Image 6
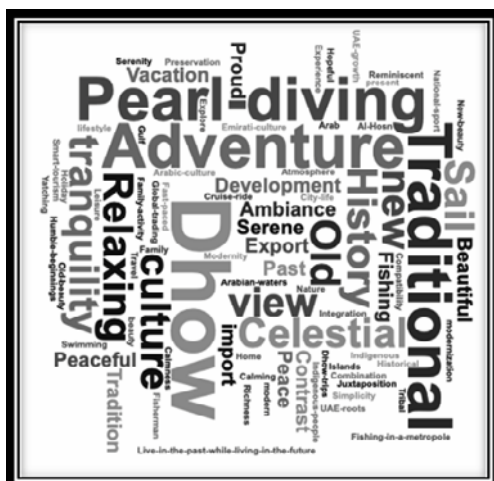
Local and Tourist Responses: It can be inferred from the responses that "serenity, calmness, peace, historic, and past", entail strong references to Urry's romantic gaze as it can be enjoyed by visitors solitarily and conducted privately relative to one's motives for visiting the site.

Broker Responses: Brokers generally had a positive reaction to the image presented. A common theme evident in broker responses was that of "historic national identity," referring to the traditional lifestyles of tribes and Bedouin communities of UAE in the past. The simplistic and rudimentary nature of both the landscape and its people signified characteristics of the romantic gaze, as one broker stated:

> Abu Dhabi is blessed with distinct diversity of terrain, peoples, and traditions and has 700 kilometers of stunning coastline, beautiful natural islands, awe-inspiring deserts, bountiful oases, towering mountains, and vibrant cities for you to explore… Before we took on these development projects, we lived a simple life, we used our resources sustainably, and our relationship with nature was one of respect and tolerance. Although globalization today is inevitable and a consequence of it has been rapid development here; protection and preservation of Emirati heritage is of the utmost importance. (Public sector broker, male).

Discussion

Tourism as a social phenomenon is undergoing dynamic transformations in efforts to characterize tourist experiences as they travel and encounter places, people, environments, and artifacts (soft, hard, and ultra). There has been an increasing amount of literature on exploring tourists' immersive experiences across destinations, and the results have led to a shift in perspectives of attractions being 'more real than real'. Touristic attractions today comprise spectacular representations that enter a fine line between reality and people's fantasies, convincing visitors to believe 'it is real' even though they know their surrounding environments are fabricated and simulated.

This study aimed to determine the touristic characteristics and experiences of attractions in Abu Dhabi and Dubai using tourism models and concepts of the BLT models, HANS model, tourist gaze, ultra-artifacts, and hyperreality to understand perspectives, processes, and interactions between brokers, locals, and tourists within built environments. This study investigated the following research questions through interviews with tourism brokers and surveys administered to residents and visitors in Abu Dhabi and Dubai:

RQ1: What kinds of artifacts exist in the study area?
RQ2: What kinds of tourist gazes do brokers, locals, and tourists have in Abu Dhabi and Dubai?

The results from this study reveal rich and diverse meanings for tourist experiences through representations, imaginations, sensations, and their associated interactions. Most importantly, the findings depict brokers, locals, and tourists' subjectivities with surrounding environments and artifacts that have stimulated multi-sensory domains through perceptions or 'gazes' leading to immersive hyper-real productions. The significant contributions of the current research are as follows:

1 Tourist attractions in Abu Dhabi and Dubai comprise both commonplace and ultra-artifacts

The evolution of tourism experiences and activities as a result of urban development and innovations in technology have led to the emergence of novel artifacts that elevate touristic attractions. This has been manifested in the development and expansion of tourism projects in the study area that is unique to the region, unlike those found in the rest of the world.

Some examples of these attractions include a staycation at the Emirates Palace hotel, playing tennis at the top of the Burj-Al- Arab, partaking in leisure and entertainment at Global Village, or skydiving over the Palm Islands, etc. In addition to commonplace artifacts, these sites comprise ultra-artifacts that are not found globally. This includes the level of service and opulent characteristics of the Emirates Palace hotel; a helipad tennis court; activities for visitors at Global Village at the intersection of theme parks, culture, shopping; and viewing surreal man-made wonders or scenic landscapes.

Although brokers, locals, and tourists are generally unaware of the distinction between artifacts, these new artifactual productions seek to evoke visitors' multi-sensory stimulation with the aim of providing them with the most authentic and immersive experience at the attractions. These objects play a crucial role in integrating people with their physical environment by bringing imaginative elements to reality in efforts to enhance tourist destinations and experiences with the 'more real than real moment' (Chen 2019, 15). Hence, ultra-artifacts function as touristic attractors in motivating tourists to visit destinations and engage in touristic activities linked to these artifacts across aspects of the destination, tourist sites, equipment, products, services, etc.

2 Broker, Local, and Tourist gazes in Abu Dhabi and Dubai comprise Urry's tourist gazes and a new set of 'hyper-gazes'

The results of the study reveal that brokers, locals, and tourists' interactions with attractions in the study area depict Urry's gazes and hyper-gazes, determined by motivations for travel and interactions with surrounding artifacts. The emergence of hyper-gazes was evident in those attractions comprising ultra-artifactual elements such as the Palm Islands, helipad tennis court, Global Village, etc. The tourist gaze aims to comprehend the ways in which people 'see' in the course of sightseeing and is shaped by society and the characteristics of the tourism industry and its development over time.

Hence, there is no single tourist gaze as such. It varies by society, social groups, destinations, activities, time, etc. Such gazes are constructed through difference, and the particular tourist gaze is dependent upon what it is contrasted with, the nature of the activity, touristic elements such as frequency and length of travel, or quality of the gaze itself (Urry, 1990, 1-2). For example, one tourist might depict a romantic gaze characterized by solitary and sustained immersion at the tennis court in Burj Al Arab; on the other hand, others may exhibit a 'hyper-sport gaze' characterized by enhancements to the day-to-day activity of 'playing tennis'.

The concept of gazes is dynamic in essence, and these processes culminate in the visitors' feelings of immersion, which relates to concepts of artifacts, gazes, and hyperreality. The consumption of sensations at these sites is shaped by individual perceptions and cognition (Dias et al., 2017). These experiences, whether normal or extraordinary, seek to develop a subjective reality. Gazing as a sensation works as a crucial tool to influence the ways in which individuals collect information, develop, understand meanings, and stimulate actions, further intensifying visitors' immersive tourism experiences. Hyper-gazes in this study surpass an individual's previous experiences and expectations, shaping new multi-sensory desires not commonly experienced in everyday experiences creating something 'more real than the original experience could be', or an experience beyond reality (Agapito et al., 2014 as cited in Chen 2019, 15).

3   Ultra-artifacts in Abu Dhabi and Dubai elevate Urry's tourist gazes

The image results reveal that ultra-artifactual components in tourist destinations elevate Urry's gazes through a 'hyper' lens. For example, in Image 2, brokers, locals, and tourists depict Urry's collective gaze and a 'hyper-adventure' gaze. However, it is the collective nature of the activity and viewing ultra-artifacts such as Palm Islands that elevate the nature of the activity and enhance visitors' motivation for seeking adventure. Furthermore, the activities depicted in the images can be considered 'hyper' in essence as touristic elements surpass their conventional ways and become less 'stereotyped.'

The elevation of gazes through hyper-real productions at tourist sites can reshape visitors' expectations by creating surreal spaces referred to as the 'hyper-real' experience. This transformation of the senses is based on processes and interactions of symbolization, association, abstraction, and reassignment, whereby the reality visitors perceived has been transformed by stimulated environments creating a new order of sense and reality—hyper-real tourism spaces that have been designed, that have no original reference, and one that is more real than real (Chen 2019, 15).

As tourism continues to develop with technological innovations and increasing demand for new experiences, the prevailing hyper-real experience seeks to replace the standards of the original one through new images, themes, signs, and stimulate hyper-real-based environments that provide visitors with the most extraordinary feelings of 'being there' that exceed original objects or attractions.

Overall, the results indicate that tourism in Abu Dhabi and Dubai is contingent on the interaction of factors such as gazes and ultra-artifacts to create hyper-real tourist sites and experiences amidst processes of globalization and modernization.

Conclusion

Tourism today has become a ubiquitous force for the development of individual experiences, economies, and destination characteristics globally. Within this realm, artifactual components, tourist gazes, and hyper-real tourism spaces have become highly valuable conceptual strategies for tourism development. This study explored the dynamics of the tourism system across characteristics of ultra-artifacts, gazes, and hyper-reality operating within Abu Dhabi and Dubai in the UAE by looking at two main research questions concerning 1) the kinds of artifacts that exist in the study area, and 2) the kinds of tourist gazes used by brokers, locals, and tourists.

The research questions above served as a guide to better understand factors contributing to tourism development in Abu Dhabi and Dubai. By applying foundational concepts relative to the field of tourism, the study used tourist attractions in Abu Dhabi and Dubai to explore these research questions from the perspectives of brokers, locals, and tourists to develop a new understanding of tourism and its development at the intersection of gazes, ultra-artifacts, and hyperreality.

The methodological approach used was successful in answering the questions above, and key findings include the following:

1 *Tourist attractions in Abu Dhabi and Dubai comprise both commonplace and ultra-artifacts*

2   *Broker, Local, and Tourist gazes in Abu Dhabi and Dubai comprise Urry's tourist gazes and a new set of 'hyper-gazes'*
3   *Ultra-artifacts in Abu Dhabi and Dubai elevate Urry's tourist gazes*

Based on the findings, tourism in the study area is a result of interactions between brokers, locals, and tourists and ultra-artifacts, elevating Urry's gazes to create hyper-real tourism spaces beyond people's imaginations. This research has provided a comprehensive understanding of the nature of tourism development in the near future through the perspectives of visitors, residents, and tourism developers. In efforts to meet the increasing demand for diverse and immersive touristic experiences, the research has suggested the crucial role of interactions between visitors and artifacts in their surrounding environment.

As the tourism industry develops, the introduction of new 'ultra-artifacts' will seek to enhance tourism services and activities in these destinations. People will adapt to these new artifacts paving the way for attractions that were once purely fiction. The introduction of ultra-artifacts in relation to tourist gazes has enhanced the visual effect that has built up the tourism industry and themes of the attraction that arouses visitors' subjective imagination, leading them into a hyper-real world. From the perspective of tourism brokers, the research introduces the role of emerging technological applications and sensations to meet visitor motivations and preferences for creative experiences that transcend illusionary fantasy into physical reality.

These hyper-real experiences are already underway in numerous attractions in the UAE, such as the Museum of the Future in Dubai. This 'hyper-museum' allows visitors to reimagine their perceptions of the world, ways of living, and technological possibilities in the future (YouTube, 2022). Tourists are able to immerse themselves in the recreation of their imaginative experiences in the real world through sensory stimulations, ultimately creating an ambiguous line between what is perceived as real or fake. The museum (in addition to numerous other tourist attractions in the region) embodies the hyper-real and ultra-artifactual characteristics discussed in this study as the region applies the "I see it, but still can't believe it" bravado to projects whereby the hyper-real city becomes centered in a reality that other destinations strive for.

Moving forward, this research confirms that tourism concepts of hyperreality and ultra-artifacts will become the future trend of the tourism industry, shaping new escapes for travelers and shifting perspectives in the production and consumption of these spaces. Tourism is no longer associated with sightseeing and entertainment but has acquired the status of a widely acclaimed and diverse industry of a different order and scale through an artifact-driven world.

While the approach used in this study was appropriate and successful for the questions asked, no single research can inform the complexity of tourism studies and their development. This study can further be complemented by comparative studies in other regions, alternative forms of tourism, and tourism management and planning, across local, global, and international scales. Furthermore, this opens pathways to explore new methodologies in other tourist destinations to compare experiences, aid in enhancing regional characteristics, and enhance components of conceptual frameworks in tourism studies.

By recognizing opportunities for growth in new fields such as this, the hope is to expand tourism vocabulary, understand the dynamic nature of gazing in other parts of the world, and create new kinds of tourism experiences that go beyond conventional ways of visiting and experiencing attractions. As artifacts continue to become extraordinary, people can get used to places like Abu Dhabi, Dubai, or even the moon – the new normal. This not only acts as a potent force in driving new worldviews, but further serves to enlighten the human experience and perspectives of development in the future.

Acknowledgements

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