

Social media analysis of the UK's prospective international students

United Arab Emirates deep dive

July 2022

Contents

UAE deep-dive

- Social media listening

- Search and website traffic analysis

- Student profile estimation

UAE DEEP-DIVE

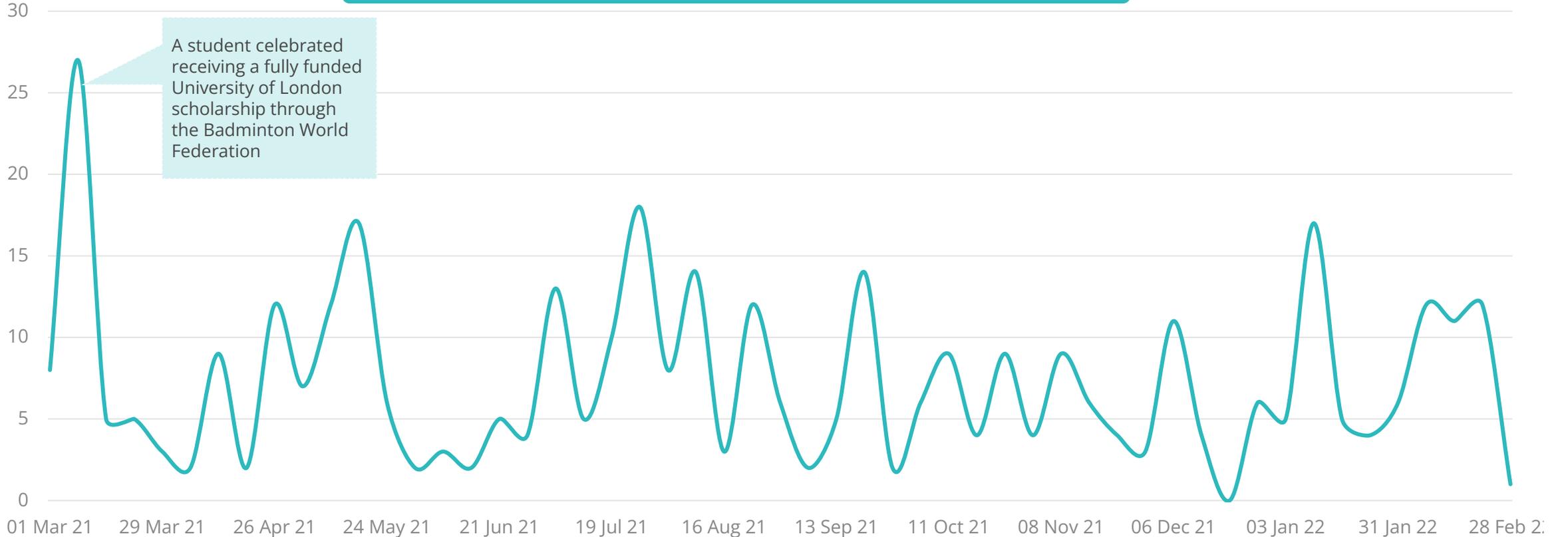


**Social media listening:
UAE**



Most small peaks in UAE conversation were not the result of any clear coverage driver, but rather a small and random increase in posts

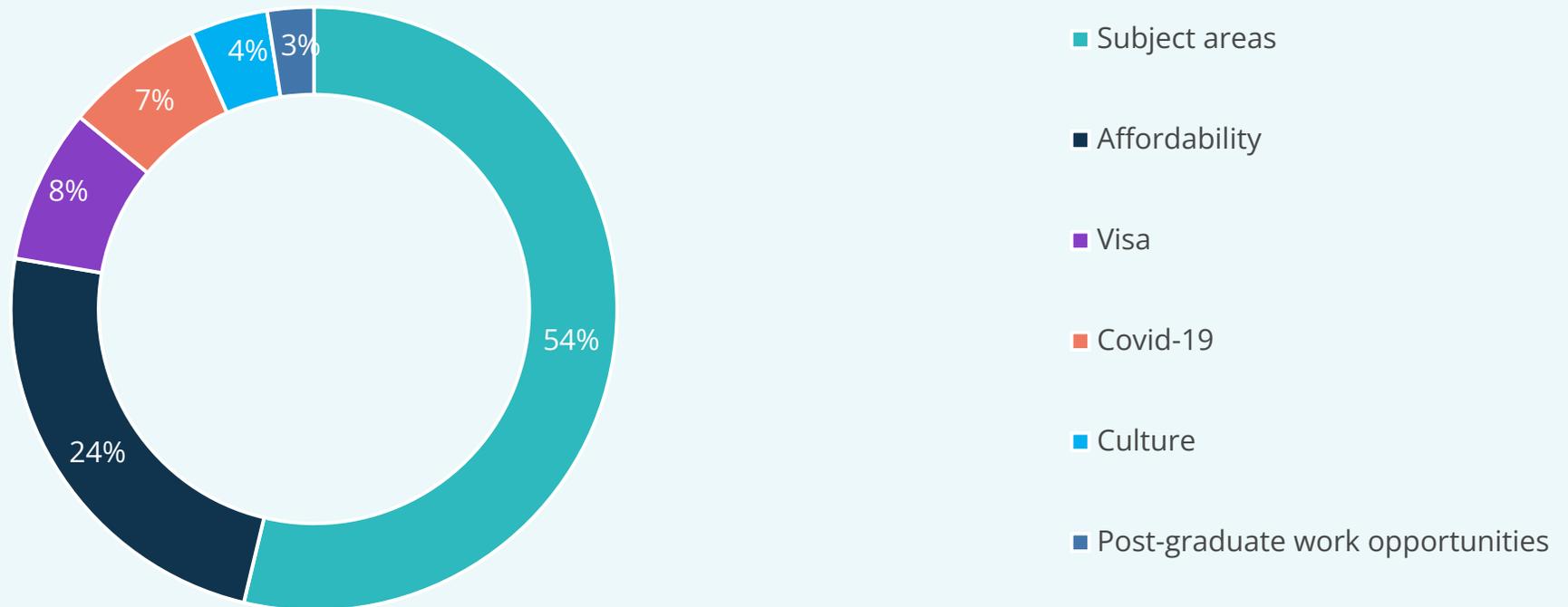
Trend in Mentions of UK Education



Platforms analysed: Twitter, Forums, YouTube. Users aged <35.

Subject areas is the leading topic, with MBAs and Engineering courses mentioned most often

KEY TOPICS SHARE OF CONVERSATION



Prospective UAE students post online to celebrate receiving scholarships

Only these three topics appeared in 10 or more posts, with the remainder of topics driving insignificant mentions.

SUBJECT AREAS

- Subject areas are usually mentioned in passing, and when they are it is most often an MBA or Engineering degree.

“

Hello everyone, so I applied for an MBA to East London University and got a 50% scholarship with flexible payment from Unicaf. I thought I should share incase anyone needs it

”

AFFORDABILITY

- Most of the comments focus on scholarships, both for full or partial reductions in tuition fees.
- Scholarship-focused posts tend to be positive in sentiment, showing gratitude for successful applications.

“

Alhumdulillah I have been selected by Badminton World Federation (BWF) for their fully funded scholarship for University of London's PG Certificate in Sports Management. There were 70 applicants from 35 countries, and BWF considered me the best fit for their ONLY 100% scholarship,

”

VISA

- Students share struggles that they go through to get a UK visa, including having to apply multiple times before their application is successful.
- Others seek information on the visa application process, including what documentation they must have.

“

*it's still quite unsettling. I'm more or less freaking out now because the University have told me that I have until 1 October to get my *** into the UK or I'm going to have to be forced to defer entry to January.*

”

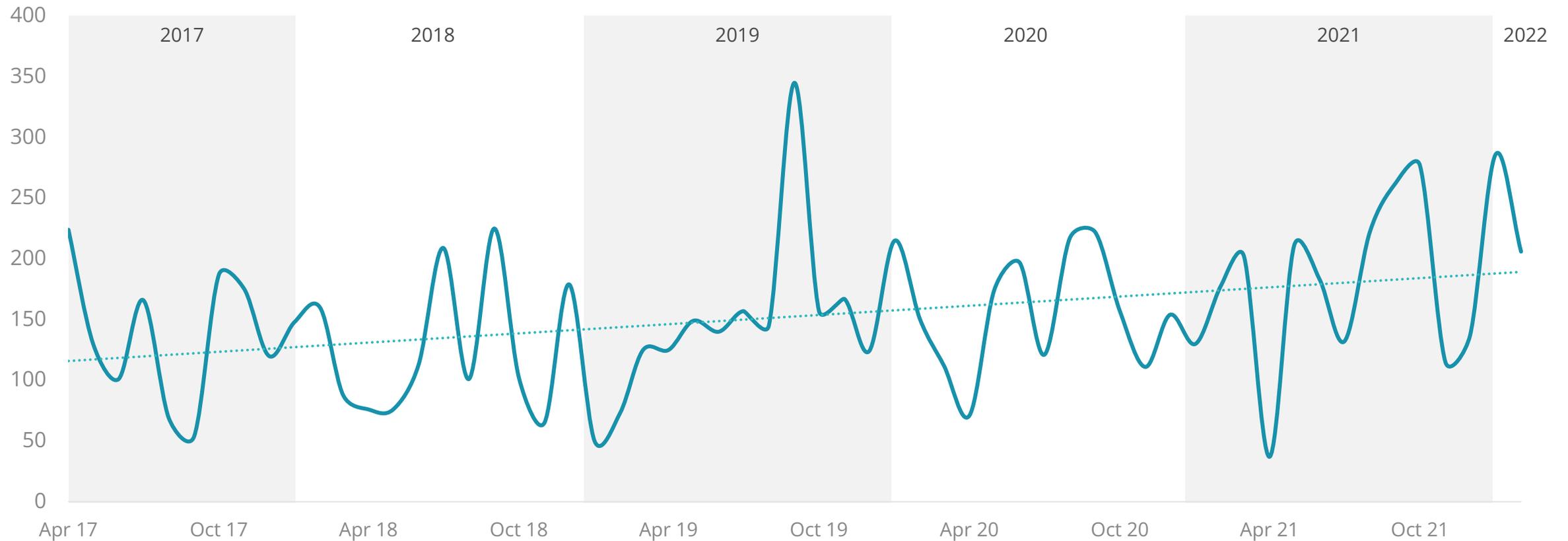
**Search & website traffic
analysis:
UAE**



Search trend analysis

There has been an upward trend in searches around UK study over the past five years. A peak in search volume in late 2019 may have been due to the introduction of a post-study work visa which would allow international students to remain in the country for two years after graduation to search for employment

Monthly searches for 'Study in UK' over the past 5 years



Search & website traffic analysis Overview

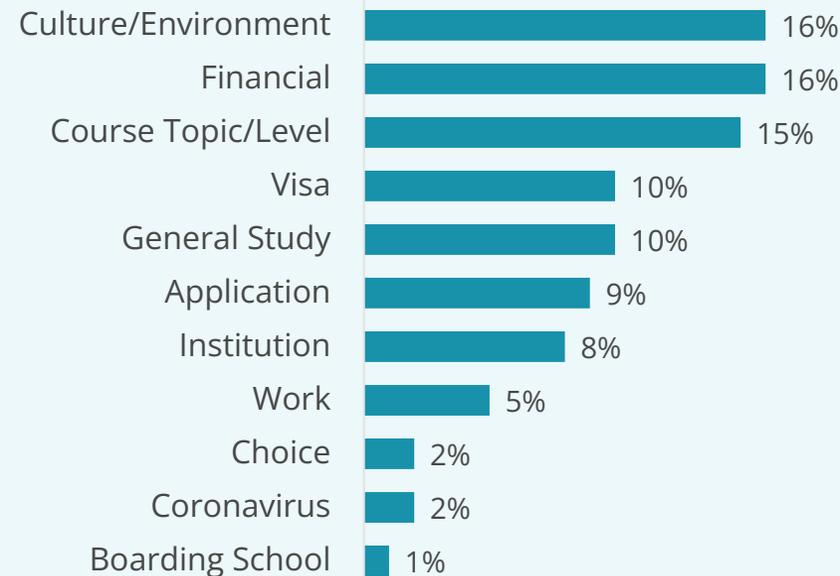
Questions around the culture and environment (generally weather) in the UK are the strongest driver of traffic to the Study UK website – it is unclear whether these searches are from potential students, however.

The data suggests that while people in the UK are most likely to search for information on studying specific subjects in the UK, such as architecture or medicine, these searches don't fuel traffic to the Study UK website. There is likely a high level of competition from other websites offering support and information (including paid-for) in this area.

Most Common Search Topics



Search Topics Driving Website Traffic



Search Data: Google.

General search topic data is from the last 12 months, while search topic data for website traffic is from February 2022. Because multiple topics may be included in a single search, percentage data may not equal 100%.

Search Analysis

People seek information on course topics and levels, as well as the financial costs of studying in the UK. There is a strong interest in understanding how the UK education system works, including how long students should expect to study, and the structure of the UK academic year.

Course Topic/Level (40%)

- Searches for subjects to study in the UK, such as architecture, language and medicine
- Levels of degree (e.g. high school, Bachelor's, Master's PhD), duration to obtain a degree and costs are also searched for

Financial (20%)

- The average cost of studying, in general and by study period (e.g. 6 months), subject (e.g. English, medicine) and level (e.g. Master's degree, high school) are the key question types
- Information about scholarship offers and 'how to' access grants are also looked for

General Study (19%)

- General informational needs around UK study drive searches
- Seeking information on the UK 'academic calendar', 'distance learning' and whether studying in the UK is 'difficult'
- Searches for 'studying in UK as a female alone' are unique question identified in the market

Application (14%)

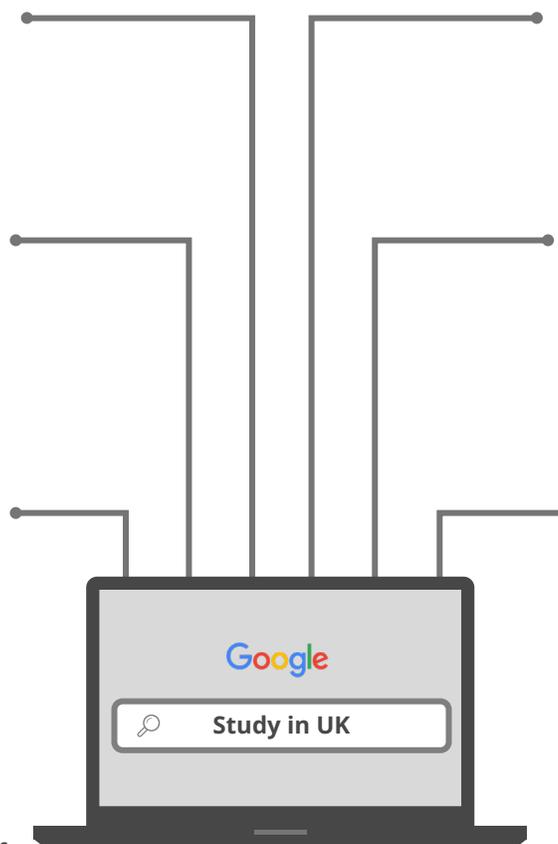
- Application-related search questions mainly focus on requirements (particularly IELTS for international students) or applications for specific subjects, such as law or medicine
- Reasons for studying in the UK are also sought by those writing their personal statements and preparing for interview

Visa (9%)

- Searches for student visa requirements and the possibility of gaining permanent residency after completing studies
- Looking for information whether dependent visa holders can study or work in the UK

Choice (7%)

- Searches for the 'advantages' of studying in UK, and which countries would be 'beneficial' for students to study in
- Countries and regions such as the US, Canada, Australia, France and the EU are compared to the UK as potential destinations for study
- Amsterdam in particular is mentioned in location choice questions
- Searches for the 'best courses' to study



Search Data: Google.

Search volume (%) by topic is based on the average number of monthly searches for a 'study in UK' keyword over a 12-month period. Because multiple topics may be included in a single search, percentage data may not equal 100%.

Search Analysis: Sample Searches

Course Topic/Level

- *Study medicine in Scotland*
- *Study medicine in Britain after high school*
- *Best courses to study in UK*
- *Undergraduate studies in UK for international students*
- *How long does it take to study a master's degree in the UK?*
- *Best university to study architecture in UK*
- *Best place to study English in UK*

Application

- *Requirements to study in UK for international students*
- *Why do you want to study in UK answer*
- *Study in UK without IELTS*
- *Do you need IELTS to study in UK*
- *Exams required to study in UK*
- *Apply to study in UK*
- *Requirements to study masters in UK*

Financial

- *Average cost of studying in UK*
- *How much does it cost to study in UK*
- *Scholarship study in Britain*
- *The cost of studying a language in Britain 6 months*
- *Study in the UK for free*
- *The cost of studying high school in the UK*
- *How to get a scholarship in Britain*

Visa

- *UK study visa requirements*
- *Is it possible to get PR in UK after study*
- *Stay back option in UK after studies*
- *Can my spouse work in UK while I study*
- *Do I need visa to study in UK*
- *Work permit after study in UK*
- *Language studying visa in Britain*

General Study

- *Study in UK*
- *Studying offers in Britain*
- *How to study in Britain*
- *When does the study start in the UK?*
- *University study system in Britain*
- *UK academic calendar 2020*
- *Study in England*
- *Studying in UK as a female alone*

Choice

- *Advantages of studying in UK*
- *What are the benefits of studying in the UK*
- *Pros and cons of studying in UK*
- *Study in UK vs Canada*
- *Study in US or UK*
- *Why study in UK not in other countries*
- *Is it beneficial to study in UK France or Australia*

Search Data: Google.

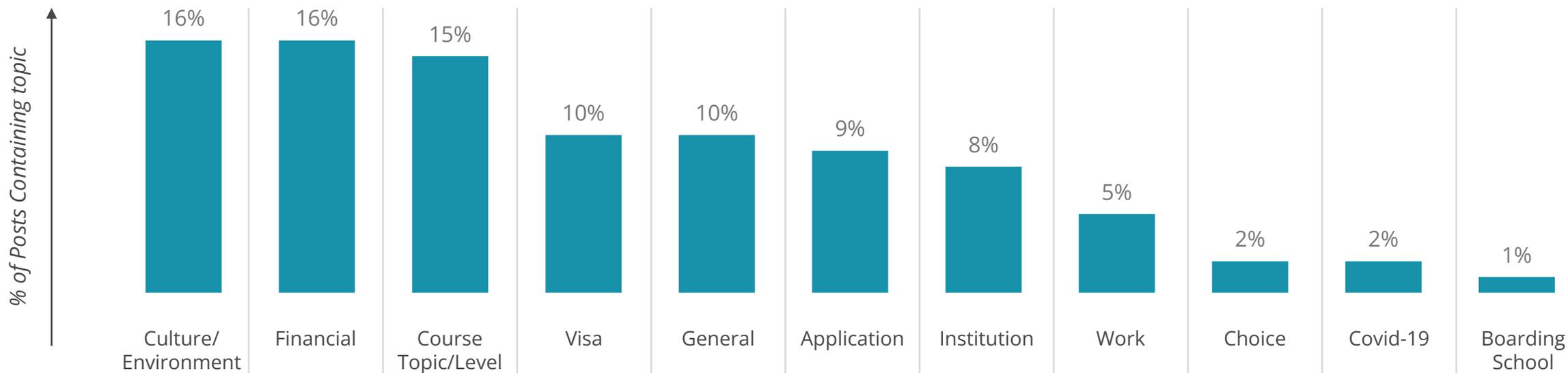
Search volume (%) by topic is based on the average number of monthly searches for a 'study in UK' keyword over a 12-month period. Because multiple topics may be included in a single search, percentage data may not equal 100%.

Website Traffic Analysis

People based in the UAE visited study-uk.britishcouncil.org **2.6K** times in February 2022.

There are 738K key search terms leading people to visit the website, and we conducted an analysis of the **top 100 search terms** (driving 99% of website visits). Within this data, we identified 11 search topics that lead people to visit the site:

Topic Footprint in Website Traffic Search Data



Data covering February 2022. Because multiple topics may be included in a single search, and searches consisting of single, unrelated words such as 'great' or 'commonwealth' were not included in the data reviewed for these slides, percentage data may not equal 100%.

Website Traffic Analysis: Sample Searches

A high share of the Study UK website traffic from the UAE comes from people hoping to understand the UK culture and environment, often asking what the weather is like and what religion is practised. People seek information on scholarships, with some already anticipating that they will be able to find useful information on the British Council's website.

Culture/ Environment	Financial	Course Topic/Level	Visa	General	Application
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>UK religion</i>• <i>Winter temperature in UK</i>• <i>UK weather</i>• <i>UK language</i>• <i>UK holidays</i>• <i>UK seasons</i>• <i>England celebration day</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>How to get scholarship in UK</i>• <i>British Council scholarship</i>• <i>What is commonwealth scholarship</i>• <i>Funding for international students</i>• <i>Funded degrees UK</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Postgraduate</i>• <i>Study English in England</i>• <i>Graduate visa UK</i>• <i>Master's in UK</i>• <i>Bachelor duration</i>• <i>Environmental Engineering UK</i>• <i>Medicine UK</i>• <i>Business Management UK</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>UK student visa</i>• <i>How to apply post study work visa UK</i>• <i>UK visa</i>• <i>Graduate visa UK</i>• <i>UK student visa requirements</i>• <i>England study visa</i>• <i>Tier 4 visa requirements</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Study in UK</i>• <i>Education in UK for international students</i>• <i>Free online degree courses for international students</i>• <i>Education in Great Britain</i>• <i>EEA students meaning</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>How to get scholarship in UK</i>• <i>How to apply</i>• <i>Clearing/clearing places</i>• <i>Apply for Master's in UK</i>• <i>Application to study</i>• <i>Study in UK requirements</i>

Data covering February 2022. Because multiple topics may be included in a single search, and searches consisting of single, unrelated words such as 'great' or 'commonwealth' were not included in the data reviewed for these slides, percentage data may not equal 100%.

Website Traffic Analysis: Sample Searches

Transnational university partnerships seem to be of interest in this market, with people seeking information on UK universities with sites in the UAE. As with other countries, some are keen to understand if they would be able to work in the UK while studying. With regard to choice, people ask why they should choose the UK, as well as hoping to understand how to choose a university.

Institution	Work	Choice	Covid-19	Boarding school
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>UK universities UAE</i>• <i>UK universities in UAE</i>• <i>UK universities in Dubai</i>• <i>British university in Dubai</i>• <i>UK universities</i>• <i>University of Hull</i>• <i>UK schools</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Work placement</i>• <i>How to apply post study work visa UK</i>• <i>Can I work and study in UK</i>• <i>Can students work in UK</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Why choose UK for study</i>• <i>How to know if a university is good</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>UK covid</i>• <i>UK coronavirus</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Boarding school</i>

Data covering February 2022. Because multiple topics may be included in a single search, and searches consisting of single, unrelated words such as 'great' or 'commonwealth' were not included in the data reviewed for these slides, percentage data may not equal 100%.

Leading Subdomains

Subdomain	Traffic
https://study-uk.britishcouncil.org/	1,322
https://study-uk.britishcouncil.org/moving-uk/coronavirus	241
https://study-uk.britishcouncil.org/find/study-options/studying-uk-degree-outside-uk/uae	157
https://study-uk.britishcouncil.org/scholarships	134
https://study-uk.britishcouncil.org/moving-uk/student-life/weather	123
https://study-uk.britishcouncil.org/moving-uk/student-life/religion	102
https://study-uk.britishcouncil.org/moving-uk/student-visas	66
https://study-uk.britishcouncil.org/find/study-options/boarding	54
https://study-uk.britishcouncil.org/after-your-studies/post-study-work	52
https://study-uk.britishcouncil.org/find/study-options/postgraduate	47

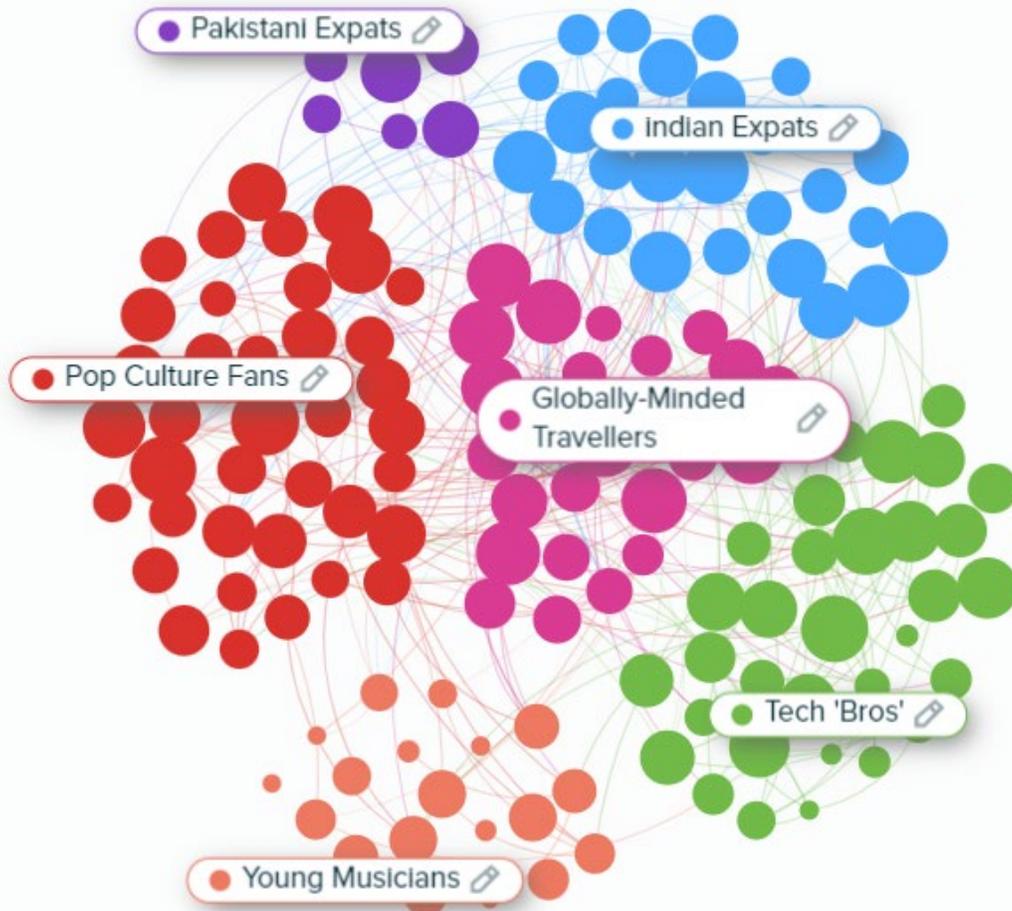
Subdomain	Traffic
https://study-uk.britishcouncil.org/scholarships/great-scholarships	47
https://study-uk.britishcouncil.org/find/how-to-apply	23
https://study-uk.britishcouncil.org/why-study/succeed-your-career/work-placements	18
https://study-uk.britishcouncil.org/scholarships/commonwealth-scholarships	15
https://study-uk.britishcouncil.org/moving-uk/student-life/language	14
https://study-uk.britishcouncil.org/find/how-to-apply/clearing	13
https://study-uk.britishcouncil.org/find/study-options/study-english-uk	11
https://study-uk.britishcouncil.org/find/subject-areas/creative-arts	11
https://study-uk.britishcouncil.org/scholarships/great-scholarships/india	9
https://study-uk.britishcouncil.org/find/choosing-university	9

Data covering February 2022. Because multiple topics may be included in a single search, and searches consisting of single, unrelated words such as 'great' or 'commonwealth' were not included in the data reviewed for these slides, percentage data may not equal 100%.

**Student profile
estimation:
UAE**



Audience segmentation of young Twitter users in the UAE



Pop Culture Fans (19%)

Mixed gender group who have completed their undergraduate degrees. They show a preference for US-based celebrities such as Rihanna, Eminem and Kim Kardashian. They are highly likely to use Twitch.

Tech 'Bros' (16%)

A male-leaning group that tends to follow the social media accounts of regional media outlets and monarchs. They enjoy tech, especially consumer electronics, and use the apps Telegram and Snapchat.

Indian Expats (13%)

Keen fans of movies, especially Bollywood, who tend to follow Indian actors and celebrities. They are also passionate about sport, in particular cricket. On social media, they tend to use Twitter and Facebook.

Globally-Minded Travellers (12%)

They tend to be based in Dubai, and are avid consumers of international news outlets such as The Economist, The New York Times and Forbes. They have a keen interest in travel and tourism, and are heavy users of Medium, Reddit and LinkedIn.

Young Musicians (10%)

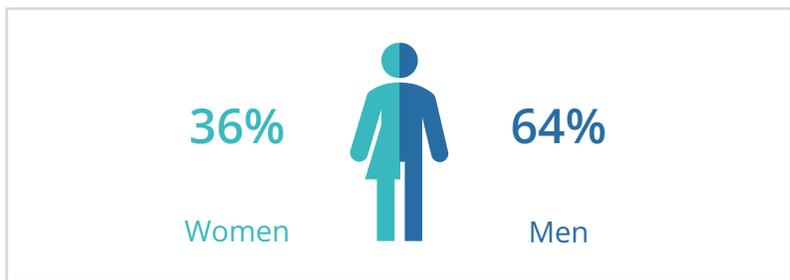
Music fans, who enjoy singing, ska and hip hop music. They follow an eclectic range of accounts, spanning writers, actors, activists and athletes, from countries including Australia and the Philippines. They tend to use Instagram and TikTok.

Pakistani Expats (3%)

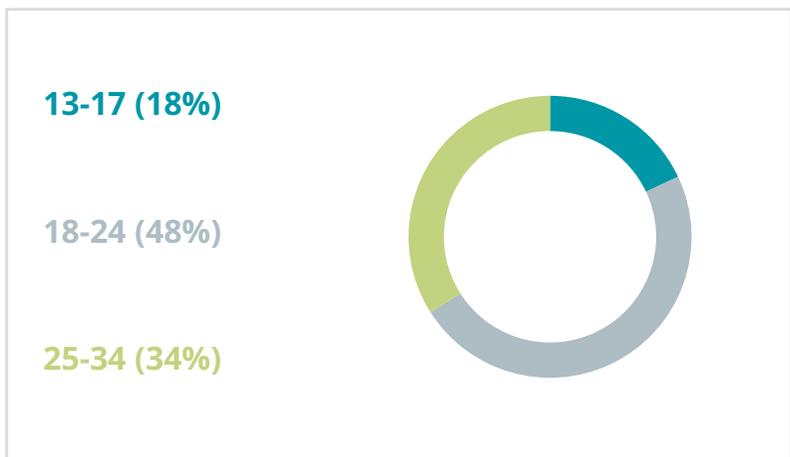
Mostly male (91%) group that tends to follow Pakistani politicians and journalists. They are highly likely to identify as religious, and tend to use Facebook and Telegram.

Who are young Twitter users in the UAE?

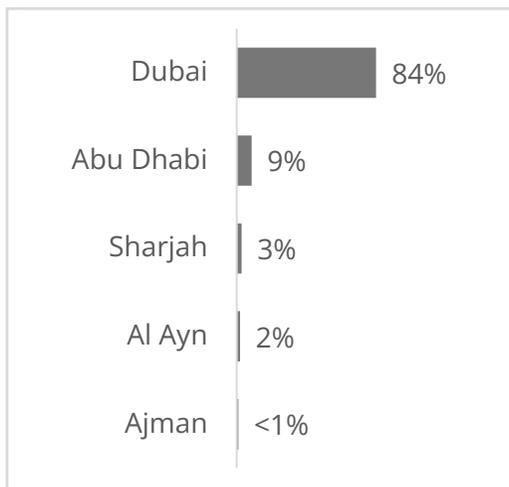
GENDER



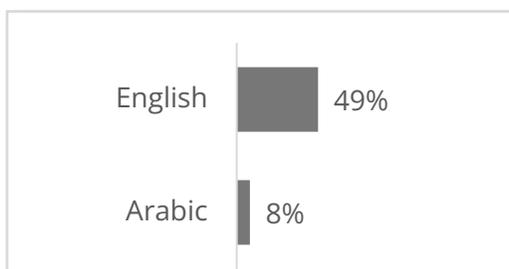
AGE



WHERE THEY LIVE



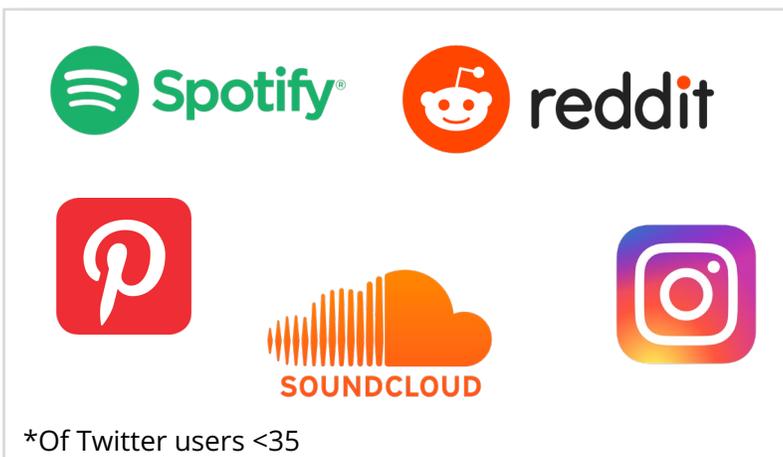
LANGUAGES USED*



WHEN THEY GO ONLINE (local time, based on last 30 days of data)



PREFERRED SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS*



The platforms listed are those for which this audience displays the strongest propensity to use in comparison to the country average. They are not the platforms with the highest penetration of platform usage among the audience analysed. Other platforms (e.g. YouTube will command higher penetration, but the audience does not significantly over-index on these compared to the average. Twitter does not feature as the sample is derived from users of the platform.

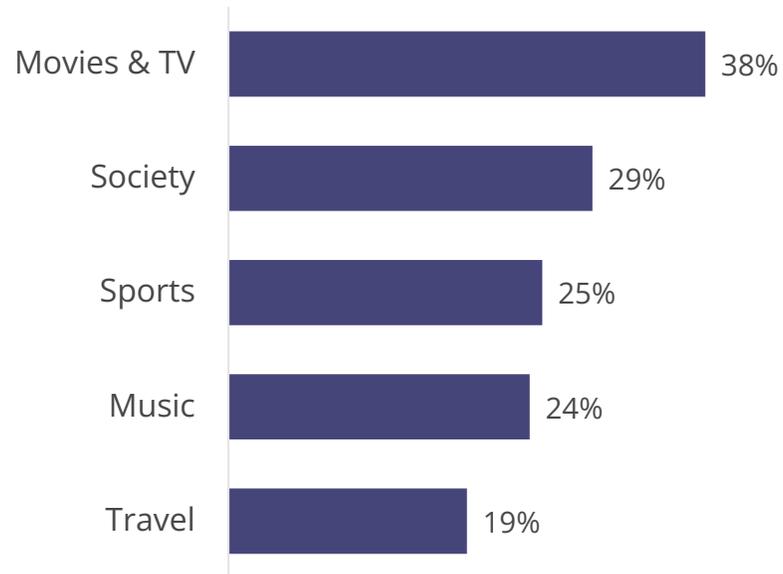
*Language use may not equal 100% as posts which consist only of links, user tags, emojis, pictures or videos have no language indicated. Languages are identified through machine learning algorithms which review user posts and bios.

What are young Twitter users in the UAE interested in?

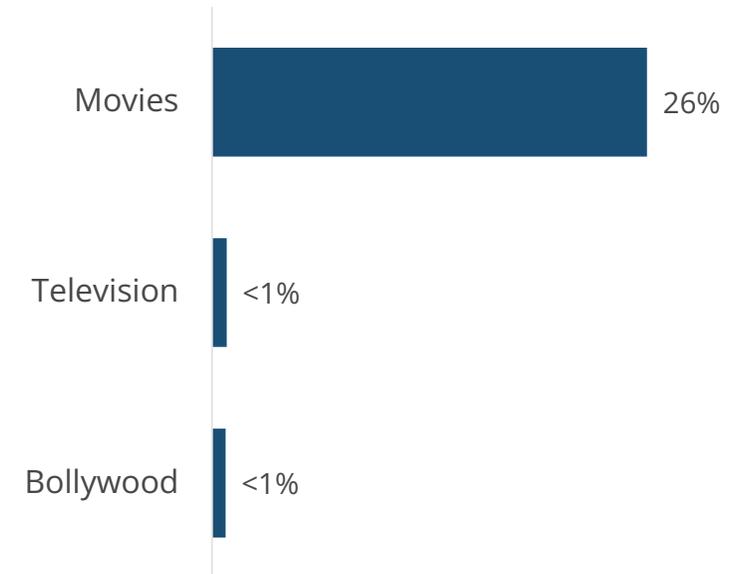
Young Twitter users from the UAE are interested in film and television, but show a preference for movies.

Interests

Areas of Interest



Deep Dive on Top Interest



Accounts that influence young Twitter users in the UAE

	DepEd	The executive agency for basic education of the Republic of the Philippines. For comments, queries, or complaints, email us at action@deped.gov.ph
	C. S. Lewis	Inspiring Quotes From C. S. Lewis
	LAU	Providing news and interesting insight about Lebanese American University, the Middle East, and the world.
	CreativeLive	Live a more creative life with CreativeLive. Free online education.
	Knowledge@Wharton	The online business journal of the @Wharton School at @Penn, sharing Wharton's intellectual capital with the world since 1999. #WhartonKnows

	Word of the Day	Expanding your vocabulary one word at a time since 2009. Definitions from http://dictionary.com .
	AUC	The American University in Cairo, founded in 1919, is the premier English-language university in the Middle East.
	MIT OpenCourseWare	Free lecture notes, exams, and videos from @MIT. No registration required. Part of @mitopenlearning.
	iebusiness	IE Business School Official Twitter account. News, updates, events and #LifeatIE
	HowStuffWorks	No, really. How does stuff work? Be the first to read our latest stories! Sign up for our newsletter: https://www.howstuffworks.com/newsletter

The media enjoyed by young Twitter users in the UAE

They tend to watch international news channels and entertainment programmes.

Most Popular TV

	CNN	American news channel
	BBC News (World)	British news channel
	ParisHilton.eth	American media personality
	National Geographic	Documentary channel
	E! News	News channel
	GMA News	News channel
	Game of Thrones	TV series
	MTV India	TV music channel for Indian songs
	Pinoy Big Brother	TV show for young adults
	GLEE	An American musical comedy-drama television series

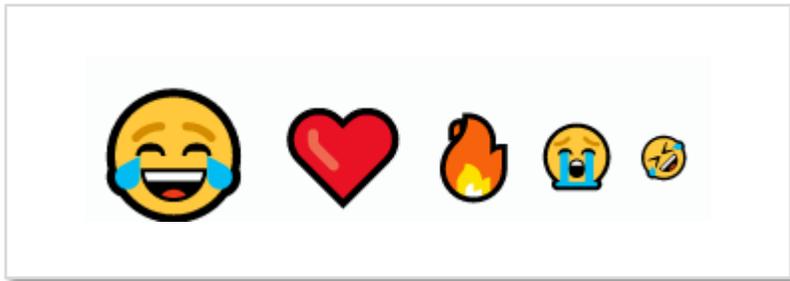
Most Popular Digital Magazines

	Emirates 24 7	World news platform for the Emirates 24 7.
	BBC News (World)	British news channel
	BBC Breaking News	British news channel with immediate news for current events
	الإمارات اليوم	Emirates News channel
	ABS-CBN News	Philippines' entertainment and media conglomerate
	Inquirer	Online newspaper in the Philippines
	Rappler	Philippine online news website
	Official PEP.ph	entertainment news and lifestyle website
	Mashable	international entertainment, culture, tech, science and social digital media platform
	Business Insider Tec	News channel

Content shared by young Twitter users in the UAE

Young Twitter users from the UAE use their social media platforms to show support for the Ukraine, as well as posting content to boost the profile of the UAE and Dubai.

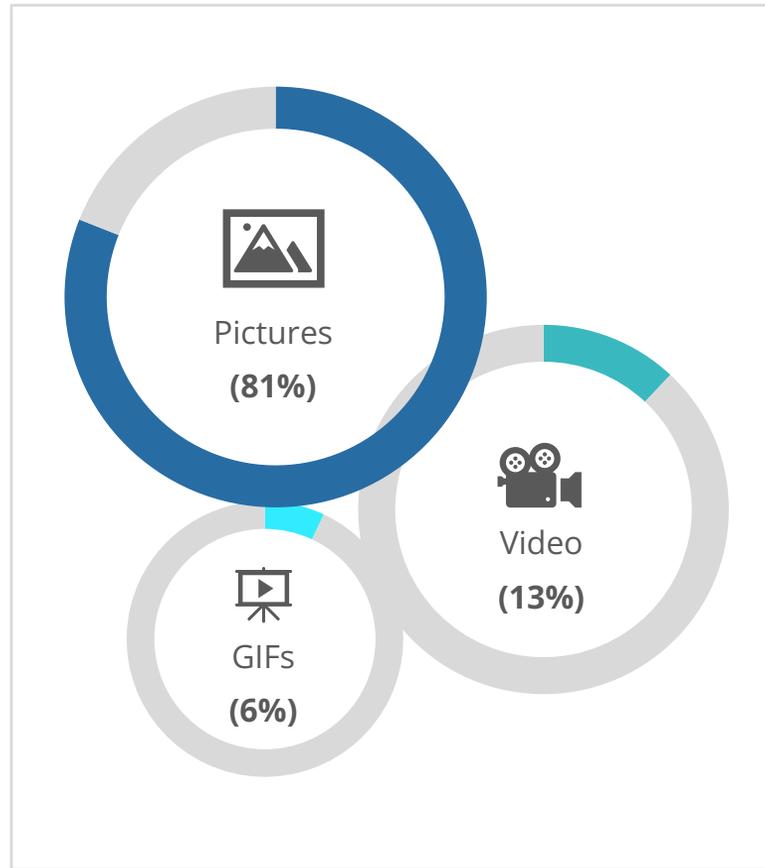
POPULAR EMOJI



POPULAR HASHTAGS

Hashtag	Meaning
#ukraine	Used in posts mentioning Ukrainian war
#dubai	Used in posts mentioning news, facts, activities in Dubai
#uae	Used in posts mentioning news, facts, activities in UAE
#teamlaziznkumu	Used to collect donates for Laziz Rustamov
#pbblaziz	Used to collect donates for Laziz Rustamov

MEDIA FORMAT



DOMAINS THEY SHARE LINKS TO

- cherumbu.com
- instagram.com
- youtube.com
- linkedin.com
- swarmapp.com
- zawya.com
- aapbook.org
- andina.pe
- opensea.io
- t.me