Creating a Marketing Campaign for Mohammed bin Rashid Library:

A Research-Based and Creative Approach

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1. Context and Motivation

Libraries are often associated with the word 'reading.' They can change people, communities, and even countries by elevating individuals' consciousness and strengthening their minds (Itedjere, Achugbue & Sokari, 2012, as cited in Itsekor & Nwokeoma, 2017). Like other libraries, Mohammed bin Rashid Library (MBRL) promotes the reading culture and the youth's mental growth and inspires a love of learning (MBRL, 2016). Songhui (2008) mentions that a conventional library faces challenges as people's reading habits, especially young people, and their ways of acquiring materials have turned online. Thus, a library that utilizes the latest AI technology to create a new reading culture would be viewed as more attractive to the younger population.

The young generation is not as passionate as the older generations about visiting a typical and traditional library. We believe that libraries such as MBRL must be promoted amongst young people as they adopt a new and futuristic culture of reading that is more adapted to their tech-savvy taste. As MBRL was recently opened in 2022, many people have yet to visit it, especially Emirati university students in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). This paper is the outcome of our senior tourism project for the course TCC-471, which leverages research and analytical skills to address a communication challenge in the context of the tourism, cultural, and heritage industries. Using a mixed-methods approach, this project aims to identify the visitation of Emirati Zayed University (ZU) students in Mohammed bin Rashid Library and create an advertising campaign based on the findings. It is, therefore, a research-based and creative project that produces digital media content.

This creative and research project aims to address this challenge. As the library is still growing its audience, we aimed to build brand awareness and encourage Emirati youth to visit it to increase MBRL's domestic visitation. More specifically, the outline of this research paper is as

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follows: Section 2 presents the problem statement and the literature review; Section 3 explains the methodology; Section 4 illustrates the findings and showcases how the data was used to create an appropriate marketing campaign tailored to the target audience's interests. Section 5 presents the discussion and conclusions, and finally, section 6 addresses the limitations and recommendations for future research. In the Annex, attached is the marketing video we produced for MBRL, which combined footage filmed by the internship from Creative Lab by Twofour54 and some raw footage given to us of the library from MBRL.

2. Background/Literature Review/Problem Statement

We were eager to address a real-life communication challenge in the domestic tourism industry, as per the TCC 471 syllabus, by starting with a literature review and conducting primary research to implement the solutions to the challenge and, consequently, build relations with an industry partner such as MBRL. Out of the numerous libraries in the UAE, we chose MBRL for two reasons. Firstly, it was recently opened in June 2022 and integrated an effective use of the latest technologies for education. Secondly, MBRL has partnered with Zayed University to enhance students' passion for reading and provide them with the library's resources (Zayed University, 2022). We wanted to follow up with this partnership. This collaboration further motivated us to encourage our peers at Zayed University to visit the library, as they will also gain the maximum benefit of the library from this partnership. We, therefore, reached out to the library, per the TCC 471 requirement for collaboration with industry. The MBRL management was glad to work with us; they allowed us to collaborate with them, contributing to this project's requirements and success. After the interviews with the management, we identified a need for a marketing plan primarily targeted to attract Zayed University students.

We then conducted background research on MBRL through the business press and journal articles to learn more about the library and the techniques of marketing a library and its services. According to Zaywa (2022), the library has had more than 40,000 visitors since July 2022. Their ages range from 15 to 60 years old, and they spend 2 to 5 hours in the library. Additionally, MBRL is the largest library in the Arab world and the biggest electronic library globally (Rogers, 2016). Also, the business press informed us about the library's scale and audience demographics.

The academic literature on the marketing of libraries revealed that libraries should avoid using jargon in library terminology and have their marketing team promote services successfully (Benedetti, 2017). This information told us we should use simple terms in our marketing campaign. MBRL has its marketing team, so we collaborated with them specifically to market the library successfully. Librarians should also understand the library's values and competitors, categorize its users, and make the environment hospitable to its visitors (Adeloye, 2003). We benefited from this information by informing ourselves about the library's brand identity to represent MBRL appropriately in our marketing campaign. Additionally, Anwar and Zhiwei (2020) stated that the marketing of libraries witnessed social media as the most significant development in the twenty-first century and that social media marketing is crucial for libraries in promoting their goods and services. This helped us conclude that our marketing campaign for MBRL should be on social media platforms to keep up with the latest trends in attracting audiences.

3. Research Approach/Methodology

In this research, we used a mixed-methods approach gathering qualitative data from interviews with the Marketing and Communication department at MBRL to learn about the library and its features and quantitative data from a survey distributed to the targeted ZU students. We had several meetings with the marketing team in the library, including the Marketing and Communications Manager and a Marketing and Communication Senior Officer. We also communicated with them for additional questions through email and WhatsApp. We asked the marketing team about the most appropriate way to market the library during the meetings. We were also given information on the library's resources, services, and features. The marketing team also informed us that fewer university students visit the library than expected, as the library heavily caters to the young population of the UAE. Therefore, we aimed to create a survey for our peers at Zayed University to define our target audience and understand their perceptions and level of awareness towards MBRL.

The target audience for this marketing video is Zayed University female and male students from both Dubai and Abu Dhabi campuses whose ages range from 18 to 25 years old. They are students who are active on social media and looking for a quiet and aesthetically pleasing place

to study. The survey gathered quantitative data from 119 Zayed University students from Dubai and Abu Dhabi Campuses. It included 13 questions with several answer options on demographics, level of awareness of MBRL, visitation and experience, marketing reach of MBRL, and interest in visitation.

As the students showed interest in visiting the library, we aimed that this marketing campaign would encourage them to plan a visit. Based on the survey findings and the interviews with the marketing department, we produced a marketing video that combined some raw footage of the library given to us by MBRL and other raw footage filmed by the internship students Khalid Alhosani and Mohammed Mahmoud from Creative Lab by Twofour54. Creative Lab by Twofour54, a media and entertainment production company, is a community of passionate people who want to expand their creative opportunities in the media and entertainment industry. Due to this initiative, we came up with the idea of collaborating with them and granting some of their talented interns the opportunity to work on a real-life project and make our idea come to life. We contacted the Senior Production Manager, Salwa Alhadhrami, at Twofour54 and discussed our collaboration. Upon approval from the top managers at Twofour54 to create the marketing campaign, the plan was finalized and shared with MBRL. We also developed a script for the marketing campaign that was narrated in Arabic by Fatma Alhadhrami in the video. Moreover, the video was edited by one of the authors of this paper, including English subtitles for the Zayed University students who do not understand Arabic. We used Movavi Software to edit the video and assemble the raw footage from MBRL and the internship students. The marketing video and the script are provided in the Annex below. Furthermore, the cast in the marketing video was the senior project group members, including one of the member's nephews (see Annex for the marketing campaign).

4. Results

This research project aimed to raise awareness among Zayed University students about MBRL by producing a marketing video based on the survey's findings distributed to Zayed University students in Dubai and Abu Dhabi campuses. We addressed the active challenge of Zayed University students' lack of visitation to Mohammed Bin Rashid Library in Dubai. The

marketing video highlighted the library's most important aspects and features and, therefore, would attract students to the library.

Starting with the demographics shown in **Figure 1**, the survey findings revealed that 94.1% (112) of the participants were 18-25 years old, 3.4% (4) were 26-30, and 2.5% (3) were above 30 years old. In addition, 97.5% of the participants (116) were female, and 2.5% (3) were male **(Figure 2)**. Regarding the Emirates, 61.3% (73) were from Dubai, 18.5% (22) were from Abu Dhabi, and a total of 20.1% (24) were from the rest of the Emirates Sharjah, Ajman, Ras Al Khaimah, Umm Al Quwain **(Figure 3)**.

Figure 1: Age range of ZU students
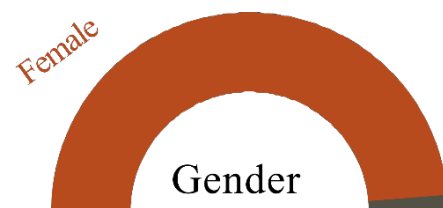

Figure 2: Gender of ZU students
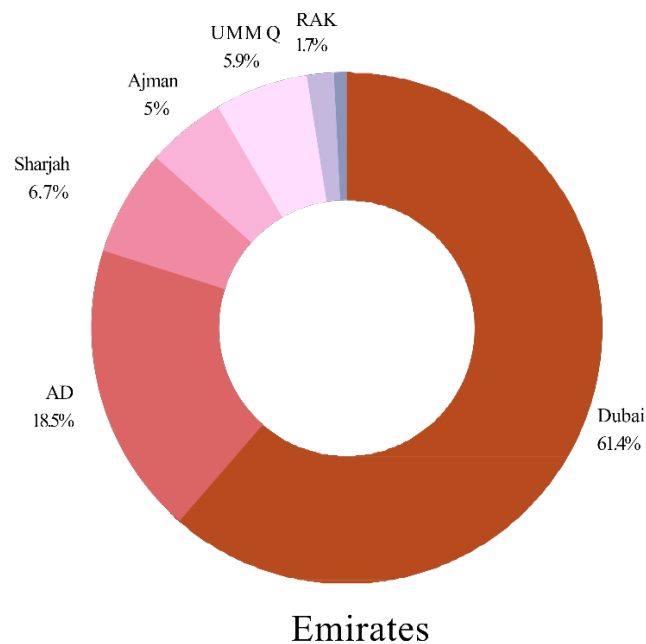
Figure 3: Division of ZU students across the Emirates

The survey findings also showed that 81.5% of the participants (97) were from the Dubai campus, and the rest were from the Abu Dhabi campus **(Figure 4)**.
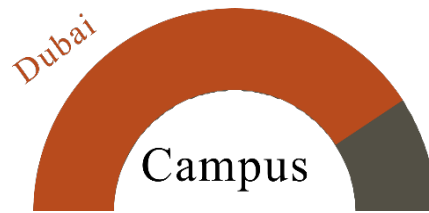
Figure 4: Campuses of ZU students

Regarding the participants' majors, 22.7% of the participants are CCMS (College of Communication and Media Sciences) students, 21% are NHS (College of Natural and Health Sciences), 16% are CACE (College of Arts and Creative Enterprises), 15.1% are from HSS (College of Humanities and Social Sciences), 12.6% are CTI (College of Technological Innovation), 10.9% are BUS (College of Business), and only 1.7% are CIS (College of Interdisciplinary Studies) students **(Figure 5)**. Understanding these variations helped us target the right demographic segment and produce appropriate digital content based on these findings.
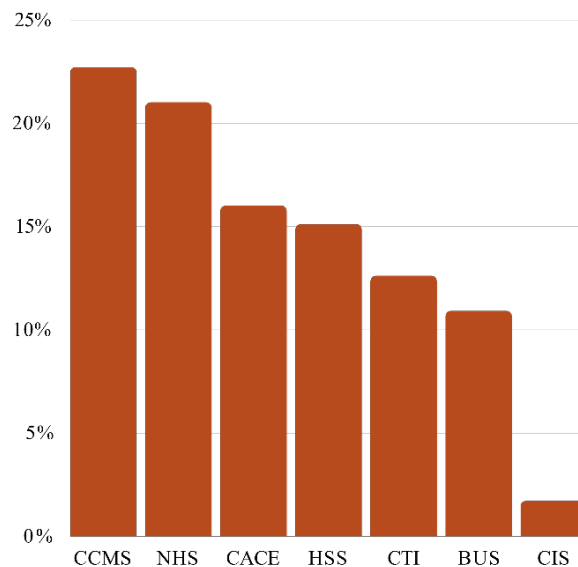

Figure 5: Majors of the ZU students

The survey results also revealed that most participants (86.6%) have heard about the library, while only 13.4% have not, as illustrated in **Figure 6**.

Figure 6: Illustration of the students who know of MBRL

When asked how they heard about the library, more than half of the respondents (58.8%) said social media, and nearly half (46.2%) noted it through word of mouth **(see Figure 7)**.
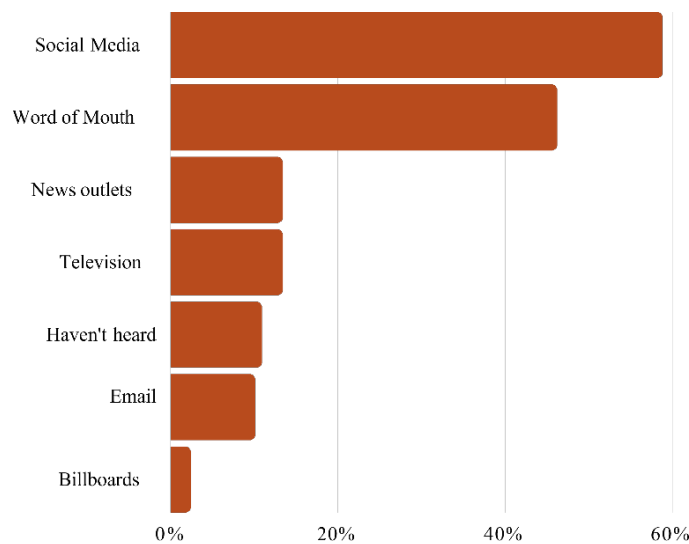

Figure 7: The channels that informed ZU students of MBRL

Regarding visitation and experience, the survey findings demonstrated that most participants (81.5%) did not visit the library; meanwhile, only 18.5% visited **(Figure 8)**.

Figure 8: Illustration of the students who did not visit MBRL

Most participants who visited the library stated that they visited months ago (10.9%), and only a few students (5.9%) visited days ago. We did not focus on this finding as this information is more critical for the MBRL Marketing Team to have a background on ZU students' activity in the library.
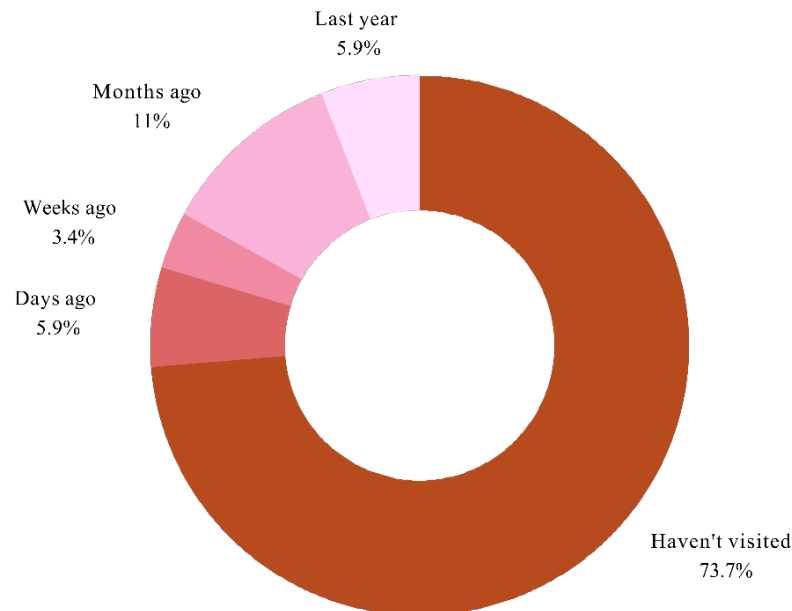
Figure 9: How long ago ZU students visited MBRL

Moreover, the most common library features enjoyed by the students who visited are the seating and atmosphere of the library (18.8%), the study rooms (16.2%), and the aesthetics (14.5%). This finding is another crucial piece of information for us. By knowing what features attracted the students who visited the library, we utilized this finding by including these features in the video to attract our peers.
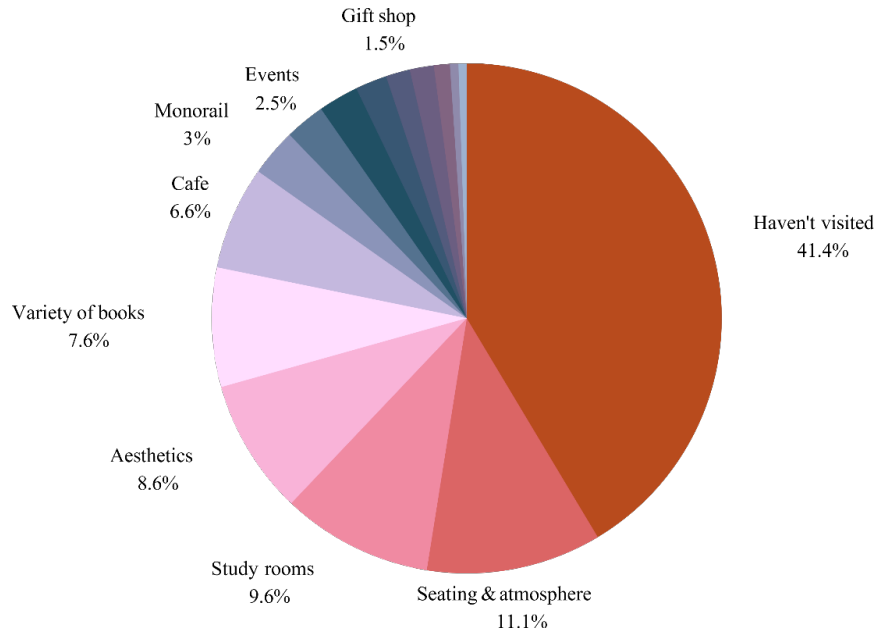
Figure 10: The features of MBRL enjoyed by ZU students who visited

Regarding the marketing reach of MBRL, more than half of the participants (58.8%) have seen advertisements of MBRL on social media, and these advertisements were mainly on Instagram (36.3%), then TikTok (19.9%) and other platforms such as Snapchat, YouTube, Twitter **(Figure 11)**.
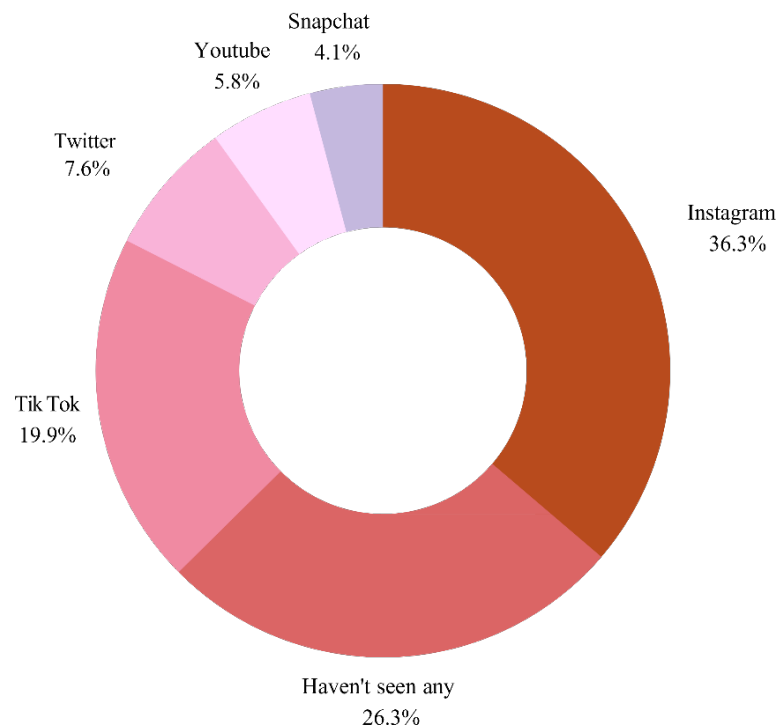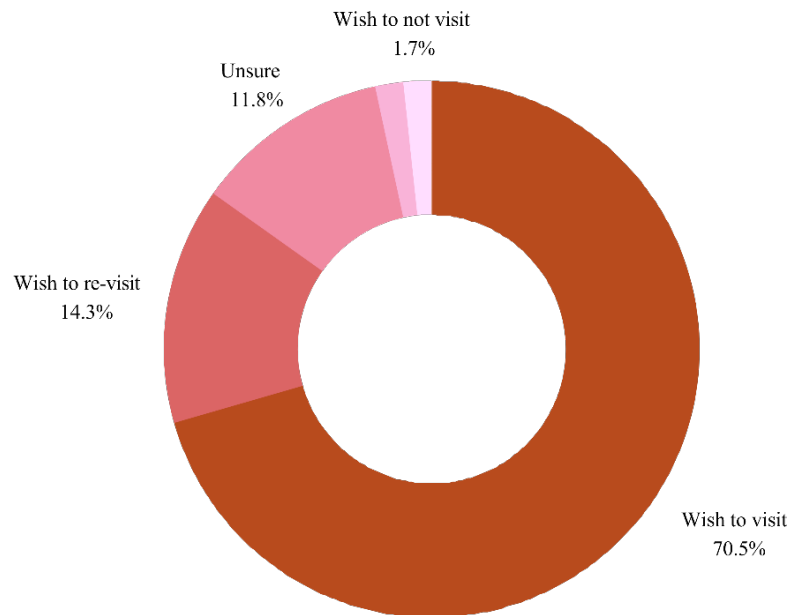

Figure 11: The advertising reach of MBRL through social media platforms

Lastly, most of the participants who visited the library (14.3%) would like to visit again, and those who have not visited MBRL (70.6%) wish to visit **(Figure 12)**. This shows that there is a positive interest in visiting the library for those who have visited and who are yet to visit.

Figure 12: Interest in visiting

5. Discussion/Conclusions

Libraries play a crucial role in developing and educating students and youth by providing access to information, encouraging imagination and creativity, supporting learning and education, fostering digital literacy, and providing safe and inclusive spaces to learn, explore, and grow. To encourage youth to adopt a new and futuristic reading culture that suits their tech-savvy tastes, we think libraries like MBRL must be promoted amongst them. It is one of the libraries that can complement formal education and contribute to students' and youth's emotional, social, and intellectual development. Many individuals have yet to visit the MBRL, particularly Emirati university students in the UAE, as the library was recently opened in 2022. The lack of Zayed University Emirati students visiting Mohammed bin Rashid Library was the main challenge we sought to address in this paper.

The findings of this research project showed that most participants heard about MBRL, mainly through social media and word of mouth, but have not visited MBRL yet. In the video, we aimed to focus on the features that attracted university students to the library based on the findings of the survey (see Annex for the marketing campaign). It was shown in the survey that the majority of students who visited MBRL enjoyed the atmosphere and seating, the study rooms, and the aesthetics. Therefore, we made sure to show the various reading areas and the calm atmosphere of the library. In the video, we also showed a spacious study room with a projector suitable for university students looking for a place to practice for their upcoming presentations. As for the aesthetics, the video showed how nicely organised the library is, and the bright colours introduce a sense of creativity and productivity. Since our target audience enjoys working in an aesthetically pleasing environment, we made sure to showcase the beauty of the library in the video. We also shared the survey findings with MBRL's marketing team for future reference regarding ZU students' demographics and perception of the library.

To create further awareness about the library among ZU students and share our message with the target audience, we reached out to the university social media managers who shared our advertising campaign on their platforms such as Instagram, LinkedIn, TikTok and Twitter. Moreover, we also shared our research findings and campaign with the marketing department at MBRL to utilize them further and use them as a strategy to attract more female ZU students to the library.

6. Limitations/Future Research

This study has a few limitations that could be addressed in future research. One of them is the issue of the sample size. For this research project, we aimed to gather more than 200 responses from Zayed University Dubai and Abu Dhabi students. However, because of time constraints and the duration of our survey, which was limited to 2 weeks, we only gathered 119 responses. This sample size is insufficient because, as known, there are more than 6000 students at Zayed University, and with our small sample size, our results may not accurately represent the larger population of Zayed University students.

To minimize the impact of this limitation in future research, the online survey could be sent out to students ahead of time, and the survey deadline could be extended to get more respondents. The online survey could also be conducted in person on campus to gather more responses, providing further data on Zayed University students' perceptions and level of awareness towards Mohammed bin Rashid Library. The lack of prior research on the topic of marketing for libraries and strategies to draw in youth and students can be further addressed. Moreover, future research could build on the findings of our paper and dig deeper into the subject to explore domestic visitation in other universities in the UAE, besides ZU.

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Annexes

The link to the marketing video:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FYpeTiexAOun63Rc4sC_cw4lLX3GpHWf/view?usp=sharing

The script of the marketing video in Arabic and English:

النص 1: القراءة هي غذاء للروح وللعقل، القرآن بدأ بـاقرأ – صاحب السمو الشيخ محمد بن راشد آل مكتوم in the Holy
Al Maktoum **Subtitle 1**: "Reading is nourishment for the soul and mind; the first word revealed
Quran was "Read" – HH Mohammed Bin Rashid

النص 2: "اقرأ"، أو ُلؤصي ٍهسماوية، ومنارتُنا الثقافية سعت لتنفيذها. مكتبة محمد بن راشد اكثر من مجرد مكتبة، مكتبة محمد
Subtitle 2: بن راشد الوجهة الى عالم بأكمله حيث الثقافة والعلم والمعرفة في مكا ٍن واحد، عال ٌ ُهحملكم الى مستقبل أكث ُ رإشراقًا.
"Read," the first revealed verse in the Quran, and our beacon of knowledge strived to fulfill the
first Quranic verse. Mohammed Bin Rashid Library is more than just a library; Mohammed Bin
Rashid Library is your destination to a whole world where knowledge, culture, and education
meet in one place, a world that takes you to a brighter future.

النص 3: صر ٌ ُحِزُائني ٍتتداخل نِيه الحركة الَعلِيمِية والِثؤانِية والسِياحِية، ٌ ُحمعرني ونكري ٍبِحِضِن ٍتسع مِكِتُبات
صرر عامرة

Subtitle 3: A بمليين الكتب والرسائل والكنوز المعرفية ويعكس وج ُ ًها من وجوه النهضة الثقافية لإلمارات.
cultural edifice in which education, culture, and tourism intertwine. An intellectual and cultural
edifice that is home to nine libraries with millions of books, manuscripts, and treasures. It reflects
one of the aspects of the cultural renaissance of the UAE.

النص 4: من هنا يُسافر اطفالُنا عبر الكتب الى عالم مميز خا ٍصِهم، عال ٌ ُهِجمع التعلم والمتعة في آن واحد، عال ٌ ُهخيالي يمنح
Subtitle 4: Our اطفالنا مساحة واسعة للتعبير عن طاقاتهم وأنفسهم، وتُبنى فيه الطموحات وتتحقق األحالم.
children travel through books to a distinctive world of their own, a world that combines both
learning and entertainment simultaneously, a magical world that gives our children ample space
to express themselves, a world where ambitions are created, and dreams come true.

النص 5: غر ُفٌومساحات مهٌأة لسنٌبالكم لنٌحن ٌزروح الإبداع والخٌال لدٌكم لتنطلؤوا بأنكاركم وتنٌدح امامكم آناؤٌا لمستقبل باهر. جدٌدة

Subtitle 5: Rooms and spaces ready to welcome you, ones that inspire you to unleash your creativity and imagination to create a brighter future ahead of you.

النص 6: عند عتٌبات الطابق السابع تُبحر بكم مكتبة محمد بن راشد في رحلة تُثري معارفكم وتعود بكم حتى القرن الثالث عشر عبر مجموعة من الأطالس والكتب والمخطوطات النادرة والقيمة في معرض الذخائر.

Subtitle 6: When stepping on the 7th floor, Mohammed Bin Rashid Library takes you on a journey that enriches your knowledge and takes you back to the thirteenth century through a unique collection of rare books, atlases, and manuscripts in the Treasures of the Library Exhibition.

النص 7: التكنولوجيا الحديثة لم تٌغب عن هذا الصرح الثقافي، كتبكم بين ايديكم بضغطة زر، وتجربتكم مميزة في مكتبة محمد بن راشد باستخدام احدث تكنولوجيا المكتبات العالمية والذكاء الاصطناعي، والذي يحفزكم لتُطلقوا خيالكم وتصنعوا المستقبل.

Subtitle 7: Advanced technology has not been missed in this cultural edifice. With one click, your books get between your hands, and your experience at Mohammed bin Rashid Library is extraordinary using the latest global technology and artificial intelligence, which will motivate you to unleash your imagination and help shape the future.

النص 8: ملتقى حضارٌيًا للطلبة، الشباب، الاطفال، المبدعين، الباحثٌين، المفكرين، والفنانين وكل من يهوى القراءة والعلوٌم المتنوعة.

Subtitle 8: A cultural meeting point for students, youth, children, creators, researchers, thinkers, artists, and anyone who is an enthusiastic reader and a diverse knowledge seeker.

النص 9: هنا يعيش الحلم ويزدهر حامًلاالجيال الى مستقبل أكثر ازدها ًرا، هنا حيث يمتزج الابتكار مع عبق الماضي وحداثة الحاضر وألق المستقبل، هنا حيث ال سقف للطموح وال حدود لألحالم. عالٌ ٌهمختلف واستثنائي بانتظاركم في مكتبة محمد بن راشد.

Subtitle 9: Here is where the dream lives and flourishes, taking generations to a prosperous future. Here is where innovation blends with the past, the modernity of the present, and the

brightness of the future. Here where there are no limits to your dreams and ambitions. A different, exceptional world awaits you at Mohammed Bin Rashid Library.