

Consumer Sentiment and Business Outlook of Filipinos in the UAE:

# The Filipino Times National Survey: Filipinos' consumer and business confidence in UAE at an all-time high

- **Positive consumer sentiment:** Survey conducted by The Filipino Times, released at the Global Business Forum-ASEAN, shows that 96% of Filipinos in the UAE are optimistic that the UAE economy will continue to grow and prosper over the next 12 months
- **Growing purchasing power:** Nearly 9 out of 10 Filipinos in the UAE have expressed confidence that their salaries will increase over the next 12 months, with the majority confirming that they have already seen remuneration increases amid the Covid-19 pandemic
- **Upbeat business outlook:** Strengthening UAE-Philippines ties are fueling business expansions of Philippine-based companies, UAE-based Filipino enterprises, and international firms targeting Filipino consumers



Filipinos in the UAE are welcoming the year 2022 with an all-time high consumer and business confidence building on the growing economy, increasing salaries, positive consumer sentiment and upbeat business and investment outlook.

This is according to a national survey conducted by The Filipino Times, the largest digital news portal for Filipinos in the Middle East and the biggest free newspaper in the UAE, which was released at the Global Business Forum ASEAN on 8 December 2021 at Expo 2020 Dubai UAE.

Ninety-six per cent of Filipinos in the UAE are optimistic that the UAE economy will continue to grow and prosper over the next 12 months. Eighty-nine per cent expressed their confidence that their respective companies will perform better, which will result in an increase of their salary and/

or remuneration package over the next one year. More than half of those surveyed – 6 out of 10 – confirmed that they have already seen salary increases in the UAE amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

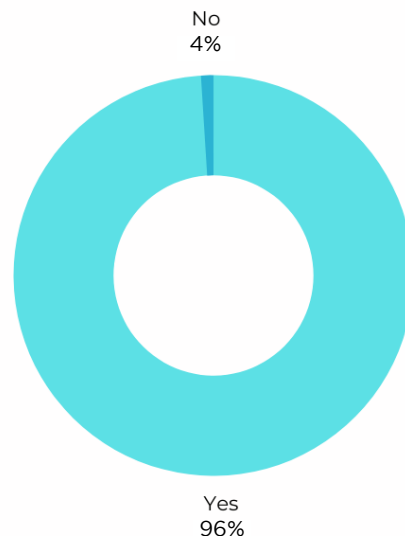
The survey, which asked 2,612 respondents, showed that Filipinos here are not only enjoying an increasing purchasing power, but are also starting to have more entrepreneurship mindset, with three-quarters of the respondents now highly considering to do business in the UAE in the near future.

On top of that is an upbeat business outlook as the growing number of Filipinos, their growing purchasing power and the strengthening of UAE-Philippines ties fuel business expansions from Philippine-based companies, UAE-based Filipino enterprises, and international firms targeting Filipino consumers.

## Exhibit 1

Filipinos in the UAE are welcoming year 2022 with an all-time high consumer and business confidence building on the growing economy, increasing salaries, positive consumer sentiment and upbeat business and investment outlook.

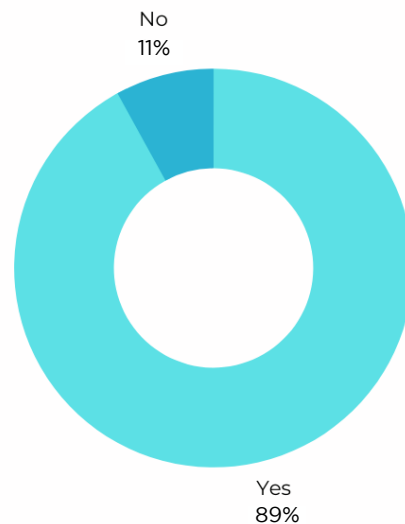
Are you optimistic that the UAE economy will grow in the next 12 months?



## Exhibit 2

Nearly 9 out of 10 are confident that respective companies will perform better, which will result in an increase of their salary and/or remuneration package in the next one year.

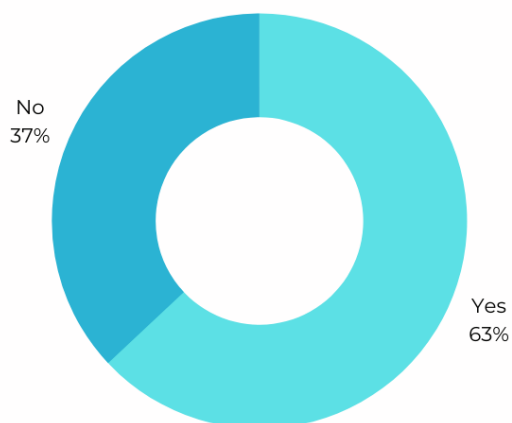
Are you expecting your company to perform better over the next 12 months or that your salary benefits will be increased over the next 12 months



## Exhibit 3

More than half of those surveyed – 6 out of 10 – confirmed that they have already seen salary increases in the UAE amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

Did you or any of your relative/friend/acquaintance receive salary or benefits increase in the past 12 months?



Filipinos in the UAE Consumer Sentiment and Business Outlook

## Drivers of optimism



The UAE has transformed into a place where the world converges for huge global conventions and conferences including the ongoing Expo 2020 Dubai that hosts 192 countries incidentally, it is also the Philippines' largest participation in a World Expo to date



Filipinos' optimism is brought about by a number of factors – first among these is the UAE's strategic Covid-19 response that has pushed the country from 3rd rank to the top of Bloomberg's Covid Resilience Ranking charts having reported cases below 100 since mid-October and being one of the most vaccinated nations in the world, according to Our World in Data.

In addition, Filipinos based in the country also feel safe, no matter what time of the day it is. Statistics from Gallup Global Law and Order 2021 ranked the UAE first worldwide, with a 95% confidence rating among residents who feel secure even when walking on Dubai's streets at night.

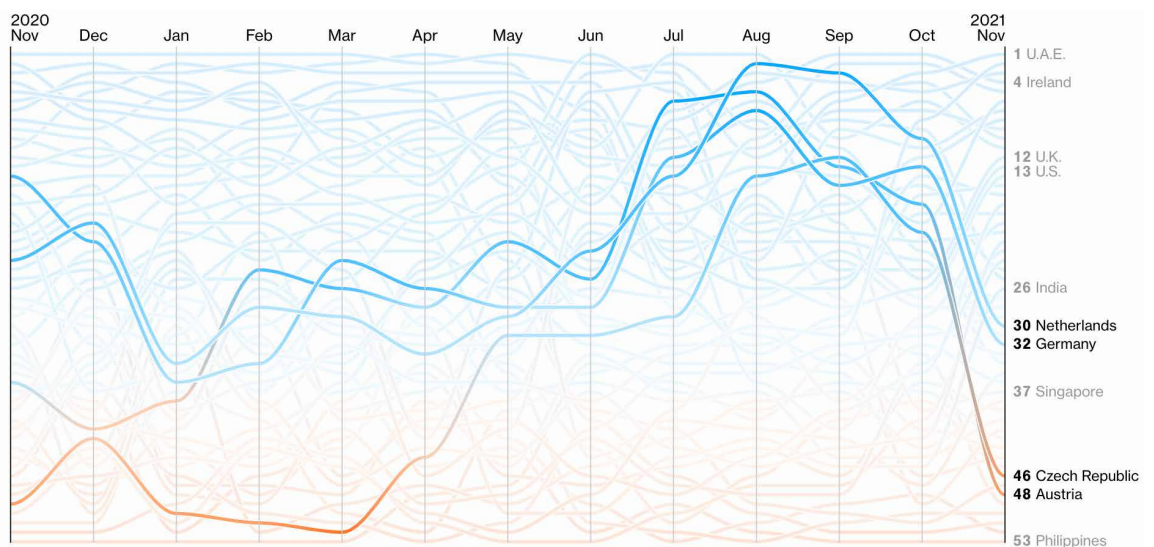
The tolerance and inclusivity of the UAE are among the biggest factors that make Filipinos feel at home in this country. Filipinos were seen as the biggest number of attendees during the visit of Pope Francis to the UAE in 2019, the historic, first ever Papal visit to the Arabian Gulf. It is a powerful

testament to the longstanding values of acceptance, coexistence, inclusivity, tolerance and humanity that are embedded in the fabric of UAE society.

A comfortable life and decent work and pay attract millions expats, including Filipinos, to stay in the UAE. It was encapsulated in HSBC's 14th Expat Explorer study revealed that the UAE has risen in the ranks as the 4th best country in the world to live and work. Over the years, expats – including Filipinos – noted that the UAE has transformed into a place where the world converges for huge global conventions and conferences including the ongoing Expo 2020 Dubai that hosts 192 countries. Incidentally, it is also the Philippines' largest participation in a World Expo to date. The UAE has also gained worldwide recognition with its successful bid to host the 28th Conference of the Parties this 2023 – following a unanimous endorsement among the Asia Pacific Group of nations.

## Exhibit 4

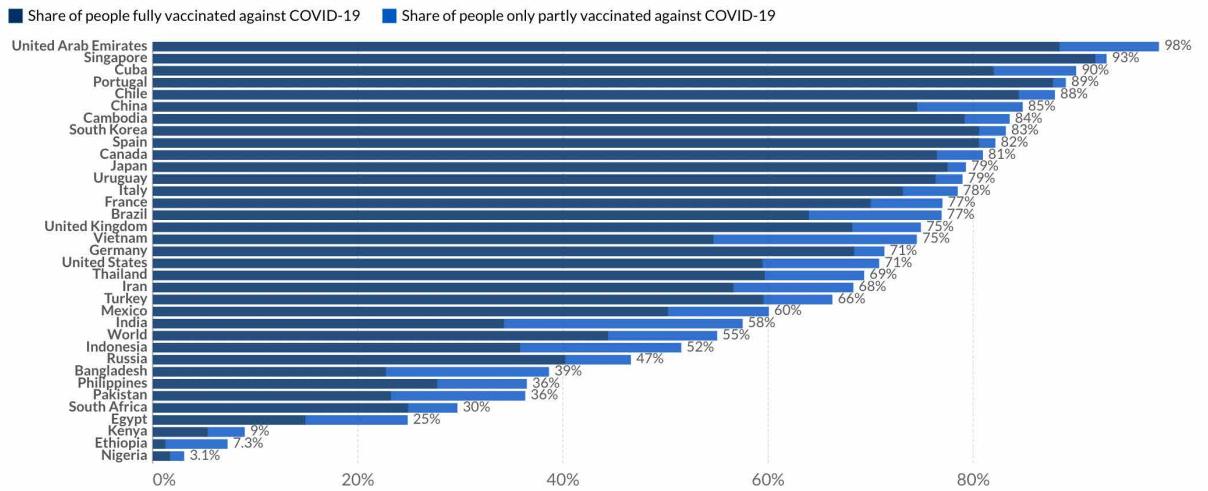
Filipinos' optimism is brought about by a number of factors – first among these is the UAE's strategic Covid-19 response, now ranking No.1 in Bloomberg's Covid Resilience Ranking charts



Source: bloomberg

## Exhibit 5

UAE, which has been reporting Covid-19 cases below 100 since mid-October, is leading the world in terms of vaccination rate

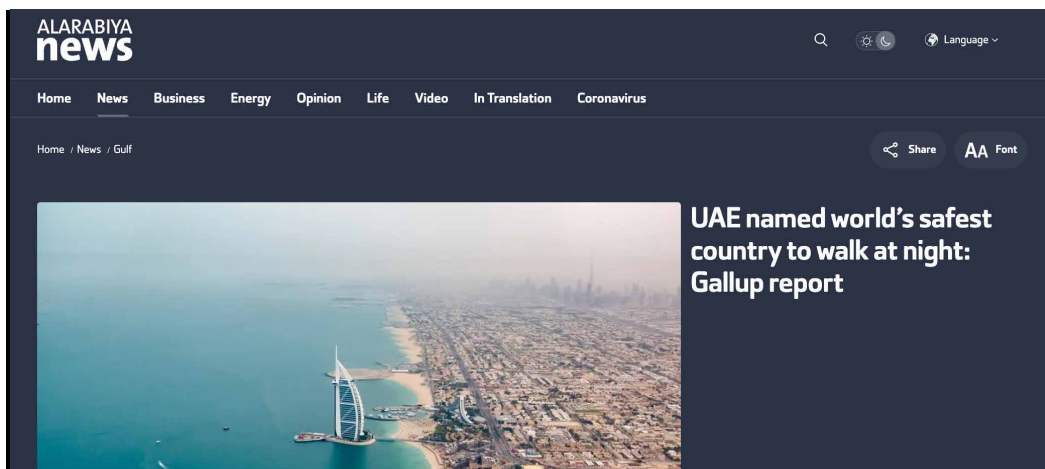


Source: Official data collated by Our World in Data. This data is only available for countries which report the breakdown of doses administered by first and second doses in absolute numbers.

CC BY

## Exhibit 6

Expats in the UAE, including Filipinos, feel safe, no matter what time of the day it is



Countries/Areas Where People Feel Safest Walking Alone		Countries/Areas Where People Feel Least Safe Walking Alone	
COUNTRY	% FEEL SAFE	COUNTRY	% FEEL SAFE
United Arab Emirates	95%	Brazil	45%
Norway	93%	Dominican Republic	45%
China	91%	Uganda	45%
Slovenia	91%	Cameroon	43%
Taiwan	89%	Mexico	42%
Finland	88%	Chile	41%
Tajikistan	88%	Guinea	40%
Croatia	87%	Namibia	40%
Austria	86%	Peru	40%
Switzerland	86%	South Africa	40%
		Gabon	31%
		Venezuela	31%

GALLUP WORLD POLL, 2020



## Exhibit 7

A comfortable life and decent work and pay attract millions expats, including Filipinos, to stay in the UAE



Consumer Sentiment and Business Outlook of Filipinos in the UAE

# Filipinos, one of the fastest growing consumer markets in the UAE



8 out of 10 Filipinos in the survey said they are willing to pay a premium price for products that they prefer or aspire to own





The optimism among Filipinos in the UAE is reflected on their consumption habits. The survey conducted by The Filipino Times highlights that nearly half of Filipinos in the country are within the millennial age. Forty-one per cent are 25-35 years old, while 44 per cent are 36-45 years old, together these age groups comprise 85 per cent of the respondents.

As this generation practically grew up and lived in the age of the Internet, Filipinos in the millennial age group are more likely to be savvy on using the Internet and engaging each other on social media and other forms of digital media to update themselves with the current events and making online purchases.

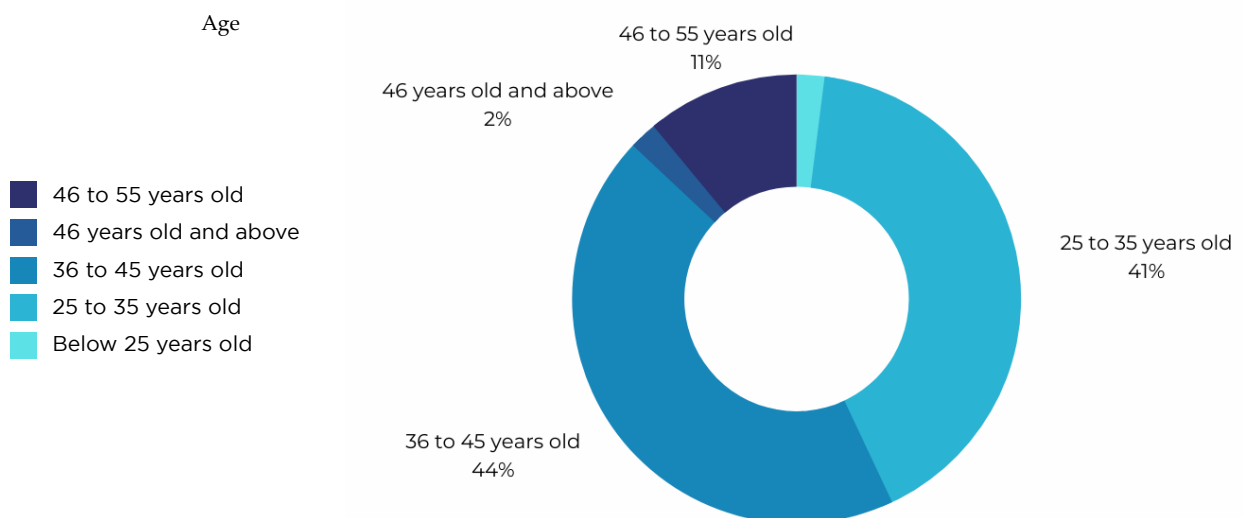
With brighter and inclusive opportunities to work, live, work and enjoy life, Filipinos tend to come to the UAE at a young age and stay in the country on a long-term basis. Eighty-five per cent have lived in the UAE for more than 5 years, with 42 per cent having stayed in the country for more than 10 years.

Filipinos' unique demographic profile, combined with their rising

confidence and optimism, trickle down in their consumption habits, making them a major consumer market – and one of the fastest growing, brand-loyal consumer markets – in the UAE. Eight out of 10 Filipinos in the survey said that they are willing to pay a premium price for products that they prefer or aspire to own.

Top sector where Filipinos are ready to spend more is in technology, which comes as a no surprise as they are one of the most connected people on Earth. Thirty-nine per cent are willing to pay a premium on high-end phones, computers, and gadgets, to secure their footing as a 'connected' netizen not just for work, but more so to keep in touch with their families back home. This is followed by purchasing culinary experiences (26%) which is a form of connection for them. Twenty-four per cent said they are willing to pay more for branded clothes, fashion items and accessories (24%), showing that Filipino's puts importance on grooming, upscale appearance and image.

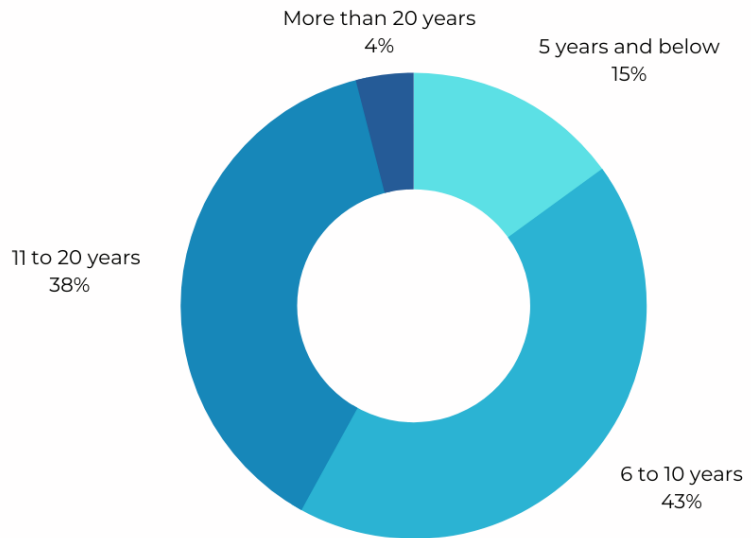
## Exhibit 8



## Exhibit 9

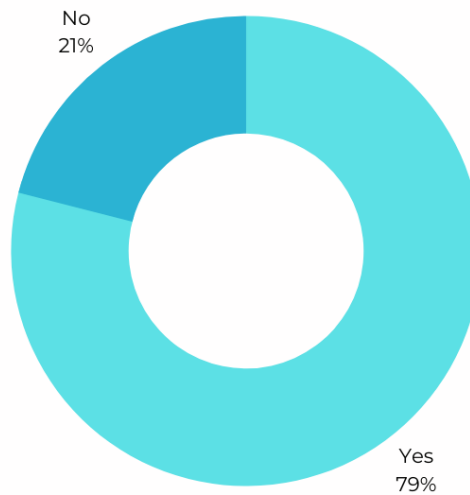
How long have you been in the UAE?

- More than 20 years
- 11 to 20 years
- 6 to 10 years
- 5 years and below



## Exhibit 10

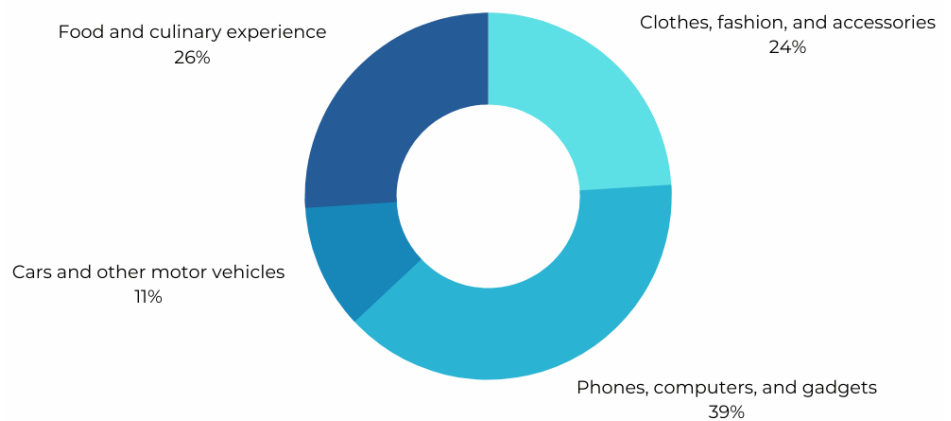
Are you ready to pay for a higher price to buy your preferred/ an aspirational brand?



## Exhibit 11

In which category would you buy high-end brands?

- Food and culinary experience
- Cars and other motor vehicles
- Phones, computers, and gadgets
- Clothes, fashion, and accessories



Consumer Sentiment and Business Outlook of Filipinos in the UAE

# Filipinos are brand-loyal, and brands love them back



With around 1 million in number, Filipinos are the third largest expat population in the UAE and are one of the fastest growing consumer segments in the country. Companies understand that getting their loyalty is vital to their continuous business growth in the country.



Brands themselves have been banking on the growing purchasing power of Filipino consumers in the UAE market and their loyalty to brands that they love. All survey respondents agree that there are now more local and international brands that are targeting UAE-based Filipinos compared to five years prior.

Six out of every 10 respondents said that they have personally seen, heard, and/or witnessed a promotion or a marketing campaign by a local and/or international brand in the UAE that caters specifically to Filipinos.

Since its inception in 2013, The Filipino Times has been seeing a steady growth of brands targeting Filipinos. Leading home-grown brands in the UAE and international brands, along with Philippines-based companies have been winning big at The Filipino Times Awards, the largest event that honors exemplary Filipinos in their respective industries and recognizes top brands in the UAE. In 2019, over 500 nominations were received under the brand category, of The Filipino Times Awards of which, 269 brands were shortlisted.

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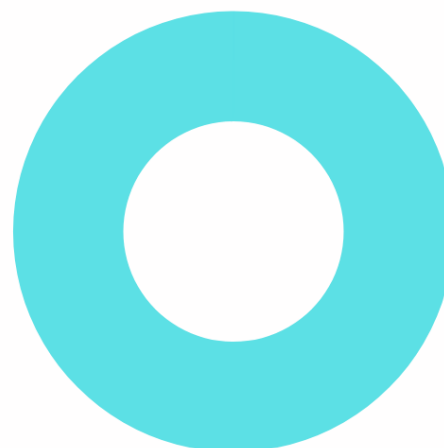
Dr. Karen Remo, CEO and Managing Director of New Perspective Media Group, Publisher of The Filipino Times, said: "As one of the largest expat communities in the UAE, the Filipinos have become a major consumer segment for many brands – both local and international – in this country. We have been seeing more brands boosting their strategy in capturing the hearts of this important target market."

Vince Ang, Vice President, Brand Engagement at New Perspective Media Group and General Manager, The Filipino Times, added: "Filipino consumers in the UAE now have more purchasing power and are more discerning when it comes to choosing the brands that they vote for. In addition to familiarity, they opt for brands that provide good customer experience."

## Exhibit 12

Brands themselves have been banking on the growing purchasing power of Filipino consumers in the UAE market and their loyalty to brands that they love.

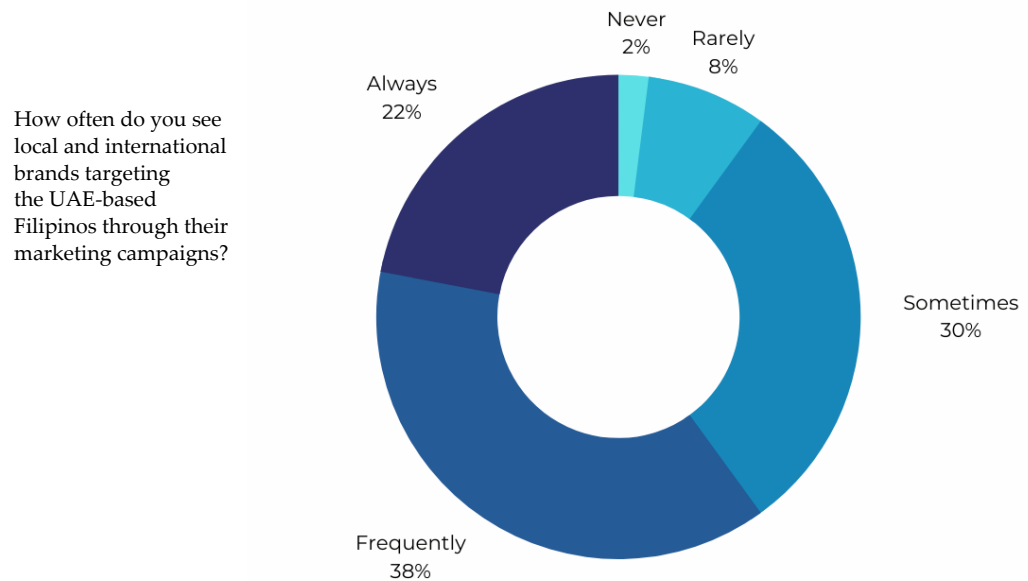
Are you seeing more local or international brands targetting Filipinos in the UAE compared to 5 years ago?



Yes  
100%

## Exhibit 13

Six out of every 10 respondents said that they have personally seen a promotion or a marketing campaign by a local and/or international brand that caters specifically to Filipinos.



## Exhibit 13-A

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Emirates scoops "Preferred Airline of the Year by Filipinos" for second year in a row



Emirates Airlines and La Mer among top brands for Filipinos



Dubai Duty Free wins Filipino Times Employer of the Year accolade



Al-Futtaim Toyota Wins Product Reliability Award at 2019 Filipino Times Awards



Consumer Sentiment and Business Outlook of Filipinos in the UAE

# Business expansions on the horizon



Our UAE sales grew by 136% in value this year and it's the highest growth compared to other countries. Our US grew by 71% and the UK at 73%

- Anna Tatlonghari, President at Ayala Land International Sales, Inc.



In addition to UAE-homegrown businesses and international companies who have already found footing by engaging the Filipino market in the UAE, a growing number of businesses from the Philippines are leveraging on UAE's strategic position in the world not only to bring their services closer to Filipinos in the country, but also to engage and serve the wider community in the Middle East, African, and South Asian regions (MENASA).

Nearly all of the survey respondents or 98 per cent agree that there are now more Filipino brands in the UAE compared to the business landscape five years ago, using Dubai as a major hub.

Anna Tatlonghari, President at Ayala Land International Sales, Inc. (ALISI) which is among the Philippines' largest property developers, and is owned by the oldest conglomerate in the Philippines, Ayala Corp., underscored that their UAE sales have increased by more than double in 2021.

"Our UAE sales grew by 136% in value this year and it's the highest growth compared to other countries. Our US grew by 71% and the UK at 73%," said Tatlonghari.

As they count their years of stay in the country, Filipino professionals have found themselves in diversified occupations in the UAE's wide-

ranging growth sectors, with their respective salary and remuneration packages that have gradually increased through the years.

A third of Filipinos in the country are now in entry to mid-level managerial positions, while 4 per cent are now either in the C-level or entrepreneurs themselves in the country. A third are earning over AED 10,000 monthly. At the same time, the number of Filipinos who chose to stay in the UAE continues to increase with 85 per cent who have stayed in the UAE for at least five years, where 42 per cent have continued to live and work in the country for over 10 years.

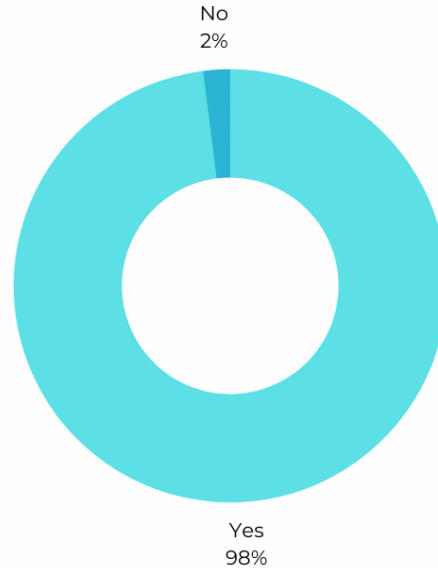
With a demographic that continues to grow in both numbers and purchasing power, Tatlonghari stated that Filipino business leaders are confident that this upward trend on the Filipino market here in the UAE will continue to prosper.

"Yes, I am optimistic that the Growth that ALISI is seeing now will continue as the UAE is going back to the Pre-pandemic level. People feel safe in the UAE as 99.62% of the population are fully vaccinated so there is business confidence. As the UAE continues to be a favorable country for our operation, we intend to continue the deployment of members of the team to reach out to more and more Filipinos," said Tatlonghari.

## Exhibit 14

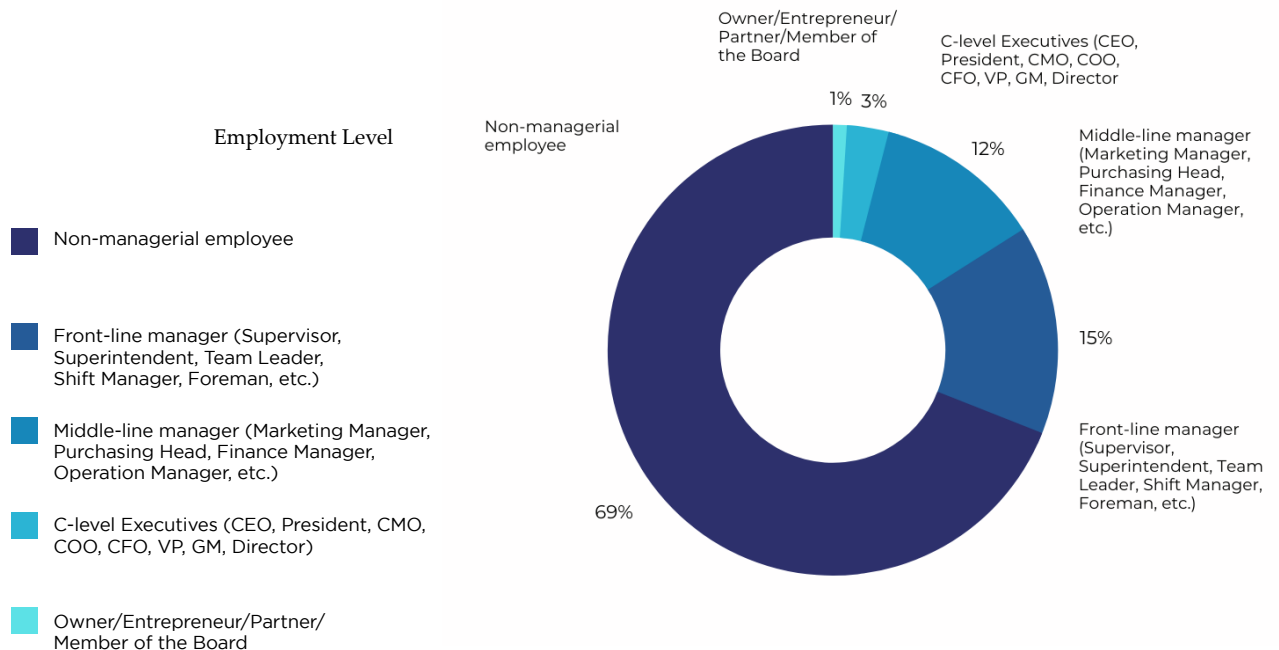
Nearly all of the survey respondents or 98 per cent agree that there are now more Filipino brands in the UAE compared to the business landscape five years ago, using Dubai as a major hub.

Are you seeing more Filipino brands in the UAE compared to 5 years ago?



## Exhibit 15

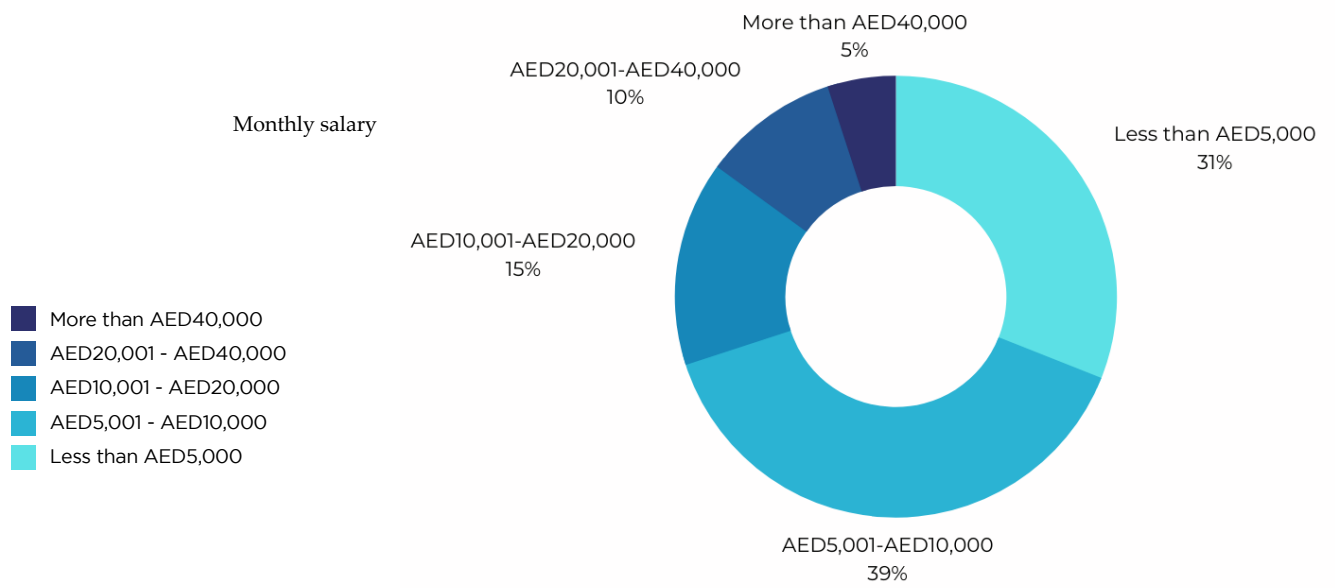
A third of Filipinos in the country are now in entry to mid-level managerial positions





**Exhibit 16**

A third are earning over AED 10,000 monthly



UAE Consumer Sentiment and Business Outlook of Filipinos in the UAE

# Entrepreneurial Mindset



The entrepreneurial mindset of Filipinos here in the UAE has also witnessed considerable growth in terms of awareness and intent. Ninety-four percent of survey respondents state that they have witnessed more Filipino-owned businesses emerging in the UAE's local business scene. Three-quarters of them also revealed that they personally know a relative, friend or an acquaintance who has started or at least have shared that they are planning to launch their own business in the UAE in the near future. In addition, 1 per cent of the respondents have also classified themselves as partners or owners of their very own businesses in their respective emirates.

The tremendous support, sweeping law reforms favoring businesses, and generosity of the UAE leadership in providing financial assistance during the pre-and-post COVID-19 scenario have been encouraging Filipinos with an entrepreneurial mindset to take the leap and start their very own businesses in the country.

To date, data from the Philippines' Department of Trade and Industry (PDTI) highlight that there are 792 Filipino-owned businesses in Dubai alone.

One of the most prominent laws that the UAE has enacted is the 100% ownership law, which now allows foreigners to own 100% of the company that they launch in the country. A businesswoman highlighted that this has allowed her to skip the then-requirement of

having a local sponsor just to keep the business running.

"Recently, with the promulgation of the 100% ownership law, I have applied for 100% ownership of my travel-related business and it was so easy. Now I am 100% owner and no longer need a local sponsor and because of that I am able to free up some cash flow to grow my business," said the businesswoman.

Statistics from the World Bank's Doing Business 2020 report support the sentiment of Filipino business leaders in the UAE as it revealed that the country now ranks 16th worldwide, and is considered as the strongest performer across the region. The report outlines that the UAE leadership's efforts to expedite the time and lessen the cost for expats to launch their business, as well as its initiatives to boost efficiency at work in the private sector, has attracted foreign investors such as Filipinos to begin their investment and entrepreneurial journey in the country.

Among these new entrepreneurs is a businessman who, after working for two decades in the UAE's marketing industry has taken a leap to engage in export and trade, to connect and market new Philippine products to UAE residents all around the country. Thanks to the very efficient trading platform and export-friendly ecosystem here in the UAE, it has become quite easy to source products from the Philippines to bring to the UAE which now also serves as a gateway to the MENA region.

“I am inspired by a growing number of Filipinos who have started their own business and have succeeded. Seeing them flourish in the UAE gave me the courage to take the risk in business investing. After working in the marketing industry for Asia, Europe, and the Middle East for over 20 years, I have ventured into trade and export” said the businessman.

In parallel, data from PDTI highlight that the Philippines-UAE trade also grew exponentially to the tune of Php 1.3 billion from January to May 2021 – months ahead of the Expo 2020 Dubai

E-commerce is also making a huge wave among Filipino entrepreneurs in the UAE, as both Dubai and Abu Dhabi have made it easier for individuals to secure an e-commerce license while working on their 9-5 at the same time. To

date, e-commerce and the UAE’s digital economy now contribute 4.3% to the national GDP, according to the Ministry of Economy.

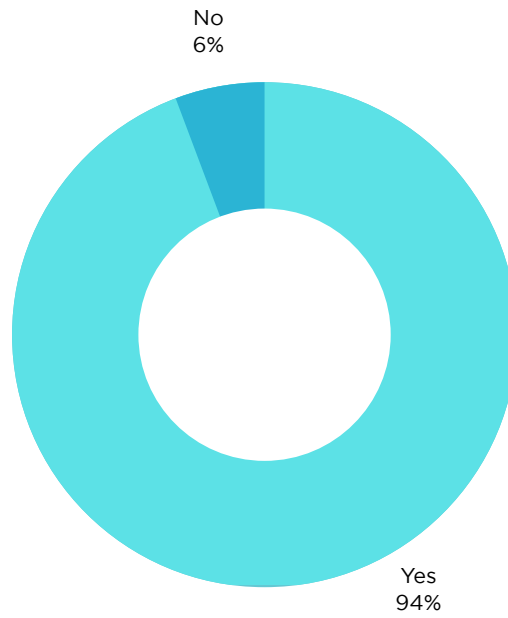
A mother-of-two who works as a full-time employee said that her e-commerce license has helped her fund the education of her children.

“The UAE has made it easier for expats to open and operate an e-commerce license even if I’m still working full time for me to be able to provide for my daughters’ future,” said the expat mom.

The wave of COVID-19 regulations in the UAE likewise enhanced public perception of online shopping and digital transactions, banking on the UAE’s technological backbone, and its readiness for virtual transactions where all payments and paperwork are tracked and processed through the cloud.

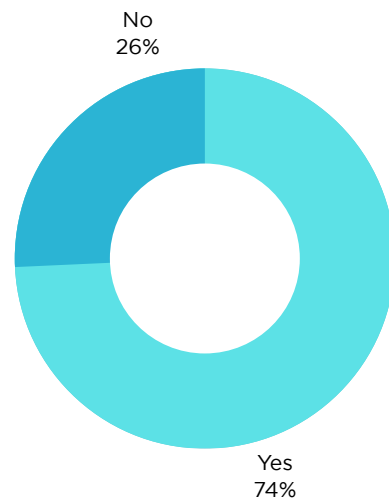
## Exhibit 17

Are you seeing more Filipino-owned businesses in the UAE compared to 5 years ago?



## Exhibit 18

Did you or any of your relative/friend/acquaintance, have started their own business or considering to do business in the UAE in the near future?





## About New Perspective Media Group:

### **INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS**

Since its establishment in 2011, NPM has served more than 1,000 brands and companies, including 20 major government agencies in the UAE (federal and Local), over 30 banking and financial institutions in the Middle East, 10 of the top real estate developers in Asia, on top of a long list of companies in the aviation, healthcare, technology, tourism & hospitality, F&B and FMCG sectors across 36 countries.

### **MEDIA & PUBLISHING**

NPM Group publishes 999 Magazine, the official English publication of the UAE Ministry of Interior on behalf of the Ministry. The company is also the publisher of The Filipino Times, the biggest newspaper in the UAE with 250,000 weekly readership and the largest digital & social media platform for the Filipinos in the Middle East. TFT is read in 236 countries as per Google Analytics and receives an average of 20 million impressions per month.

### **EXHIBITIONS & CONFERENCES**

NPM Group is the organiser of Philippine Property & Investment Exhibition, now on its 8th edition, is the biggest, longest and most trusted international Filipino property investment expo. NPM also organises The Filipino Times Awards (now on its 5th year), the most prestigious awards of its kind in the region and an exclusive glitterati red-carpet celebration that honors global excellence of professionals and brands



## About The Filipino Times

The Filipino Times is the largest digital news portal for Filipinos in the Middle East and the biggest free newspaper in the United Arab Emirates.

[www.filipinotimes.net](http://www.filipinotimes.net) receives an average of 4 million pageviews and 35 million impressions per month, and has a global footprint in 236 countries around the world. The Filipino Times newspaper has a weekly print run of 60,000 and enjoys a weekly readership of 250,000. TFT newspapers are strategically distributed to more than 2,500 hotspots across the 7 emirates in the UAE.

The interactive version of the newspaper can be viewed and downloaded at [www.filipinotimes.net/enewspaper](http://www.filipinotimes.net/enewspaper). Readers can also receive their free e-newspaper through Telegram and WhatsApp by subscribing to +971 52 109 5450.

TFT Reach, the marketing arm of The Filipino Times, provides behavior-based products that suit every Filipino lifestyle, utilizing TFT's wide range of media channels. TFT's wide suite of content channels includes TFT Daily eNewsletter, which is sent to more than 250,000 subscribers twice a day, TFT Partner Content, TFT Facebook competitions, TFT Daily Newsbreak Video and TFT Weekly Lifestyle TV.

