An Approach for the Assessment of the National State of Giftedness

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ABSTRACT

This article is concerned with providing a generic approach for the assessment of the national state of giftedness, as the application of this approach would enable understanding the national current state of giftedness of a country and would consequently support planning for improvement. The approach has two domains: the first is concerned with the dimensions of giftedness; while the second is associated with assessment measures. It considers that a country consists of several regions, and that the assessment considers every region according to the dimensions of giftedness, from which measurable indicators can be developed. Indicators are quantitative or qualitative, with normalized values and weights assigned to each one of them to enable finding sub-indices and indices that combine various indicators together. The outcome of the article provides a tool for countries to use for the assessment of their current state of giftedness and the development of improvement plans.

KEYWORDS
Giftedness, High Ability, Assessment, Qualitative Indicators, Quantitative Indicators, General Education, Higher Education, Mawhiba

INTRODUCTION

Giftedness is a natural high ability asset built-in in people enabling them to provide distinguished deliverables that can support national development. Therefore, supporting giftedness and exploring its potential is an essential need for all countries to consider. This need is the concern of the organization “Mawhiba” of Saudi Arabia; and the

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work presented in this paper is part of its activities. The work is based on the view that the current national state of giftedness in a country is an important problem to assess in order to enable sound planning for future improvement. In this introductory section, Mawhiba is introduced, and the general importance of assessments for future improvements is emphasized. The main types of indicators needed for assessments are also viewed. The work of the paper is then introduced.

**“Mawhiba” of Saudi Arabia**

“Mawhiba” is a non-profit organization, established in 1999 under the full name “King Abdulaziz and His Companions Foundation for Giftedness and Creativity”; the abbreviated name of the organization “Mawhiba” is the Arabic word for “giftedness.” The vision of the organization is “to enable giftedness and creativity as the main contributions to the advancement of humanity”; and the mission is “to provide an inspirational environment for giftedness and creativity and promote passion for science and knowledge in the development of future leaders.” The organization values include: “passion, excellence, creativity, collaborations, and trust” (Mawhiba, n.d.). The organization has various programs and activities for supporting giftedness, including the work presented in this paper.

**Importance of Assessments**

When the current state of an object, or a strategic unit, needs to be well-understood for planning future improvement, an assessment would be needed. In this respect, such an assessment would need measurements to describe the current state and specify needed improvement accurately. Such measurements would, in turn, need the identification of meaningful indicators that can receive measured data on the current state for understanding where we are, and aim at targeted data of a future state for deciding where we want to be. An illustrative view of the assessment requirements is given in Figure 1.

Measurements for assessment have always been essential for the development of knowledge. William Thomson, known as Baron Kelvin, who measured the absolute temperature in the 19th century said:

*When you can measure what you are speaking about, and express it in numbers, you know something about it; when you cannot express it in numbers, your knowledge is of a meager and unsatisfactory kind; it may be the beginning of knowledge, but you have scarcely, in your thoughts advanced to the stage of science. (Morgan, 2009).*

An important observation on measurement was made by Albert Einstein who developed the relativity theory and was the genius of the 20th century. His observation was on the difficulty of making some measurements on the one hand; and on the ease of making some others that may be unnecessary. He said:
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