The State of People and Knowledge in the GCC Countries per a New Index and the Future Ahead

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ABSTRACT

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, with their rich oil resources, are facing the problem of fallen oil prices on the one hand, and reduced oil reserves on the other. As a result, they are moving toward less dependence on oil, and increasing dependence on people and knowledge. This paper develops a wide scope “people and knowledge index (PKI)” using relevant international indicators made available by various international organizations. The index includes “ten building blocks.” Four of these blocks are concerned with the “core issues” of people and knowledge; while the other six blocks are related to the “environment issues” according to which people and knowledge interact. The paper assesses the GCC countries according to the index revealing their strengths and weaknesses, and enabling the derivation of guidelines for their future development. The resulting guidelines consider how the GCC countries can direct their future development toward a high and growing standard of living, while reducing dependence on oil. Finally, the future use of the new index is highlighted.

KEYWORDS
Bahrain, Knowledge, Kuwait, Oman, People, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, The GCC Countries, United Arab Emirates

INTRODUCTION

This section introduces the work presented in this paper, which is concerned with the assessment of people and knowledge in the “Gulf Cooperation Council: GCC” countries. The section starts by introducing the GCC countries and their current drive toward increasing dependence on people and knowledge, while reducing dependence on oil for development. This followed by reviewing major international indicators and indices that address issues concerned with people and knowledge. The section then gives the objectives of the work and addresses the structure of the coming sections of the paper.

The GCC Countries

The GCC countries are spread over an area exceeding “2 million km²” with a population of over “48 million”. They enjoy rich oil resources, which contribute to putting them internationally among the “high income countries”. They consist of six countries, which alphabetically are: Bahrain; Kuwait; Oman; Qatar; Saudi Arabia; and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Figure 1 shows the map of these countries illustrating their locations and relative areas; and Table 1 gives their population and GDP per Capita (WB Data, 2015).

DOI: 10.4018/IJKSR.2017100103

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The GCC countries are facing the problem of fallen oil prices on the one hand, and reduced oil reserves on the other. As a result, they are moving toward less dependence on oil, and increasing dependence on people and knowledge. It is therefore important to assess the state of people and knowledge issues in these countries, as this is of great importance for planning future development toward sustainable, or perhaps growing, standard of living.

**People and Knowledge Indicators**

There are various sources of information concerned with the assessment of different issues of people and knowledge. These sources gather hard data from different countries, conduct surveys, use data from other sources, and perform other activities to provide indicators, sub-indices and indices associated with various issues and subjects. In this respect, there are usually two types of such sources:
Aspects of Social Responsibility in the Information Society
www.igi-global.com/chapter/aspects-social-responsibility-information-society/29026?camid=4v1a