

Framing Emirati Womanhood: Heritage, Modernity, and Soft Power in Tourism Discourse

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Abstract: This paper examines how Emirati womanhood is framed within the tourism discourse of the United Arab Emirates, analysing how gendered representation operates as both a cultural and political instrument in nation branding. Drawing on framing theory and informed by feminist perspectives on tourism and media representation, this study explores the visual and textual portrayal of women on official online platforms, including Visit Dubai, Visit Abu Dhabi, Emirates Airlines, and the UAE Ministry of Culture and Youth. These materials constitute a state-sanctioned narrative of national identity that integrates cultural heritage with modernity. Through qualitative framing analysis, four recurrent interpretive frames were identified: *guardian of tradition*, *empowered professional*, *cultural ambassador*, and modern national icon. Each frame constructs Emirati women as both rooted in heritage and central to the UAE's vision of progress and global leadership. The analysis demonstrates that these portrayals harmonise heritage and empowerment rather than position them as opposites. Emirati women are represented as mediators between tradition and modernity; figures through whom the state communicates moral legitimacy, cosmopolitanism, and social stability. These findings align with broader research on Emirati women's narratives of economic and professional agency, revealing a consistent cultural mechanism of legitimation across both institutional and personal discourse. The study argues that tourism imagery functions as a communicative tool of soft power, affirming the UAE's global identity as a progressive Arab nation while domestically reinforcing social cohesion and cultural continuity. The 2025 election of an Emirati woman, Shaikha Nasser Al Nowais, as Secretary-General of UN Tourism symbolically extends these representational strategies into global governance, converting visual representation into institutional leadership. The paper concludes that the UAE's tourism discourse serves a dual purpose, showcasing gender equality to international audiences while reaffirming national authenticity at home, thereby contributing to a distinctive, culturally grounded model of gendered modernity. Theoretically, the paper advances the conceptualisation of gendered nation branding as a communicative process of cultural legitimation, wherein representations of women reconcile heritage and modernity through culturally coherent expressions of empowerment. While not engaging in-depth with soft power theory, the study highlights its relevance in understanding how tourism can serve as a site for producing credible and sustainable forms of gendered modernity. Emirati women thus emerge not merely as symbolic figures of authenticity but as central mediators of the nation's image, embodying a model of progress that aligns cultural continuity with global visibility.

Keywords: Cultural Diplomacy, Emirati Women, Framing Theory, Gendered Modernity, Nation Branding, Tourism Discourse

1. Introduction

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has established itself as a global tourism hub, leveraging its strategic geography, oil wealth, and advanced infrastructure to develop a distinctive destination brand. As part of this nation-branding strategy, cultural heritage has become central to communicating an identity that is both modern and authentic. Supported by developed infrastructure, strong safety indicators, sustainable tourism initiatives, extensive retail and hospitality offerings, and long coastlines with year-round sunshine, the UAE has expanded its tourism capacity. In 2022, the sector contributed nearly AED167 billion (USD45.4bn) to the country's GDP (9%), with international tourist spending reaching AED117.6 billion (USD35.5bn), and 1,189 hotels offering 203,000 rooms.

Within the tourism discourse, Emirati women play a prominent symbolic role. They are depicted simultaneously as custodians of tradition and as representatives of national progress, reflecting official narratives that negotiate the balance between heritage and modernity (Anholt, 2007; Salazar, 2012). Imagery commonly depicts women in *abayas* (lightweight cloaks) and *shaylas* (headscarves) as educated professionals, signalling traditional values, gender-progressive policies, and cultural specificity in a competitive global market (Khatib, 2012; Al-Mutawa, 2020).

The symbolic use of women in nation-building is well established across postcolonial and post-oil Gulf societies (Yuval-Davis, 1997). In the UAE, this dynamic is amplified by the economic and ideological importance of tourism. Representations of Emirati women mediate between state aspirations for modernisation and commitments to heritage preservation. Their global visibility, exemplified by the 2025 election of Shaikha Nasser Al Nowais as Secretary-General of UN Tourism, underscores the need to examine how womanhood is framed within national tourism narratives.

This paper, therefore, analyses how Emirati womanhood is constructed in official tourism materials, using framing theory to explore how these portrayals function within broader discourses of national identity and gendered nation-building.

2. Literature Review

The intersection of gender, heritage, and tourism has attracted sustained attention in critical tourism and cultural studies. Feminist scholarship has demonstrated that tourism is not merely an economic or recreational activity but a powerful cultural arena in which identities are produced, negotiated, and commodified (Aitchison, 2005; Pritchard & Morgan, 2007). Within this framework, gender operates not only as a demographic variable but also as a discursive and symbolic resource. Tourism and heritage sites frequently reflect and reproduce normative gender ideologies, generating carefully curated portrayals that sustain dominant conceptions of femininity and masculinity (Tucker & Akama, 2009). However, the view that patriarchal structures alone determine gendered tourism imagery has been challenged by Wijesinghe, Mura, and Tavakoli (2020), who argue that gender portrayals are not only shaped by patriarchy but also by nationalist and postcolonial hierarchies. Their research demonstrates that tourism imagery operates through multiple intersecting power relations, a dynamic evident in the UAE context, where gendered representation intertwines with nation-building, cultural, and modernisation initiatives.

Heritage, understood as a cultural practice, is inherently selective. It can be “understood as being produced through socio-political processes reflecting society’s power structures” (Logan & Wijesuriya, 2015, p. 569). It entails processes of remembering and forgetting, inclusion and exclusion, all of which are embedded in broader power relations (Smith, 2006). In the context of the Gulf states, heritage is often mobilised as a stabilising force amid rapid economic and social transformation. As Graham, Ashworth, and Tunbridge (2000) argue, heritage narratives are frequently less concerned with preserving the past than with legitimising the present. They perform a political function by fostering national cohesion and validating contemporary state ideologies. A similar return to the past to legitimise current changes also features in Emirati women’s own narratives of their economic activity, in which they invoke historical models of women’s work to reconcile cultural heritage with their expanding economic participation (Goby, 2024). Within such heritage narratives, women are typically positioned as custodians of cultural continuity, with their representation often confined to the domestic or familial sphere, reinforcing patriarchal norms and expectations (Yuval-Davis, 1997). In the UAE, however, these portrayals are limited, and they coexist with images reflecting the state’s ambition to present itself as modern, inclusive, and globally competitive. Emirati women are more frequently depicted in professional settings, wearing traditional attire and participating in education, leadership, and science, that is, imagery that signals progress and gender equality (Al-Mutawa, 2020). This dual construction of women as both traditional and modern exemplifies what Kraidy (2010) describes as the “hybridity of Arab identity” within mediated nation-building. Such strategic oscillation between conservatism and progressivism reflects the UAE’s broader imperative to appeal simultaneously to domestic and international audiences.

These representations intersect with the concept of **tourism imaginaries**, which refers to collectively held discourses about places and people that shape tourists’ expectations and experiences. As Salazar (2012) explains, tourism imaginaries are socially constructed narratives that circulate through media, institutions, and everyday discourse, shaping how destinations and identities are imagined and consumed. Tourism imaginaries are not neutral; they are generated through media, policy, and institutional narratives that serve commercial and ideological purposes. In the UAE, imaginaries of Emirati womanhood draw on recurring motifs of professional empowerment, traditional dress, and family embeddedness, elements which construct a culturally recognisable yet politically uncontentious image that aligns with state priorities (Khatib, 2012; Pritchard & Morgan, 2007).

Taken together, these diverse literature streams highlight a gap in the critical examination of how Emirati women are constructed within the tourism sphere. Building on the concept of tourism imaginaries (Salazar, 2012), which elucidates how representational frameworks shape perceptions of places and people, this study draws on insights from framing theory, cultural representation, and nation-building in the Gulf to interrogate how visual and textual portrayals of women function not merely as depictions but as ideological performances.

3. Methodology

3.1 Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in framing theory, which offers a robust approach to examining how meaning is constructed, legitimised, and circulated through communicative texts. Building on Entman's (1993) conceptualisation, framing is understood as the process of selecting certain aspects of perceived reality and making them more salient in a communicative text to promote particular definitions, causal interpretations, moral evaluations, or policy recommendations. Frames, therefore, function as organising principles that shape how audiences interpret social phenomena by guiding attention and structuring perception (Goffman, 1974).

Within tourism communication, framing theory provides a valuable tool for analysing how visual and textual narratives shape understandings of culture, identity, and gender. Frames not only foreground specific themes but also suppress alternative perspectives, determining what becomes visible, desirable, or legitimate within the tourism imaginary. They operate through repetition, symbolic association, and cultural resonance, mechanisms that together reinforce specific interpretations of social reality (Hughes et al, 2017). This theoretical orientation is particularly relevant to the representation of Emirati women, whose visibility in tourism materials functions as both a marker of national authenticity and an instrument of image management. Applying framing analysis enables the identification of how gender, modernity, and heritage are combined to construct an ideologically coherent version of womanhood that advances the UAE's broader nation-branding objectives.

3.2 Data Collection and Analysis

The research adopted a digital ethnographic approach, focusing exclusively on official websites that promote tourism and cultural heritage in the UAE. Data were collected from publicly accessible online materials produced or endorsed by state or quasi-state institutions between 2020 and 2025. The corpus comprised content from major national tourism and cultural portals, including Visit Dubai, Visit Abu Dhabi, Emirates Airlines, Expo 2020 Dubai, the UAE Pavilion, the Dubai Department of Economy and Tourism, the Department of Culture and Tourism, Abu Dhabi (DCT Abu Dhabi), and the UAE Ministry of Culture and Youth. These platforms were selected because they serve as the primary digital interfaces through which the UAE projects its national image and articulates its cultural identity to domestic and international audiences. Purposive sampling was used to identify webpages and campaigns that explicitly or implicitly referenced gendered themes or depicted Emirati women. Only materials that were publicly available and officially sanctioned were included, ensuring that the analysis reflected institutional perspectives on gender representation within the tourism sector. Both textual and visual materials were examined, including website narratives, promotional copy, images, and embedded videos. In total, the corpus comprised materials drawn from eight official tourism and cultural platforms. Across these sites, approximately 42 webpages and 17 promotional campaigns were analysed, yielding around 138 visual items (images and video stills) and 93 textual segments. These items were selected based on their explicit or implicit portrayal of Emirati women or their relevance to heritage and national identity.

The analysis applied framing theory as both a conceptual and methodological framework to uncover how Emirati womanhood is constructed in digital tourism discourse. Textual and visual materials were examined through an iterative, multi-cycle coding process aimed at identifying dominant interpretive frames, including themes such as tradition, modernity, cultural authenticity, professionalism, and national pride. In the first cycle, open descriptive codes were generated to capture recurring motifs, settings, attire, gestures, narrative emphases, and references to heritage. Subsequent coding cycles involved constant comparison across websites, during which codes were refined, merged, or differentiated as patterns of meaning became clearer. Repetition and prominence were treated as indicators of salience, following Entman's (1993) understanding of framing as the selective amplification of certain aspects of reality. Visual and textual data were analysed in parallel so that multimodal meaning could be assessed cohesively, recognising that the representation of national heritage and gendered identity in tourism communication emerges through the interplay of both modes. Through repeated recoding and aggregation, clusters of related codes were organised into higher-order interpretive categories. The iteration continued until no new insights were generated and thematic saturation was achieved. The four frames presented in the Findings section represent the final synthesis of this process and illustrate how gendered meanings are produced, normalised, and aligned with broader strategies of cultural heritage representation, cultural diplomacy, and nation branding.

4. Findings

The analysis identified four dominant frames through which Emirati women are represented in official UAE tourism websites. These frames were derived through iterative coding of visual and textual content, focusing on recurrent motifs, settings, attire, posture, and language used to describe or depict women. Each webpage was examined for how these elements interacted to construct meaning. Through repeated comparison and aggregation, four primary frames emerged: *guardian of tradition*, *empowered professional*, *cultural ambassador*, and modern national icon. While each frame carries distinct visual and linguistic features, they collectively contribute to a coherent national narrative that positions Emirati women as central to the reconciliation of heritage and modernity within the UAE's tourism branding.

Table 1: Framing of Emirati Women in UAE Tourism Websites

Frame	Type of Image or Cue	Interpretive Notes	Sample Source (Website)
Guardian of Tradition	Women in abayas and shaylas engaged in traditional crafts such as weaving or preparing Emirati coffee; warm desert or heritage village settings; muted, earth-tone colour palettes	Emphasises continuity, authenticity, and cultural rootedness. Women appear as custodians of intangible heritage, anchoring modern development within moral and cultural legitimacy.	Visit Abu Dhabi "Culture and Traditions" section; DCT Abu Dhabi "Qasr Al Hosn" and "House of Artisans" pages
Empowered Professional	Women in formal attire within office, educational, or aviation environments; confident posture; contemporary architecture or modern interiors in background	Highlights state-led narratives of gender equality and empowerment. Positions Emirati women as contributors to national progress and the knowledge economy while retaining modest cultural presentation.	Emirates Airlines "Women in Aviation" press releases; Dubai Department of Economy and Tourism (DET) "Women in Leadership" features
Cultural Ambassador	Emirati women engaging with international visitors, guiding tours, or representing national culture at exhibitions and events; smiles, gestures of welcome	Constructs women as mediators between local and global cultures, reinforcing hospitality and intercultural understanding. Frames femininity as an instrument of soft power.	Expo 2020 Dubai UAE Pavilion website; Visit Dubai "Plan Your Trip" and "Cultural Experiences" pages
Modern National Icon	Stylised portraits or lifestyle imagery of Emirati women in urban spaces; skyline backdrops, high fashion abayas, confident expressions	Portrays women as the living embodiment of the modern UAE; cosmopolitan, visionary, yet distinctly local. Blends heritage markers (<i>shayla</i> , <i>abaya</i>) with modern design and ambition.	Visit Dubai "Dubai Now" campaigns; Emirates Airlines destination features

4.1 Guardian of Tradition

This frame was particularly evident in heritage-oriented content on *Visit Abu Dhabi* and *DCT Abu Dhabi* websites. Emirati women are frequently portrayed wearing the abaya and shayla, situated in heritage villages, weaving palm fronds, or demonstrating traditional cooking. The visual tone is subdued and nostalgic, with soft lighting and desert palettes that evoke timelessness. Textual descriptions often highlight the "preservation of Emirati heritage" and "passing down of crafts through generations." These cues construct women as stabilising figures who embody authenticity and moral continuity in the face of rapid modernisation. The absence of men in these images further strengthens the gendered association between women and cultural guardianship.

4.1 Empowered Professional

Images on *Emirates Airlines* and *Dubai Department of Economy and Tourism* platforms depict women in leadership and professional roles such as pilots, engineers, entrepreneurs, or managers. Their attire blends modern professionalism with modest cultural codes, reflecting the UAE's discourse of "authentic modernity." The tone is aspirational and confident, often accompanied by captions celebrating ambition, innovation, and excellence. The frame communicates gender empowerment as both a moral and developmental achievement of the state. However, these portrayals remain carefully curated, and empowerment is presented as harmonious with cultural propriety, avoiding overt challenges to patriarchal norms.

4.2 Cultural Ambassador

The *cultural ambassador* frame was prominent across *Expo 2020 Dubai* and *Visit Dubai* sites, where Emirati women are shown interacting with tourists or participating in international cultural events. Visual cues include welcoming gestures, guided tours, and smiling faces framed by traditional attire. The discursive emphasis is on dialogue, positioning women as intermediaries who translate Emirati culture for global audiences. Through this framing, Emirati womanhood is mobilised as a form of soft power that bridges local authenticity and global engagement. Women's presence in such imagery symbolises openness and accessibility while maintaining cultural dignity.

4.3 Modern National Icon

Across lifestyle and destination marketing imagery, particularly on *Visit Dubai*, Emirati women are increasingly depicted as icons of modernity. These visuals feature urban skylines, contemporary architecture, and luxury aesthetics. The women's attire remains traditional, yet their styling, body language, and contexts project cosmopolitanism. The combination of traditional dress with global backdrops symbolises the UAE's hybrid identity, merging heritage and progress. The text accompanying these images often invokes ambition, leadership, and vision, positioning women as representatives of a forward-looking nation. This frame transforms Emirati women into aesthetic symbols of national achievement, reinforcing the UAE's image as a modern yet culturally grounded nation.

4.4 Summary of Framing Tendencies

Taken together, these four frames produce a coherent yet circumscribed vision of Emirati womanhood within the UAE's tourism discourse. Across all websites, Emirati women are represented as vital symbols of national identity, balancing heritage, professionalism, and modernity within a state-sanctioned narrative of progress. The imagery affirms women's visibility but situates their representation within culturally sanctioned roles. The resulting discourse harmonises gender equality with cultural continuity, presenting Emirati womanhood as both evidence of social advancement and a reassuring emblem of authenticity.

5. Discussion

The findings demonstrate that Emirati women are positioned as central figures within the visual and textual architecture of the UAE's tourism communication. Across the four identified frames, women serve as narrative anchors through which the nation negotiates the relationship between heritage and modernity. In this respect, the representations align with what Salazar (2012) describes as the use of tourism as a form of cultural storytelling that mediates local identity for a global audience. Framing theory (Entman, 1993; Goffman, 1974) provides an interpretive lens for understanding how these narratives gain coherence. By selectively amplifying certain aspects of womanhood, principally authenticity, professionalism, and decorum, the frames make visible the values the nation wishes to project, and the imagery reflects a purposeful harmony, emphasising continuity and optimism rather than social disruption. This aligns with Smith's (2006) argument that heritage functions not as a neutral reflection of the past but as a performative and selective practice that legitimises contemporary ideologies.

The guardian of tradition frame, visible in heritage-based imagery on *Visit Abu Dhabi* and *DCT Abu Dhabi* websites, situates women as cultural custodians. Here, the representation resonates with Yuval-Davis (1997), who observes that women in nationalist projects are entrusted with preserving and reproducing the nation's moral and symbolic foundations. The ubiquity of women in traditional dress contributes to a sense of cultural continuity that complements rapid modernisation. Rather than portraying tradition as restrictive, the UAE's tourism discourse presents heritage as a source of strength, linking women's cultural labour to pride and belonging. The empowered professional and modern national icon frames extend this imagery into the realm of modern nation-building. On platforms such as *Emirates Airlines* and the *Dubai Department of Economy and Tourism*, Emirati women appear as leaders, innovators, and skilled professionals. This reinforces what Anholt (2007) identifies as a core function of nation branding, namely, the projection of competence, progress, and ethical leadership on the global stage. It also reflects Pritchard and Morgan's (2007) notion that tourism imagery can serve as a vehicle for gender transformation, providing new visual repertoires of women's agency. In the Emirati case, professionalism and empowerment are expressed in culturally resonant ways, with women's decorum and composure remaining intact, thus enabling empowerment to coexist with tradition. This finding aligns with research demonstrating that Emirati women's leadership is enacted within cultural rather than

oppositional frameworks, with agency exercised through relational and moral authority grounded in Islamic values. This reinforces that empowerment in the UAE derives its legitimacy from cultural coherence rather than resistance to tradition (Alhadhrami et al, 2018). These portrayals align with broader patterns of Emirati women's expanding agency across professional and organisational domains in which women's visibility is not merely symbolic but reflects an ongoing negotiation between cultural expectations and professional aspirations (Goby, 2021). The framing of the Empowered professional in tourism communication resonates with these findings, as both emphasise forms of agency that are exercised within culturally coherent boundaries rather than in opposition to them. In both organisational and tourism contexts, Emirati women are positioned as dynamic agents of national progress harmonising personal ambition with collective identity. The cultural ambassador frame links gender representation to diplomacy and cultural soft power. Women are portrayed as welcoming hosts and mediators between cultures, embodying generosity and warmth. This framing aligns with the UAE's long-standing strategy of using tourism as a form of cultural diplomacy (Khatib, 2012; Salazar, 2012). A recent example is the *Al Burda* exhibition, *As the Sun Appears from Beyond*, at the Aga Khan Museum in Toronto, curated by three Emirati women. Their work extends this diplomacy through art, presenting Islamic aesthetics in a contemporary form that fosters intercultural dialogue and reinforces the UAE's image as a hub of creative and cultural engagement (UAE Ministry of Culture, 2025).

Collectively, these frames illustrate what Kraidy (2010) terms the hybridity of Arab identity. The discourse does not position tradition and modernity as oppositional but rather as mutually reinforcing. The Emirati woman becomes a symbolic bridge linking the nation's historical authenticity to its aspirations for global leadership. This duality echoes Salazar's (2012) observation that tourism imaginaries often operate as spaces of negotiation, translating local values into globally intelligible narratives. The UAE's tourism representation thus performs a subtle balancing act, asserting national distinctiveness while engaging with universal tropes of progress, professionalism, and empowerment. The findings also reaffirm the function of heritage tourism as a communicative instrument of nation branding. As Graham, Ashworth, and Tunbridge (2000) argue, heritage often serves to legitimise the present by invoking the past. In the UAE, women's visibility across tourism platforms does precisely this; it grounds modern achievements in a lineage of cultural authenticity. The inclusion of professional and leadership imagery alongside heritage scenes signals continuity rather than rupture, allowing the nation to portray social transformation as culturally coherent.

While these four frames collectively construct a coherent and aspirational narrative of Emirati womanhood, it is important to acknowledge the selective nature of such portrayals. As with destination branding more broadly, promotional tourism discourse inevitably simplifies social complexity, foregrounding harmony, cultural continuity, and professional accomplishment while omitting dimensions of women's experiences that are less easily reconciled with national image-making. The imagery does not capture the everyday negotiations, constraints, or diversities of women's lives, nor does it reflect the broader structural dynamics that accompany gender roles in rapidly transforming societies. These absences are not unique to the UAE; rather, they are intrinsic to the representational conventions of tourism communication, which prioritise clarity, coherence, and cultural reassurance. Recognising this selective visibility does not diminish the significance of the affirmative frames identified in this study. Instead, it highlights how tourism discourse operates as a curated narrative that advances national aspirations while eliding ambiguity. This suggests scope for future research examining how Emirati audiences interpret such imagery, or how divergences between tourism representation and lived experience may shape understandings of gender and national identity.

Overall, these findings present a positive and forward-looking narrative of Emirati womanhood. The four frames together create what might be termed a harmonised gender narrative, one that celebrates women's visibility and contribution while maintaining cultural integrity. In this way, the UAE's tourism discourse exemplifies an affirmative form of framing, as it recognises the social value of women's participation in national life and situates that participation within a culturally resonant moral order. As Anholt (2007) and Pritchard and Morgan (2007) suggest, such alignment between gender representation and national identity is central to building a sustainable and credible destination brand. Rather than being purely instrumental, these portrayals can be read as aspirational, signalling both policy ambition and social change. By framing women as guardians, professionals, ambassadors, and icons, the UAE's tourism communication articulates a model of modernity that is inclusive, dignified, and locally grounded. This synthesis of heritage and progress demonstrates the capacity of tourism discourse to contribute positively to national image formation and to broader understandings of gender in the Arab world.

6. Conclusion

This study examined how Emirati women are represented within the heritage tourism narratives of the UAE, focusing on how gendered imagery contributes to national identity and destination branding. A framing analysis of official tourism websites identified four dominant interpretive frames: guardian of tradition, empowered professional, cultural ambassador, and modern national icon. These frames collectively create a cohesive yet multifaceted portrayal of Emirati womanhood, integrating cultural continuity with national ambition. Emirati women are positioned as central figures in nation branding, embodying the state's commitment to balancing heritage and progress, decorum and empowerment, and local values and global engagement. This model of modernity is distinctly Emirati, presenting tradition as a foundation for inclusion and development. The tourism narrative depicts women as symbols of authenticity and participants in national transformation, mediating between heritage and global aspiration. This convergence between women's self-legitimation and state tourism imagery aligns with findings that Emirati women draw on the past as a moral anchor to reconcile economic participation with cultural authenticity (Goby, 2024).

The study contributes to critical tourism and gender scholarship by demonstrating how framing theory illuminates the ideological mechanisms through which gender and nationhood intersect in tourism representation. It also demonstrates how tourism discourse aligns with social and policy objectives, reinforcing national cohesion while promoting the visibility of women. Within the UAE's cultural and political framework, women's representation performs an integrative role, contributing to the country's soft power strategy and its image as a progressive Arab state. Recent developments underscore this trajectory: the 2025 election of Shaikha Nasser Al Nowais as Secretary-General of UN Tourism marks both a personal achievement and a symbolic extension of national narratives, translating representational visibility into institutional authority. Her leadership reinforces the credibility of the UAE's gender narrative and suggests a continued convergence between domestic imagery, policy aspirations, and international recognition. Future research could investigate how Emirati audiences perceive these representations, as well as the impact of global recognition of women's leadership on tourism campaigns and national branding. Comparative studies across Gulf states could also identify whether similar framing patterns appear regionally.

In conclusion, the representation of Emirati women in UAE tourism materials illustrates how gender, culture, and nationhood intertwine within a dynamic framework of heritage and modernity. By framing women as both symbols and agents of progress, the tourism discourse conveys a culturally grounded national identity and contributes to broader narratives of women's expanding leadership in global tourism.

Ethics Declaration

As this research is based exclusively on publicly available materials and does not involve human participants or private data, ethical approval was not required.

AI Declaration

AI tools were not used in the development of this paper.

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