



Gulf Research Centre Cambridge
Knowledge for All

Workshop 8

Quality of Higher Education in the Gulf: Quo Vadis?

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Abstract

Quality is a relative term. It connotes a spectrum of meanings, ranging from “quality” of students admitted into the program to the caliber of academic staff and the availability of resources to support teaching and learning activities, among others. This relative nature of “quality” deserves attention in order to concretize parameters and standards that will define quality in a more objective and encompassing lens, especially in the context of higher education in the Gulf.

The main objective of this workshop is to explore the quality of higher education in the Gulf Cooperation Council (alternatively referred to as “Gulf” or “GCC” in this paper) countries, namely the Kingdom of Bahrain, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, State of Kuwait, State of Qatar, Sultanate of Oman, and the United Arab Emirates. In particular, the workshop will address the following theoretical pursuits:

- 1) What is “quality” from the eyes of key policy and decision-makers, academics, and students in higher education institutions (HEIs) as well as the industry (i.e., employers) in the Gulf?
- 2) How does the international community view the quality of HE in the Gulf? What are their bases for such assessment?
- 3) What is the impact of global outlook on the quality of HE in the Gulf?
- 4) What management models can explain quality HE in the Gulf? Is there an ideal model that will fit across the Gulf HEIs?
- 5) How is quality education in higher education (HE) promoted and nurtured in the Gulf?
- 6) How can quality HE be tailored in the light of endogenous and exogenous circumstances and expectations from the “insiders” and the “outsiders”?
- 7) Are the Gulf HEIs ready for globalization of HE?
- 8) Is HE in the Gulf at par with the global standards of HE?
- 9) How should quality of HE in the Gulf be managed and driven towards sustainability?
- 10) What is the future of HE in the Gulf – *quo vadis*?

Description and Rationale

Quo vadis is a term that heralds the future. In particular, it stimulates critical and reflective thinking as contextualized in HE in the GCC. This workshop leaps into the future as the participants examine the dialectical tension between the current scenario and the ideal prospects for HE in the Gulf region. Answers to the preceding questions are uncertain, and more questions could be deciphered at the horizon that necessitate this workshop:

- Can the public and the stakeholders be assured of quality in HE in the Gulf?
- What lies ahead in HE in GCC?
- What factors can rationalize the quality of HE in the Gulf?
- What are the metrics and key performance indicators (KPIs) that can improve the quality of HE in the GCC?

Quality is an embedded element of HE worldwide. It is a requirement that every HEI endeavors to achieve sustainable development. As conceived by UNESO (2017);

Education is a public good, a fundamental human right and a basis for guaranteeing the realization of other rights. It is essential for peace, tolerance, human fulfilment and sustainable development. We recognize education as key to achieving full employment and poverty eradication. We commit to quality education and to

improving learning outcomes, which requires strengthening inputs, processes and evaluation of outcomes and mechanisms to measure progress. Quality education fosters creativity and knowledge, and ensures the acquisition of the foundational skills of literacy and numeracy as well as analytical, problem-solving and other high-level cognitive, interpersonal and social skills (pp. 6-7).

Over the years, HEIs in the Gulf have embraced quality in the delivery of programs and services. One evidence to support this claim is the substantial improvement of the Gulf-based HEIs in global rankings. For instance, in the World University Rankings 2018, 12 HEIs from the Gulf have achieved the top 1000 positions while 18 of them were included in the QS World University Rankings 2018. Despite this performance, however, a closer scrutiny of each GCC country in the said surveys shows that more work is needed in order to fortify the performance of the said HEIs. Of the six GCC countries, Saudi and United Arab Emirates posted the highest number of “global universities” in both rankings while the rest had one HEI in the top spots. Although these rankings are not absolute measures of “quality”, it is imperative that key players in HE and HEIs have to engage more actively in their efforts for continuous improvement and quality assurance initiatives.

Apparently, without quality, HEIs may be said to have failed in their *raison d’etre*. This creates a huge gap in research and in HE management and as such, it is imperative that a global forum be conducted in order to thresh out macro and micro factors that interweave with quality HE in the context of GCC. There are several potential factors that may be relevant. These include, for instance the embeddedness of approaches to ensure quality HE, which could be defined as the degree to which the whole institution works to implement and evaluate approaches that promote excellence. Questions can be asked as to whether the approach itself articulates a clear vision that can be translated into action; and if it draws upon evidence-based strategies that are proven to achieve the best possible student outcomes. It can be considered whether any approach identified is outward facing and highlights the importance of engagement between HE and industry. There is a need to identify how teaching excellence is best recognized and rewarded through institutional cultures within the GCC. Finally, it should be considered how quality HE in the GCC should encourage students to be active participants within their own education; and to work to not only obtain their qualification but also contribute to the culture of teaching and learning excellence within an institution.

Scholarly Contribution

One of the concrete outputs from the workshop will be an edited book on the abovementioned topic. There are several materials that deal with quality higher education but there is a dearth of reference that is very specific to the Gulf region.

The workshop will also reconstruct the body of knowledge on HE in the GCC countries as well as reframe the academic and the research communities’ conceptualization of the quality of teaching and learning in the Gulf, and in doing so create fusion between education, research and professional practice.

Moreover, the workshop will be an ideal platform to converge top authorities and key players on higher education in the Gulf and work out on mechanisms, policies, standards, programs, and related initiatives that will transform HE and HEI management vis-à-vis local and regional conditions in the light of globally accepted standards.

Anticipated Participants

The workshop welcomes academics, policy makers, key decision-makers, curriculum development experts, administrative heads and other leaders and managers in HE in the Gulf, the UK, and elsewhere. The industry and other NGOs involved in various shades of collaborations with the HEIs are also encouraged to participate and share their voices in transforming the quality of HE in the Gulf.

Workshop Director Profiles

Dr. Reynaldo Gacho Segumpan is the current Head of the Department of Business Administration at Rustaq College of Education, Ministry of Higher Education, Sultanate of Oman. He has been with the Ministry for 12 years now. Prior to this, he was an Associate Professor at the Graduate School of Universiti Utara Malaysia (2000-2007) where he also served as Deputy Director of the Executive Development Center, MBA Coordinator, and Deputy Director of the University Teaching and Learning Center. His recent publications appeared in journals such as *Australian Academy of Business and Economics Review*, *European Journal of Social and Human Sciences*, and *Asian Journal of University Education*.

Dr. Segumpan is a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Business Leadership, a Lifetime Member of the Asian Qualitative Research Association, and a Regular Member of the International Sociological Association. He has received conference grants from the National Safety Council, USA, Knowledge Management Society, South Korea, UK Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy, the British Council, and World Society Foundation based in Zurich, Switzerland. He was a Paper Presenter in the 9th Gulf Research Meeting at the University of Cambridge, UK on July 30-August 3, 2018 and a Delegate to the Harvard Project for Asian and International Relations held at Harvard University, USA on February 16-19, 2018. He holds a Ph.D. and a Doctor of Communication (D.Comm.).

Dr. John McAlaney is an Associate Fellow of the British Psychological Society (BPS) and Associate Professor and Head of Education for the Department of Psychology at Bournemouth University in the UK. Within this role he is responsible for the development of new courses at undergraduate and postgraduate level. He has held previous posts the University of Bradford, the University of the West of Scotland and London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. As part of his current research and education practice he is exploring the development of cybersecurity higher education in the UK. He led the BPS

response to the UK Government consultation on the development of the cybersecurity profession, including how to improve the engagement between HE and industry.

Selected Readings

Al-Ubaydli, Omar and Andrea Plebani, ed. (2014), *GCC Relations with Post-War Iraq: A Strategic Perspective*, (Gulf Research Centre Cambridge, Cambridge)

Cordesman, Anthony H. (2017), “After ISIS: Creating Strategic Stability in Iraq,” Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington D.C.

Gresh, Geoffrey F. (2015). *Gulf Security and the U.S Military: Regime Survival and the Politics of Basing* (Stanford Security Studies, California)

Haddad, Fanar (2011). *Sectarianism in Iraq: Antagonistic Visions of Unity* (Hurst, London)

Legrenzi, Matteo (2011). *The GCC and the International Relations of the Gulf: Diplomacy, Security and Economic Coordination in a Changing Middle East* (I.B. Tauris, London)

Miller, Rory (2016). *Desert Kingdoms to Global Powers: The Rise of the Arab Gulf* (Yale University Press, New Haven)

Sky, Emma (2015). *The Unraveling: High Hopes and Missed Opportunities in Iraq* (PublicAffairs, New York)

Stansfield, Gareth and Mohammed Shareef (2017), *The Kurdish Question Revisited* (Hurst, London)

Weiss, Michael and Hassan Hassan (2016) *ISIS: Inside the Army of Terror* (Regan Arts, New York)

Yergin, Daniel (2011) *The Quest: Energy, Security and the Remaking of the Modern World* (Penguin, New York)



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Workshop 8

Quality of Higher Education in the Gulf: Quo Vadis?

Paper Presenter Abstracts:

**Global Rankings as Yardstick of Quality of Higher Education:
Voices from Gulf-based Academics**

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Abstract:

Higher education institutions in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries have emerged in global rankings in recent surveys. For instance, in the 2019 Times of Higher Education's World University Rankings, all except the Kingdom of Bahrain have made a spot in the global positions of colleges and universities that are deemed to have

demonstrated exemplary quality of higher education. In terms of number, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia had the highest number (i.e., five) of “most global” universities in the GCC, led by King Abdulaziz University (rank 201-250) and Alfaisal University (rank 301-350). The United Arab Emirates has grabbed four positions, led by Khalifa University (rank 301-350) and United Arab Emirates University (rank 351-400). The Sultanate of Oman, Kuwait, and Qatar have each one university in the global rankings.

The research problems explored in this paper were: Are global rankings reliable measures of quality in the context of higher education? What do these rankings mean from the perspectives of academics? Do they reflect quality of higher education in the Gulf? What do academics say about “quality” and global rankings?

This was a qualitative study involving GCC-based academics in higher education. Data were collected using an interview schedule that were floated to the participants using their official work emails. Manual coding of data was done in order to analyze thematically the responses. The findings are useful in understanding the notion of quality from the lens of the Gulf-based academics and in explaining how global rankings may interface with quality higher education from the voices of the academics.

Quality enhancement through internationalization at GCC universities

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Abstract:

The paper looks at the higher education institutions of GCC countries, their study programs, descriptions and novel approaches to education and instruction in the departments of business administration, and tries to identify strengths and weaknesses.

The paper also looks at the projects for future improvements that might turn out essential for the attainment of quality of instruction at these universities. The most widely practiced strategy for future development at the institutions of higher education is internationalization of study programs, departments and entire institutions. This internationalization process helps the GCC universities put their programs on a par with worldwide universities and become internationally competitive and comparable.

The major research questions are: how does internationalization facilitate quality enhancement at GCC universities? How is the quality instruction perceived at GCC universities?

Due to its nebulous nature, defining quality of education is a challenging task, especially in the period of expansion of education. The last few decades, have seen a tremendous

growth, both in the number of institutions and number of students in the GCC region. Putting it in a wider perspective, policies and measures by Arab governments over the last decade, and the rising demand for higher education, have led to a considerable expansion in the number of higher education institutions and considerable diversity in the features of these institutions. This diversity has taken several forms: state/private education; national/foreign universities; local programs/ partnership programs with foreign universities abroad; short-term/long-term studies, etc.

It is surprising, therefore, that little research on internationalization of higher education either through comparative data, case studies, or institutional experiments has been conducted in this region. It is important to investigate the changing paradigm of the higher education sector in the GCC, not just for the advancement of knowledge but also for institutions and policy makers to align their strategies according to the internationalization practices and trends.

At the same time, as nations worldwide attempt to transition their economies from their traditional agricultural and industrial bases to knowledge economies, the private rate of return to higher education is increasing. Therefore, the nations of Arab countries and international organizations alike are pressuring Higher Education Ministries to improve the employability of their populations through expanded higher education and higher quality instruction not only in terms of local employment and employability but in terms of international job market as well. Policymakers and educators perceive expanding higher education as an important means by which the Arab world will successfully integrate its workers into the global economy (Kabbani and Salloum 2009; World Bank 2008).

To provide illustrative examples of internationalization, quality enhancement and on-line instruction, the present paper conducts cross country comparative analysis of the cases of universities with well-branded names. The cases of universities analyzed are: Doha's Education City, University City of Sharjah, Dubai's Knowledge City, etc. For the purposes of analysis, the websites of the universities have been analyzed, as well as on-line questionnaires and interviews with the students and university staff, both academic and administrative. The questions asked the respondents about the quality of instruction at their universities and about their views on internationalization.

Quality Assurance Mechanisms and Policies in the Omani HE System: The Imperatives, Challenges and Future Directions

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Abstract:

This paper is aimed at tracing the development of the quality assurance (QA) system in the Omani HE (HE) by analyzing the current QA policies and mechanisms. It will analytically

provide an overview of the imperatives and challenges of developing the QA system. It will conclude with some recommendations about QA for future sustainability of Omani HE system. The paper is qualitative in nature using various official documents and relying in the experience of the author as the head of QA and accreditation Unit at Sultan Qaboos University, College of Education. Also, as a registered external reviewer at the Oman Academic Accreditation Authority (OAAA), the experience of the author would be rich to comment and analyze the current mechanisms and practices of QA in the Omani HE system. In specific, official document analysis and the author's experience are the research instruments utilized to investigate the Omani QA system.

The paper argues that the Omani government, like other government around the world, has been driven by national, regional and global forces to implement the three mentioned mechanisms. It has been found there have been various challenges in implementing these mechanisms such as the cost, the institutional culture, the resistance of faculty, contextualization of international programs and standards, and lengthy process. The paper closes with recommendations to overcome the challenges.

The paper has put some recommendations for future enhancement of the QA system. The OAAA has to play its role as it is prescribed by the Royal Decree and it has to have the power to close institutions if they cannot maintain accreditation. Moreover, capacity building is very important in such young system. Thus, the Omani Government has to implement a plan of training as many as of Omanis to lead in accreditation and QA. Regarding affiliation, the exported programs have to have exactly similar quality of sending countries. The Omani Government has to work on making sure that this is happening, and the affiliations are for the sake of quality not business for affiliates or for profit for Omani institutions. The paper also argues that international Accreditation of programs has very positive impact on global ranking of university or reputation of the receiving institutions. Therefore, accrediting programs through international agencies has to be encouraged by the government via providing needed financial and technical support. Also. The imported standards through international accreditation has to be contextualized to suit the Omani context.

“Quality Management System: A Framework for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the GCC”

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Abstract:

During the last 5 decades, an increase in the number of private and private higher education institutions (HEIs) has been witnessed in the GCC – which brought much attention to the concept of quality assurance in order to ensure the delivery of quality education. Local

accreditation bodies have been established to monitor institutional and program accreditations: (1) the Commission of Academic Accreditation (CAA) in the United Arab Emirates; (2) the Oman Academic Accreditation Authority (OAAA) in the Sultanate of Oman; (3) the Academic Accreditation Committee (AAC) in the Kingdom of Bahrain; (4) the National Commission for Academic Accreditation and Assessment (NCAA) in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; and (5) the National Bureau for Academic Accreditation and Education Quality Assurance (NBAQ) in the Kingdom of Kuwait. The local accreditation bodies have the mandate to develop - through consultations and benchmarking – the “Standards”, and oversee HEIs’ compliance towards granting licensure and/or accreditation status.

Standards are requirements set by the authority for HEIs to comply with; is the level (of quality) at which comparison will be made; and the basis upon which decision on whether it was met or not met will be made. Addressing the requirements of the standards is the responsibility of the HEIs. All too often, however, HEIs interpret the standard as a guide to achieve quality assurance as opposed to one’s measure of quality. This approach of looking at the Standards to produce documents for submission is the very reason, HEIs cannot move forward with their quality assurance efforts because the focus have shifted into creating documents rather than establishing processes and systems that will generate proper documentation.

Quality is achieved through adapting a quality management system (QMS) that produces proper documentation. These documents are in turn submitted to the accreditation bodies as an evidence of the processes and systems in place. A QMS is designed using quality improvement models that best fit the nature, size and quality statements of the business. Several quality improvement models exist: Lean, CARE, TQM, Six Sigma, and others. Lean and CARE models are most suited for the health care providers while the TQM and Six Sigma are business models. The ISO however, is a generic standard that can be applied to organization of any size, regardless of the products and services provided; and is based on the PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Act) quality improvement model.

This paper provides a framework for HEIs based on the PDCA model adapted by the ISO 9001: 2015 QMS.

Quality Prospects in Higher Education: A Case of Oman

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Abstract:

The potential impact of quality in higher education is tremendously gratifying across the globe. The context of higher education should not be considered only on disseminating knowledge, rather its deliberation in a broader holistic context should be deemed. The philosophy of higher education in Gulf region has gone through several developmental phases in last two decades. It initiated with a strong realization among the governments of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to budge from carbon-based economy to a knowledge-base economy. This research study focuses on identifying the prospects of inculcating quality in the higher education environment with a perspective of Oman. Local education system, internationalization in higher education and its potential implications are investigated in this research. The methodological approach used in this study is qualitative involving 11 experienced participants from different higher education institutions in Oman. Findings and recommendations are shared based on the interpretive phenomenological approach.

Evaluating Quality Assurance and Academic Accreditation in SQU, Oman: Implementations, Progress and Achievements

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Abstract:

Over the past three decades, higher education institutions (HEIs) over the globe have undergone extensive changes and reforms related to improving the quality of their

education. Gulf Countries with no exception have shown an upward trend in implementing and adopting more stringent quality assurance measures and international accreditation standards and call for their higher education institutions to acquire program as well as institutional accreditation from national and international accreditation agencies.

Our present study aims at evaluating the experience of HEIs in one of the GCC countries namely, Sultanate of Oman, in the process of quality assurance and academic accreditation with special reference to the experience of Sultan Qaboos University (SQU).

SQU was established in 1986 as a fully state-owned university with five colleges. It offered only undergraduate program with an annual intake of 557 students. It now has nine colleges, four deanships, six support centers, three libraries, nine research centers, the SQU Hospital (SQUH), and offers 61 undergraduates, 59 Master's and 30 Ph.D. program. The total number of degrees awarded since the inception of the University is 37032 Bachelors, 1826 MDs, and 4241 Diplomas. The number of postgraduates has increased steadily over the years. 453 Masters Degrees and 34 Doctorates had been awarded by 2017.

To have uniform quality management system for its public and private institutions the Oman Accreditation Council (OAC) was established in 2001 through Royal Decree No. 74/2001. In 2010, a Royal Decree was issued establishing the Oman Academic Accreditation Authority (OAAA) and replacing the former Oman Accreditation Council (OAC). The OAAA was established to continue the efforts initiated by the OAC in the dissemination of a quality culture and accreditation of institutions and their programs.

Quality assurance at SQU is built within the University's missions, policies, practices and strategic plans that all aim at a continuous improvement process. So, SQU is paying great attention to quality assurance and to institutional and program accreditation. The university has created a quality assurance office in 2010 and recently established a unit for quality assurance and academic accreditation in each college. This important concern led some colleges to get international institutional and program accreditation. Now, SQU undergo institutional accreditation by Oman Academic Accreditation Authority (OAAA) and they submit the "Institutional Standards Assessment Application" to get institutional accreditation from QAAA. In this paper, we will discuss and analyze the achievements as well as the key challenges facing the implementations of quality assurance and accreditation procedures in both accredited and non-accredited colleges.

Accreditation Challenges: A case study in Oman

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Abstract:

Sultanate of Oman has developed a two-stage accreditation system for higher education institutions (HEI). The initial stage involves a quality audit that evaluates the effectiveness of the HEIs quality assurance system against its own Vision, Mission, Goals and Objectives. This is followed by an institutional standards assessment that measures whether an HEI has achieved the institutional quality standards set by Oman Academic Accreditation Authority (OAAA), the National accreditation agency.

Majority of the public and private higher education institutions in Oman have undergone the formative quality audit stage and the quality audit reports have published. The second-stage standards assessment is a summative assessment of a HEI's performance against nine institutional standards having 79 criteria set by OAAA.

This paper intends to present an analysis of the outcome of quality audit and institutional standards assessments. It also discusses the challenges and concerns of the sector. The quality audit report addresses formal conclusions with commendations for good practices followed, affirmations where the HEI has identified significant opportunity for improvement and demonstrated appropriate commitment to addressing the matter, and recommendations for the areas to be improved. The HEIs quality audit reports revealed that majority of the institutional issues were in two of the nine standards namely 'Governance and Management', and Student Learning by Course work'.

Many institutions have already undergone second stage standards assessment and standard assessment outcomes of 14 institutions have been published. Only four institutions were accredited in the first attempt. A similar pattern of issues during the first stage-quality audit was also observed in the rating outcomes of criteria and standards of these institutions. Even though HEIs have attempted to take strict accountability measures, it is observed that academic Integrity is still a major concern in many of these institutions. There is also a growing concern among the sector about the consistency of the subjective conclusions arrived at by different panel teams visiting different HEIs for accreditation.

Funding Quality Higher Education in Oman

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Abstract:

Funding higher education institutions form major growing expenses for Oman government (13% to 14% of total spending in 2016) in par with other governments elsewhere (11% in the UK and 15.5% in US). However, little has been done to investigate funding quality higher education in Oman. The present research project aims at exploring sources of fund at the universities in Oman since it has opened the sector for private education in 1996. Our research methodology includes conducting interviews with higher education leaders to explore the different types of fund (e.g, gifts, tuition fees, government support...etc) that exist. This will enhance our understanding of the sources of fund for the universities in order to help improve decision makers understanding of the higher education landscape.

A critical insight into the Gulf Higher Education Landscape, incorporating a study of the opinions of academics on GCC Higher Education. A National Innovation System would enhance the role of Higher Education as an effective vehicle for developing a Knowledge Economy.

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Abstract:

The GCC countries (Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, and Oman) have been striving to build knowledge-based economies in order to move away from their reliance on

oil and gas. As GCC countries continue towards building knowledge economies, they face tremendous challenges to diversify the economy and to build human capital to compete in a global 21st century world. Identifying the need to build capacities, efforts have been made to foster innovation and entrepreneurship at both policy and program levels. However, such efforts are still nascent in GCC countries. Higher Education in the GCC is a vital system which can provide pathways to enable knowledge creation in a commercial context and thus encourages economic prosperity, diversity and socially beneficial technological advancements.

This paper examines Higher Education in GCC countries in order to gain a deeper grasp of the factors restricting knowledge and innovation creation. This is especially important to understand in the GCC context, as significant amounts of scientific research are produced in GCC Higher Education, but HE is still treated as an isolated entity instead of being linked to Industry and contributing to Government policy making.

A report of a study by questionnaire of the opinions expressed by senior academics in the Higher Education science, technology and innovation sector of the GCC is included. Among the main findings was the view that leadership was missing, there was little encouragement to innovate and commercialise and a strikingly high percentage (85%) complained of lack of funding for innovation. Many respondents took the view that their graduates lacked skills useful for industry. Any support for innovation within Higher Education seems to be encountered incidentally; it is not a major feature of either training given to academic staff or teaching courses.

The main thrust of the paper is the view that Higher Education is languishing in isolation when it should operate a dynamic feedback loop with industry. There is an urgent need in the GCC to diversify industry in order to reduce reliance on oil and gas. Under a National Innovation System (NIS) umbrella, covering the GCC, the manufacturing industry should expand via R&D thus contributing to the knowledge economy and leading to commercially successful innovation. HE would be a major beneficiary since its R&D would be obliged to create the specialised knowledge needed by industry. This revitalisation of HE would permeate beyond the research into teaching and thus would reach the students to give them the skills and incentives they need. The paper proposes a bespoke model favouring this outcome, incorporating components of the linear National System of Innovation (NSI) and the Triple Helix System (THS) and led by Government initiatives in the form of strategic policies and funding.

Framing the Social & Cultural Factors Influencing the Quality of Gulf Universities Graduates: The Case of Qatar University.

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Abstract:

This paper sheds light on factors influencing the quality of higher education graduates at Qatar University. The fundamental hypothesis of the paper is articulated around the notion of academic advising and its relevance to cultural and social factors. The case of Qatar University was selected as a platform to examine the main thesis of the paper. Students forming the pool of QU student population, although mostly Qataris or of Arab origin, are diverse. Some of their diverse characteristics are based on gender, age, employment status, marital status, the secondary school they attended, Arabic and English language proficiency, the choice of College and whether they are first generation students or not. In addition, they generally come from a sheltered and highly segregated society and high school environment. These characteristics influence their career goals, the support they get from their circles, the time spent on campus, their involvement in extracurricular activities and university life and therefore their attitude towards their studies and their perception and expectations of Qatar University. As a result, the university has to work with all these different groups and adapt to the challenges that arise from these social and cultural factors so to achieve its primary objective which is to provide quality education and produce a capable national workforce able to support Qatar's 2030 vision.

Through interviews with students and academic advisors, this paper is going to outline a new approach in academic advising relying on a more comprehensive understanding of the characteristics of the student body. Standardized academic advising is replaced with tailored approaches to the different student groups to achieve QU mission and vision to prepare the competent and future leaders of Qatar. We believe that this matrix approach is critical to the students' success. Suggestions and recommendations will be made so that QU is able to overcome many of the cultural and social challenges and reach out to an ever growing and diverse student body. Academic advisors at QU have to develop different mediums to reach the students and equip them with the skills they desperately need to succeed in the higher education environment in and out of the classroom. This is vital for the students' development and therefore creates the national human capital to cope with Qatar's ambitious development and desire to decrease its dependency on expatriates.

Reshaping Teacher Education in the Gulf Region

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Abstract:

This paper presents a qualitative study conducted over a three-year period with 40 graduate students in a Master of Education program in Dubai. Specifically, it examines *how teacher education in the gulf region can be reshaped to meet the needs of increasingly diverse classrooms in a rapidly changing world*. Drawing from the literature on *conscientization*, cultural dialogue and social justice, it suggests that reflection, self-knowledge, difficult conversations and cross-cultural collaboration in teacher preparation can lead to the awakening of a critical consciousness necessary for teachers to become agents of social change. Through data collection and analysis, we identified issues, perceptions and behaviors that led to the emergence of a triangular focus on the essence of a forward looking framework for teacher education encapsulated in three simple questions which circle back to the domains outlined in the literature review: *what, how* and *why*.

The Representation of Disability in the Higher Education Institutions of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf

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Abstract:

Investment in education and cultural development over the past five decades has seen a rapid expansion in higher education throughout the jurisdictions of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC). However, despite this economic expansion, there remain few students or staff with declared physical or learning disabilities in GCC higher education. This article has two aims. The first aim is to discuss the findings of a study using a grounded methodology to interrogate documents and datasets on higher education and disability in the GCC. The second aim is to contribute to the debate on the economic, social and cultural need to promote inclusion for students and staff with disabilities in GCC higher education. The results of the study demonstrate: 1) the continued

lack of students and staff with declared disabilities could in part be due to and reflected in the lack of recognition of disability in documentation on higher education in the GCC; 2) few data sets exist that can determine the influences on a changing demography in the GCC's jurisdictions; 3) few data sets exist to examine the pressures of the GCC's economy on a lack of education, training and social and financial support for people with disabilities in the GCC. The study concludes that the continued lack of students and staff with declared disabilities is in part due to and reflected in the lack of recognition of disability in the culture of higher education in the GCC.

Significance of personality dimensions to feedback and its impact on quality assurance in higher education: A Comparative study of Oman and India

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Abstract:

Higher Education Institutions (HEI) are entrusted with the responsibility to shape young and thoughtful human brain to create human resource for nation building. HEI are under pressure for maintaining quality. The HEIs in Oman and India, too, are not an exception to it. Most of the countries in the world have established different administration bodies for Formation, Operation and Regulation as well as for Quality Assurance (QA) of HEIs. A sustainable QA system focuses on continuous improvement based on rational feedback. Feedback of every human is outcome of their knowledge, experience and personality. This study attempts to draw and define a simplified '5 Layered Generalised Quality Assurance' (GQA) model for higher education. Also efforts have been placed to examine and understand personality dimensions of response group using 'OCEAN' big five personality dimension model. Results are based on secondary as well as primary data. The outcomes propose simplified 'GQA model' and 'personality traits analysis' using Structural Equation Model (SEM). The study suggests that feedback by response group is significantly influenced by their personality dimensions. The key implications would be, of the help to

decision makers and other stake holders in HEIs for the continuous improvement of the system.

An Empirical study on the Impact of Current Education System in Business Schools on the Development of Entrepreneurial Skills of students in Saudi Arabia

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Abstract:

Lower oil prices have resulted in economic changes, which have led to significant pressure on Saudi Arabia's economy. It has forced the government to search for ways to diversify the Saudi economy to control its overdependence on oil. Under these circumstances, the government has turned its focus on creating a productive economy and supporting entrepreneurship. The government now aims at creating employment opportunities for the Saudi Arabian population.

Under these circumstances, this paper is especially important because of its compatibility with one of the strategic objectives of the vision of Saudi Arabia 2030, which is to achieve an increase in the contribution of small and medium-sized companies in the national economy from 20% to 35% and lowering the unemployment rate from 11.6% to 7%. This is the perfect time to determine how to encourage entrepreneurship in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Entrepreneurship education plays an important role in developing of entrepreneurs. Research evidence shows that formal education has a positive correlation with entrepreneurship. During the recent past, there has been a growing debate about how well educational systems especially Business schools prepare young management graduates for Entrepreneurship. It must be admitted that the curricula of the business school programs are designed so that they merely provide knowledge, but do not motivate students to start a business. The main barriers are the lack of practical experience for starting business, lack of business ideas and shortage of capital and risk aversion. The graduates are neither sufficiently aware of nor ready to use entrepreneurship support programs.

This study aims to examine and explore the answer to the following research questions

- whether the present management education system in business schools of Saudi Arabia is developing entrepreneurial qualities in the students or not.
- It will also discuss whether the current curriculum taught in business schools meets the requirements of budding entrepreneurs.

Both secondary and primary data have been collected and will be analysed in order to investigate the research objectives. Primary data is collected to reveal students' perception towards the impact of current management education on entrepreneurial skills of students.

A detailed literature review enabled the identification of thirteen qualities of entrepreneurs, which are expected to be developed by business schools. These qualities have been included in the structured questionnaire. The questionnaire is based on five point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Descriptive research design and a quantitative research approach have been undertaken in this research study. Purposive sampling has been used in selection of the respondents. SPSS version 17 will be used in the analysis of the data. Chi-square test will be conducted to test the hypothesis.

On the basis of the findings, this research will propose recommendations and suggestions for further research in exploring entrepreneurship education as a tool for creating entrepreneurs. The study will conclude by presenting theoretical and practical implications to help the business schools to redesign their curriculum to build entrepreneurial skills.

How Internationalization Facilitates the Reform Process of National Quality Assurance of Higher Education in Mongolia

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Abstract:

The Mongolian higher education has been working on addressing the issue of low-cost, low-quality academic programs which are often not relevant to the labor market (World bank, 2010). Graduate unemployment is a major issue given that an estimated 40 percent of higher education graduates were unemployed (MECSS, 2017). Thus, the improvement of the national quality assurance system is an important agenda in the Mongolian higher education as it is expected to support the institutional and curriculum review processes and employability of graduates.

The aim of this study is to explore how internationalization facilitated the recent reform process of the national quality assurance system and discuss the future implications on strategies. The following objectives are set to determine the outcomes of internationalization at the three levels of reform processes and the future strategies to further develop the quality assurance agency: 1) to analyse the results of international accreditation and establishment of internal quality assurance supported by internationalization at the institutional level; 2) to analyse the impact of internationalization measures on the system and agency level reforms; 3) and to do SWOT analysis to determine the capacity of the quality assurance agency and to discuss implications for strategies for the further development.

It used qualitative case studies and quantitative methods. We made analysis and assessments in nationally and internationally accredited academic programs in Mongolia. The limited number of programs accredited nationally and internationally implies that more programs, especially in masters and doctoral programs need to be accredited both nationally and internationally. All participants of the case studies highly valued the result of international accreditation. Like challenges faced by quality assurance agencies in Asia (Hou, 2015), MNCEA lacks the capacity of internationalization, autonomy and accountability. To prevent from devaluation of the national accreditation, MNCEA needs to act on defining their development strategies to improve its capacity, accountability and governance to gain public confidence and trust.

Improving the Quality of Corporate Identity Management among Higher Education Institutions in the Gulf: A Conceptual Model

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Abstract:

Corporate Identity Management (CIM) in higher education institutions (HEIs) has been acknowledged in marketing literature as an important area of research. Research within the current spectrum of CIM indicates some ambiguities surrounding corporate identity in higher education. More so, very few studies are available in the field of corporate identity within the Gulf HEIs context. Based on a review of the existing literature in a range of fields, this paper proposes a conceptual model of the positive relationships between CIM activities in HEIs with internal brand communication, transformational leadership, corporate culture and employee brand support. The internal brand communication, transformational leadership characteristics of the immediate leader and corporate culture

of the university are included in the model as determinants of CIM activities. While organizational performances are proposed as consequences of CIM. The proposed conceptual model is developed based on marketing control theory (Jaworski, 1988) combined with transformational leadership theory (Burns, 1978), and social learning theory (Bandura, 1977). The researcher expects this research to make several theoretical and managerial contributions as well as making offering constructive recommendations to policymakers. For example, the HEIs in GCC countries who are interested in building employee brand support should ensure that the corporate identity management, internal brand, corporate culture and leadership move in the right direction.

Strategies and Perspectives through the Prism of HR System in Higher Education: HR an Essential Component of Quality

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Abstract:

Universities are often described as ‘anchor institutions’, and sometimes as ‘civic’ universities. Taken together, universities should be seen as ‘connective anchors’ that work to bridge the intellectual gap at local, national and international level. Higher education in most of the GCC countries has undergone tremendous growth over the past decades. Sustainability in education is the emerging aspect along with the quality of education. Institutions of higher education play a crucial role in improving the quality of life and well being of the people. Due to the rapid advances in most fields, skills and techniques learned more than a decade ago are inadequate to compete in today’s market. Therefore, the country must develop and nurture the requisite talent, which can be achieved by infusing quality in the higher education system.

Therefore, it becomes imperative to analyze the strategic objectives and functioning of these institutions. These institutions have a twofold responsibility. At the one hand, they must be aligned strategically with the overall education & development policy of the government and on the other they must create the internal learning environment for all the stakeholders and contribute toward the consistent development of the people. To attain their strategic objectives, universities/ institutions need to develop a focused and coherent approach to managing people.

Hence, the present paper is an attempt to focus on two critical issues about universities/institutions.

- What kind of people are needed to manage and run universities or institutes of higher education to attain strategic objectives?

- What kind of strategies, programs and initiatives must be designed and implemented to attract, develop and retain staff to compete effectively and efficiently?

The purpose of this paper is to identify the vision, strategies, targets and goals against which the universities measure their performance like employees' satisfaction, employees' retention, students' satisfaction, competitive market share, etc. The researcher has focused on how to link strategic vision and long-term objectives to short-term tactics of the universities and efficient performance measurement of teaching and non-teaching staff.

Human Resource Development in the GCC Countries: Challenges and Opportunities

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Abstract:

The role of higher education is vital to human resource development in any country. This is one of the most discussed issues now days in developing countries. This issue could be addressed by educating and imparting training to requisite population in the country. The six member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) have in recent decades experienced substantial and rapid development progress. This can be understood if we look at the United Nation's Development Programme's Human Development Index (HDI). But despite these achievements, the process of development in the GCC still faces challenges. The most significant challenge is of course relating to national human resources in the GCC countries. This paper will discuss the different development strategies available to the GCC states in the face of the challenges of human resource development, the problems facing GCC labor markets, the opportunities and potential for investment in human capital and the many obstacles to sustainable development in the Gulf. One of the serious limitations of these countries is their inadequate population base. The demographic profile of these countries is predominantly characterized by the small size of their national population. The other serious weakness of the GCC countries is their low quality of available human resource which is the direct result of low quality of higher education and lack of proper training. It is evident that not enough human resource is produced in these countries despite increasing enrolment in secondary and universities education. It is also true that employers generally prefer to more cost effective and easily available expatriate labor force with the result that there is increasing unemployment among nationals. Further, few GCC countries also have been suffering from sectarianism, favoritism, apathy, conservatism and lack of innovation and communication which create impediment in the path of human resource development. Saudi Arabia and Bahrain are glaring example where sectarianism hampers

the process of human resource development. It is now imperative for every GCC country to formulate the inclusive education policy which could provide the opportunities to educate entire indigenous population and train them for the benefit of the nation. Moreover, expatriate labour also must be taken into account while considering human resource development of the GCC countries. They may be integrated into mainstream society. There are in fact two means to increase the population of the country- high birth rate and naturalization process. The GCC countries normally follow the pro-natalist population policy which is not so effective to increase human resource in the country. The GCC countries need an extensive regional planning in terms of the use of educational infrastructure and on job training for the sake of human resource development. Although some efforts are being made in this direction, they continue to remain piecemeal and inadequate. Lower rate of female participation is the other very important factor that must be taken into consideration. There is considerable scope for enhancing the women participation in the labour force. Oman and Saudi Arabia are better placed to tap another reservoir of human resource in rural areas. The main aim of the paper is to examine as how to enhance quality in higher education in the GCC countries? Human resource of any country could be developed only by raising the standards of higher education. Secondly, What can be learnt from experiences of other best institutions would also be discussed in this paper? Thirdly, how can the Gulf higher education institutions compete with the World Class institution? Fourthly, this paper will also assess the impact of globalization in the Gulf. Finally, Gulf education policy will critically be analyzed so that apt liberal policy could be formulated. Hence there is a need to have modern and scientific education in order to convert young population in to human resource for the nation-building and development in the Gulf.

Knowledge Management and Organizational Innovation as Drivers of Quality Higher Education in Malaysia: Lessons for Gulf Countries

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Abstract:

The promotion of quality of higher education in Malaysian public universities is widely documented. However, how it links to the enhancement of quality education in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Countries seems non-existent. This paper hopes to address this gap by proposing a conceptual framework to study the relationship between knowledge

management (KM) and organizational innovation (OI) as drivers of quality higher education. The setting is in the East Coast of Malaysia, with three public universities as the units of analysis.

In this research, KM and OI represent the factors as the drivers of quality higher education. The ontological and epistemological meanings of “quality” as applied in the context of higher education will present in the paper. The proposition will be developed and tested to suggest the relationship between KM and OI and implications to GCC higher education will be explored, in particular, on how KM and OI would enhance quality higher education. Data will collect from the academic staff from three higher education institutions in the East Coast of Peninsular Malaysia. Mixed-mode methods of quantitative and qualitative analyses will be employed. The findings of this research are expected to propose a framework of KM and OI and the interlinks to quality higher education in Malaysia and the GCC countries.

Higher Education Policies in the GCC: Enablers or Barriers to Innovation?

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Abstract:

Since the turn of the twenty first century, Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states have strived to build knowledge economies[i] in order to face challenges such as a growing youth population, volatile oil and gas prices, economic diversification, and the need to build human capital to compete globally (Al-Kuwairi 2012; Miniaoui and Schiliro 2016). Recognizing the vital role entrepreneurship and innovation can play in contributing to national development by generating a number of economic and social benefits, GCC countries have formulated policies to promote entrepreneurship and innovation among its young population as part of their national vision and development agenda (United Nations 2011; Buckner et al. 2012; Silatech 2012).

For example, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has encouraged entrepreneurial ambitions of Emirati youth by introducing an innovation policy within the public education sector as part of its national innovation strategy (Miniaoui and Schiliro 2016; UAE Ministry of Cabinet Affairs 2015). Qatar’s national development strategy uses the term entrepreneurship 21 times and speaks of innovation 48 times. Consistent with its strategy,

the Qatari government created entities such as the Qatar Development Bank and Enterprise Qatar to support and develop the country's small and medium sized enterprises (Silatech, 2012). Similarly, Bahrain established the Bahrain Development Bank, Economic Development Board, and Tamkeen to lead private sector growth through innovative and entrepreneurial activities. In fact, outright services and resources such as financial grants, training and advisory programs, and incubators are directly delivered by various government and quasi-government bodies (Preuss 2011).

Despite such investments to spur entrepreneurship and innovation, GCC countries have nevertheless lagged behind their comparable countries in the world in terms of educational achievement, production of knowledge and research, and development of scientific and technological advances (Tadros, 2015). In fact, the GII Report in 2016 showed that GCC countries are situated within the upper middle range of the Global Innovation Index ranking. At the same time, however, the GII Report 2016 also explicitly states that “despite these top ranks, and compared to their level of development, resource-rich countries in the region could rank higher” (Dutta, Lanvin, & Wunsch-Vincent, 2016).

The triple helix of university–industry–government interactions is a universal model for the development of the knowledge-based society, through innovation and entrepreneurship. It draws from the innovative practice of Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) with industry and government in inventing a regional renewal strategy in early 20th-century New England. Parallel experiences were identified in “Silicon Valley,” where Stanford University works together with industry and government (O'Mara, 2005). Triple helix is identified as the secret of such innovative regions. Universities are central to the triple helix approach and are often considered to be the engine of the economy and are generally positioned at the center of attention by policy makers desiring to foster technological developments and innovations and to sustain an economy based on knowledgeable and skilled human capital (Weber, 2011; Markkula & Kune, 2015). A report released in 2019 by the European university association entitled, “The role of universities in regional innovation ecosystems,” states that universities' access to international research is a key source of innovation potential and authority in the eyes of businesses and government agencies. It further asserts that universities play a pivotal role in society as an institution of knowledge creation in post-industrial economies (Reichert, 2019).

So then, what role has higher education played in contributing to innovation and entrepreneurship development in their respective countries? To what extent are higher education policies and subsequent activities aligned with national efforts to spur innovation? In other words, how do universities, especially the flagship public universities, support innovative activities?

In considering the above questions, it is important to note that it is insufficient for governments and universities to create structures and environments that support innovative and entrepreneurial activities. Equally as important is the presence of individuals who will take advantage of the resources and opportunities. And for rentier contexts like the GCC where the majority of its citizens display “low societal capacities” (Hertog, 2010) where

citizens have low productivity but high expectations from state resources, it becomes even more critical that young people are not only equipped with the skills and knowledge to engage in innovation but also instilled with positive attitudes and desire to innovate. So then, to what extent are universities engaged in activities that spur and build a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship among the young? And what opportunities and challenges do universities face in trying to foster a culture of innovation?

In what follows, we first provide an overview of the policy context of innovation and higher education in the GCC countries and provide a few case studies of how universities, in partnership with the government, are working to foster innovation in the country. Then, we explore the challenges and opportunities that universities in the region face in both engaging in and fostering a culture for innovation.