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The Gulf Cooperation Council's Public Sector Executive Education: Relevance, Trends, Challenges, and Opportunities

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Introduction

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) that comprises the states of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has witnessed substantial development and institutional and organizational shifts over the past 40 years. Before the discovery of oil, fishing and pearl were the main natural resources and industries in the GCC region, which then had one of the lowest GDP growth rates in the Middle East.

Due to vast oil reserves and revenues, these nations have dramatically transformed sandy deserts into globally renowned financial hubs and tourist attractions, becoming a blueprint for development in neighboring Arabian countries. Currently, GCC's Qatar and the UAE have some of the highest GDP per capita in the world and faster rates of economic growth with successful strategies to diversify their economies (Biygautane and Dargin, 2015).

The impressive rate of progress and development was only possible with the key role played by a highly talented international workforce of expatriates coming from all corners of the globe to take part in the emergence of the GCC as a new player in the world economy. Building massive infrastructure projects and establishing governmental institutions to deliver services effectively required highly talented human capital. Since GCC states had not developed local human capacity to cater for urgent emerging demands to accelerate the pace of building infrastructure and deliver services, GCC governments had to rely on expatriates, and continue to do so to sustain their workforce needs.

In recent decades, GCC governments have invested generously in the education of their citizens aiming to prepare them to take leadership roles in the

public and private sectors (Al-Nuseirat and Biygautane, 2014d; Biygautane and Al Yahya, 2014). However, the current educational systems have not been successful in equipping GCC citizens with the practical skills necessary to perform their jobs effectively. Problems that affect the quality of educational systems are illustrated in the following section, which justifies the importance and relevance of executive education (EE) and training courses as a most viable channel to address the skill gaps among public sector employees in the GCC region.

Although EE is becoming an increasingly important lever for public sector organizations to improve the levels of satisfaction with services they provide, it has attracted low attention from researchers (Hagen and Liddle, 2007; Hambrick and Fredrickson, 2005; Long, 2004; Morley and Vilkinas, 1997; Von Glinow, 2005).

The existing research on EE in the public sector is largely concerned with the impact of training on effectiveness of public sector organizations (Liedtka et al., 1999); the motivations of executives and senior government officials to attend EE programs (Long, 2004); the content, design, and delivery of EE programs; and the challenges and opportunities of EE development and expansion (Bolt, 1993; Ulrich, 1987).

Literature on EE tends to predominantly cover programs in the private sectors of countries in North America and Europe. But literature about countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and GCC regions lags critical role behind in the private and also in the public sectors. Despite its significance for the growth of the region from socioeconomic perspectives, issues pertinent to EE practices and courses have not yet attracted ample attention from researchers.

The purpose of this chapter is to fill such a gap in the literature and explore the importance of EE for the enhancement of public sector quality in the GCC states. It stresses the significance of equipping government employees with the skills and competencies necessary to produce public policies and values that satisfy both the citizens and other residents of these states. Moreover, the chapter sheds light on the continuous efforts made by the GCC states to educate, train, and qualify its public sector employees by establishing government-funded EE institutions and programs.

In addition, the chapter sheds light on the efforts made by the GCC states to educate and train public sector employees with government-funded institutions and EE programs. The exploitation of oil revenues to prepare well-educated and trained public sector officers and leaders is a sensible investment by these states to fill the current gaps in human capital.

This study is based on data gathered through comprehensive research and analysis of government documents, thorough examination of literature on EE principles and practices, and primary data gathered in interviews with public policy and administration experts, heads of EE units, and government employees in the Gulf region.

It is necessary to clarify that in this chapter EE refers mainly to education of senior government executives and training that will support them to effectively improve the management and leadership of government organizations.

The structure of the chapter is as follows. The second section provides a theoretical review that discusses the significance of EE programs designed to improve the knowledge of public sector employees and equip them with the practical skills necessary to carry out their tasks. It also discusses different EE programs and trends in the past 50 years. The third section explains reasons why EE is essential for GCC states in their pursuit of long-term strategic objectives. Various educational and current human resource challenges are discussed. The fourth section illustrates the efforts each GCC state has made to empower public sector senior employees through investment in EE programs and institutions. It also highlights the GCC states' focus on leadership in EE programs, which seem to be the dominant trend and concentration of most EE institutions. An explanation of the rationale behind increasing investment in EE programs is offered along with a glimpse of the challenges to prepare content and design courses that best suit the unique cultural context of the GCC states. The conclusion summarizes the chapter and discusses the future of EE programs in the Gulf region in light of the new developmental shifts already underway.

Importance of EE for the public sector in the 21st century

The New Public Management (NPM) paradigm has introduced private sector practices to the public sector promising substantial improvement in service quality (Osborne, 2006). Since the 1980s NPM has emerged as a new managerial trend for governments around the world. The rigid bureaucratic processes of the traditional model of public administration, its inherent ineffectiveness, limited level of responsiveness to people's needs, and the high costs associated with running public organizations required drastic change in the way governments operated (Hughes, 2003). The rapidly changing world economy, dwindling public revenues, and the rise in public sector budgets and social welfare (Gow and Dufour, 2000) meant that governments of the 21st century had to reinvent themselves (Kettl, 1997) to survive the internal and external challenges they faced. Bevir et al. (2003) argued that NPM "refers to a focus on management, not policy, and on performance appraisal and efficiency; disaggregating public bureaucracies into agencies dealing with each other on a user per pay basis; quasi-markets and contracting out to foster competition; cost-cutting; and a management style that emphasizes output targets, limited term contracts, monetary incentives and freedom to manage" (p. 4). But public sector executives usually do not possess skills required to achieve these objectives. Hence, training them on new management styles is mandatory to ensure capacity to transform and

improve organizations and move them from hierarchical and traditional entities into innovative, result-based, and over all learner-centered structures (Conger and Xin, 2000; Peters and Pierre, 1998).

The public sector is undergoing major structural and organizational changes that require new skills and approaches to tackle emerging public policy challenges. These changes are occurring in response to financial restrictions governments face worldwide and the need to do more with less (Al-Nuseirat and Biygautane, 2014d; Hughes, 2003). Guido Bertucci (qtd. in United Nations, 2001) has indicated that:

managing the public sector in today's environment of constant change, particularly in view of globalization, has become an increasingly demanding challenge for national decision makers, policy advisors, service delivery managers and civil servants at large...Decentralization, de-bureaucratization and deregulation are adding to the importance not only of local government, but also non-state actors on whom significant functions are devolved or outsourced.¹

New methods of public sector management require executives and managers with new analytical and practical frameworks to deliver tangible results (Morley and Vilkinas, 1997). Hence, the performance and competencies that public sector executives need to acquire are increasingly called into question in synch with new methods to enhance productivity and effectiveness that are key concerns of HR departments.

Additionally, NPM has championed a vision of public managers who not only emulate business practices and values but also emphasize the delivery of optimal service to constituents by enhancing their skills to serve the public better. The "New Public Service" is a movement built on democratic citizenship, community, and the civil society, as much as organizational humanism and discourse theory. Most notably, the primary role of the public servant is to help citizens articulate and meet shared interests rather than to attempt to control or steer society (Denhardt and Denhardt, 2002).

The development of public sector officials' competencies through EE programs reflects positively not only on individual performance but also on their organizations (O'Reilly, 1993). Then EE needs to target the improvement of individual skills and behaviors, and also enhancement of the entire organizational culture through executive leaders (Goodwin and Fulmer, 1995).

Long (2004) argues that EE needs to be linked to organizational effectiveness to target both individual learning and organizational renewal and adaptation to change. Senior officials are responsible for organizational transformation and renewal, and need to draw the mission and strategic direction of their institutions by providing the vision and roadmap to achieve it. Continuous learning and training ensure that employees can

keep abreast of new management styles and be prepared to successfully deal with the rapid changes in organizations (Mellahi, 2000; Wick and Leon, 1993). EE programs need to be designed carefully and delivered purposefully to improve performance of public sector employees within a culture of innovation, creativity, and excellence, (Shibata and Berger 2000).

However, it is essential to note that success is contingent with an organizational culture that allows flexibility and accepts change and innovation that employees need to practice after they take EE and training programs. To achieve this objective public sector organizations need to draft strategic objectives and goals that are strictly aligned with EE objectives and structure.

EE has undergone deep transformations in the last decades. Traditionally only university faculty taught EE programs delivered in the formats of lectures or seminars that imparted information and theoretical foundations of public administration, human resource, and related topics. Harvard Business School is considered to be a prime example of a developer of non-academic EE offered by a university, and is particularly noted for its shortened versions of MBA programs (Crotty and Soule, 1997). The timeframe of these programs ranges between 5 and 15 weeks and targets principally senior employees within the public or private sectors, (Farris et al. 2003).

Starting from the year 2000, emerging financial, social, and structural challenges that organizations faced imposed further changes and shifts in course content from “functional knowledge” (Conger and Xin, 2000) to subjects such as leadership and its impact in steering organizational change and effectiveness, understanding of challenges and opportunities brought about by the waves of globalization, partnerships, emotional intelligence, e-commerce, and communication. More importantly, the majority of EE programs were no longer standardized and university-based but were specifically designed and tailored as “interventionist” methods to improve organizations (Bolt, 1993, Cairns, 1998). In-house EE programs appeared as alternatives to classroom and university-based programs to address practical needs of organizations while cutting the costs of training at the same time. Conger and Benjamin (1999) stress a methodological shift in EE from a teacher-oriented to learner-centered focus relying more on real-life case studies and problem solving, instead of the traditional theoretical approaches.

The development of executives’ problem-solving skills and enhancing teamwork through exercises and case studies is now the basis of EE programs to a higher extent than reading abstract course work in university-based programs. Additionally, corporate trainers are offering in-house EE based on skills that help participants to negotiate with people, satisfy needs of clients, and build sustainable commercial relationships, often filling gaps employees have in formal educations “all while bringing their humanity and personality into the mix” (Klaus, 2010, 9). A special issue is “People Skills for Public Managers” (McCorkle and Witt, 2014).

Change and updates in content and delivery of EE will continue to be an essential support mechanism to help public sector executives add value

to services and provide policies the public expect. The fast changing environment we live in today requires continuous training and education as governments worldwide compete to achieve high rankings in effectiveness, efficiency, and innovation. Moreover, novel programs like e-government and Smart Government initiatives require new sets of skills and strategies to design, deploy, and evaluate outcome and success.

Orienting EE around a “humanistic” paradigm has become an essential issue of discussion in the 21st century (Kimakowitz et al., 2010) centered on three main pillars: (1) unconditional respect for human dignity, (2) integration of ethical reflection in management decisions, and (3) active and ongoing engagement with stakeholders. Research on EE in the Gulf region needs to reflect on the humanistic perspective of training programs, and the importance of developing the skills of people to produce better results, which can only be attained by well-trained and informed individuals.

Why EE is becoming increasingly important for the GCC states

While EE in Western countries is important to enhance the competencies and expertise of public sector executives and train them in the latest public management theories and practices, in the GCC states, EE programs are essential to fill gaps in knowledge and skills of government officials. What makes the GCC's context unique vis-à-vis Western societies is that the challenges that emanate from the composition of its workforce are rooted in pedagogical and structural inefficiencies in the educational systems, and priority of the GCC states is to transform their economies into a knowledge based ones.

From a classical human capital development perspective, looking at these challenges calls for reinforcing EE programs, establishing solid training strategies, and investing in human development as immediate policy actions. However, the situation is complex due to demographic challenges the region has been facing for the past 30 years. The concentration of the national workforce is mostly in the public sector, and considerable reliance on an expatriate workforce that lacks necessary knowledge in management jeopardizes knowledge transfer to the local population (Biygautane and Al-Yahya, 2014) and furthermore makes EE programs the only viable channel to equip public sector employees with skills essential to perform their duties effectively and efficiently.

Composition of the GCC's workforce and localization policies

The demographic and workforce compositions in all GCC states reveal serious human resource challenges. The rapid economic growth rates the GCC states have witnessed during the past few decades, largely due to oil revenues, confronted these states with the lack of a qualified national workforce. Consequently, importing expatriates with the necessary educational backgrounds and professional experience the local workforce lacked

was unavoidable. Table 4.1 illustrates the overall populations of the GCC states that are relatively small ranging between 2 million in Qatar and 27 million in Saudi Arabia, with expatriates comprising more than 80 percent of the overall population like the case in the UAE.

Table 4.1 also shows the concentration of local workforce in the public sector, while expatriates predominantly occupy the private sector. Expatriates account for 90–95 percent of the private sector, while nationals hold 90 percent of public sector jobs throughout the GCC. This phenomenon is a result of numerous factors. First of all, it is the GCC states' social contract to guarantee jobs for its citizens as a fair way of sharing and distributing its oil resources. Furthermore, the public sector offers attractive benefits and salaries, longer vacations, shorter working hours, and, more importantly, a guaranteed career for life. To further restrict public sector job access to locals, GCC states have passed and are aggressively implementing localization policies that aim to "localize" the public sector and replace expatriate workers with locals. This is a result of increasing unemployment within the local population, (Al Ali 2008). The private sector is not attractive to locals because it is more demanding, requires longer working hours, and is more selective. Expatriates are generally better qualified to occupy such jobs and perform higher than locals. Hence, the public sector remains the best work and career alternative for the local populations in all the states of the Gulf region.

The obligation to guarantee jobs for GCC citizens exerts heavy impact on performance and quality of public services and overall effectiveness of governments. Since the public sector is the major recruiter of locals in GCC, there are constant challenges to offer jobs to less qualified employees that compromise performance of the services provided. This is forcing GCC governments to substantially invest in training and education of the public sector local workforce to equip them with the necessary management skills that they lack (Al-Nuseirat and Biygautane, 2014b).

Need for improvement of local education systems

The deficient performance of educational systems in the GCC states and the "mismatch" between governments' developmental needs and the skills schools pass on to students are serious challenges for those states (UNDP, 2009; World Bank, 2008). Table 4.2 shows that literacy rates in the region are relatively high; those from developing countries in the African regions of MENA are considerably lower. However, the quality of the education students receive is questionable.

The Arab Knowledge Development Report (2009) discusses in detail the fundamental shortcomings of the educational systems in the GCC region, emphasizing that although students get basic knowledge or skills like reading and writing, they lack capacity in critical thinking, effective communications, and teamwork, skills that the private sector deems essential for recruitment and the job market.

Table 4.1 GCC states' populations and numbers of locals and expatriates in the public and private sectors

	Year	Population	Public Sector		Private Sector	
			Local	Expatriate	Local	Expatriate
Qatar	2011	1,910,902	55,170	46,395	6,279	946,374
	2012	2,050,514	58,769	52,883	7,664	25,690
Kuwait	2011	3,124,705	229,161	84,328	61,435	1,103,366
	2012	3,250,496	240,170	91,163	61,890	1,159,987
Oman	2011	3,024,774	159,258	25,182	174,441	1,114,590
	2012	3,314,001	166,804	27,522	172,066	1,316,182
UAE	2011	8,925,096	84.9% of locals (2009)	14.9% of expats (2009)	19,874	3,875,821
	2012	9,205,651			20,000	4,000,000
Saudi Arabia	2011	27,761,728	1,602,540	137,460	844,476	6,937,020
	2012	28,287,855	1,767,000	133,000	1,134,633	7,352,900
Bahrain	2011	1,292,764	47,998	7,928	93,265	362,536
	2012	1,317,827	49,073	8,329	93,575	367,313

Source: World Bank (2014), IMF (2014).

Table 4.2 Socioeconomic indicators in the GCC region

Countries	Literacy Rate % (2011)	Knowledge Index (2011)	Total Unemployment % (2011)	Youth Unemployment % (2011)	GDP Growth % (2011)	Government Effectiveness % (0 low and 100 high) (2012)
UAE	90	7.09	2.4	6.3	4.4	83
Kuwait	94	5.15	2.2	23.3	6.1	51
Bahrain	92	6.98	15	20.7	2.5	69
Qatar	96	5.5	0.5	17	1.6	78
Oman	87	5.87	15	19.6	5.4	61
Saudi Arabia	87	6.05	10.8	25.9	2.13	57

Source: World Bank (2013), International Labour Organization (2013), UNDP (2009).

The Arab Human Capital Challenge Report (2007) states that lack of well-educated and skilled employees is a main challenge the public and private sectors face to hire employees in the region. Most employees need to participate in EE and training to acquire competencies necessary to meet professional responsibilities. Harry (2007) indicates that educational systems in the GCC state have managed to develop the national identities of their citizens but have largely failed to prepare them for the job market (Girgis, 2002).

Transition to a knowledge economy

A main strategic objective shared by all GCC states is to transform their economic systems from relying on natural resources and oil revenues to knowledge-based ones. For approximately five decades, the GCC states' main economic activity has been the exploitation of oil and its revenues that have financed infrastructure and development. In fact, oil revenues have allowed GCC states to skip the industrial phase all major global economies experienced to service-based industries such as airlines, education, logistics, and tourism.

Table 4.2 shows GCC states' knowledge index that measures "ability of a country to generate, adopt and diffuse knowledge" (World Bank, 2014). The UAE and Bahrain are the highest-achieving states in the Arab region scoring 7.09 and 6.98 respectively (scale: 0 lowest score and 10 highest). The long-term vision of these GCC states is to establish economic systems based on knowledge instead of high dependence on natural resources to deploy innovating solutions in the public and private sectors (Biygautane and Dargin, 2015).

EE: opportunity to address present challenges

EE will be increasingly important to compensate for educational shortcomings of public sector employees if programs are designed and delivered based on the needs of the employees and if their organizations support change and innovation.

The capacity of education and training of national workforces to deliver expected results determines the success of states' policies. If the focus of GCC states is solely to replace foreign employees with nationals, the risk is high that the workforce will lose quality of public services. Effective EE in the public sector is instrumental to address the skill gaps of government executives and senior officers, who, due to time constraints, cannot devote themselves to study specialized full-time degree programs. Therefore, EE represents a feasible alternative to achieve the expected educational needs. Al Dosari and Rahman (2005, p. 139) indicate that "neglecting education and training will mean failure of attempts to reduce the employment of foreigners through localization". Therefore the GCC region is becoming an increasingly important market for EE programs that target the technical, leadership,

and managerial skills government executives need in order to improve their productivity. Effective training needs to address and identify skill gaps; this is essential to optimize the benefits off EE programs (Al-Nuseirat and Biygautane, 2014a, 2014c) that will be strengthened with a diversified mix of nationals and expatriates based on a cross-cultural approach that is central in the human centered paradigm.

GCC governments support for EE and the public sector

GCC states face significant human resource challenges that force them to endorse EE programs as a lever to fill in the gaps in government officials' competencies. Since the public sector is the largest recruiter of GCC nationals who have not necessarily acquired the needed knowledge and skills, providing them with continuous educational training programs is inescapable. The efforts GCC states have made are in the form of generous financial support of EE programs for the local workforce joining the public sector and specialized training programs for senior executives. Therefore government institutions that provide EE programs aligned with the needs of governments is a necessary step to target and develop their local workforce. The following reports for each GCC state shed light on their efforts to support EE programs in the public sector.

Bahrain

Unlike other GCC countries that have vast oil and gas reserves, Bahrain has few natural resources that will be depleted in the next few years (Shaham, 2009; World Bank, 2009). Limited natural resources increase Bahrain's need to invest in the service sector and a knowledge-based economy to increase productivity and competitiveness regionally and globally. In the past 20 years, Bahrain has followed a strategy to diversify its economy and invest in human development with high interest to develop EE. The World Bank's government effectiveness index shows that Bahrain scored 69 percent, as the third most effective government in the GCC (shown in Table 4.2).

Bahrain has gradually increased its training budget of public sector employees over the past ten years. In 2003 the government allocated US\$39 million for EE programs and doubled it in 2011 to reach US\$94 million for EE programs delivered in Bahrain and abroad (Ministry of Finance, 2013). This expense accounts for 17 percent of total government expenditure and the government intends to further increase it based on employees training needs.

The Bahrain Institute of Public Administration that opened in 2006 as the EE training and research arm of the government is aligned with the government's National Economic Vision of 2030. It is aimed to develop the human capital necessary to drive Bahrain's organizational capacity to deliver the best services in the public sector. Standardized EE programs target

skill development of new employees and senior executives. The programs typically range between 4 and 16 weeks in length.

Kuwait

Kuwait is one of the richest oil producing countries of the GCC, but it faces more challenges in developing its human capital and empowering its government officials with necessary managerial and leadership skills. Based on World Bank statistics, 74 percent of the Kuwaiti population did not continue on to higher education in 2008, and only around 8 percent completed higher education degrees (World Bank, 2013). Moreover, the quality of education is below the international average. Compared to the rest of the GCC states, Kuwait's public sector, similar to that of Qatar, has some of the highest rates of employment of nationals in the public sector, with more than 85 percent Kuwaitis in this sector. Given its lack of government officials with sufficiently adequate educational training in public administration, Kuwait scored the lowest among the GCC states in the World Bank's government effectiveness index (51 percent) in 2012.

To address structural deficiencies in performance of the public sector, the government of Kuwait has taken the task of educating and training its employees more seriously. In 1982 Kuwait created the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training, which is the oldest training agency in the government made up of numerous institutes, authorities, and colleges that offer EE programs in medical sciences, governmental, and technical sectors. The 2012–2013 training budget was US\$28 million for 27 government entities and involved training of approximately 1,800 government officials each year (The Kuwait News, 2012).

Oman

Like Bahrain, Oman's reliance on natural resources has been decreasing due to depletion of oil and gas reserves, placing significant pressure on the government to develop its human resources to raise national performance. The government strives to transform public sector institutions into learning organizations that foster innovation, creativity, team building, and flexibility in line with the strategic objective to transform the system into a knowledge-based economy (Albawaba 2011).

The government has invested substantially in human capital through various EE programs. The eighth Five-Year Plan (2011–2015) dedicates approximately US\$260 million to a human resource development plan of continuous training and EE programs. According to Ministry of Civil Service statistics in 2013, there were 70,053 Omanis working for the public sector who were trained in Oman or abroad (Al-Lamki 2000).

The administrative agency that delivers major government EE programs in Oman is the Public Administration Institute established in 1977 to address

Table 4.3 Government institutions offering EE programs in the GCC region

Country	Name	Program Description	Duration
UAE	Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government	<p>Programs target government leaders to enhance expertise in public policy, leadership, and management. Short certificate-based programs focus on leadership, management, negotiation, and governance.</p> <p>Programs designed to help public institutions reach their potential introducing integrated, customized, capacity building programs. Programs are relevant to the UAE and the MENA region.</p>	<p>Usually two weeks but this can vary</p> <p>Contingent with organizations' needs</p>
	Mohammed Bin Rashid Program for Leadership Development	<p>Personal Development – Focuses on personal growth and development, career development, coaching, mentoring, and action planning.</p> <p>Technical Knowledge – Focuses on job-related training.</p> <p>Management Acumen – Focuses on management, finances, project management, marketing, business, and people skills.</p> <p>Leadership – Focuses on leadership development at personal and organizational level.</p>	<p>Total duration of the integrated leadership program: 13 years</p> <p>Fast track option for exceptional leaders: 8 years</p>
	UAE Government Leaders Program	<p>Strategic Leaders Program.</p> <p>Executive Leaders Program.</p> <p>Future Leaders Program.</p> <p>Innovative Leaders Program, Ministerial Forums.</p> <p>Government Capacity Building.</p>	<p>12 months</p> <p>18 months</p> <p>18 months</p> <p>24 months</p> <p>Customized on needs of government entities</p>
	Federal Authority for Government Human Resources	<p>UAE Government Leaders Program focuses on changing management in institutions and team work in collaboration with trainers from Ashridge Business School in the UK. Launched in February 2008.</p>	<p>Three-day workshops</p>
Kuwait	Public Authority for Applied Education and Training	<p>The governing body consists of numerous institutes that offer programs in various sectors and industrial, structural, and vocational training.</p>	<p>Variable. Depends on industry and government needs</p>

Table 4.3 (Continued)

Country	Name	Program Description	Duration
Qatar	Qatar Leadership Center	<p>Institutional Leadership Program offers customized courses to organizations from high schools to private and public sector institutions that can deliver education and training to meet needs of organizations.</p> <p>Strategic Leaders Program.</p> <p>The Leadership Development Program for current and future leaders to develop personal and leadership skills.</p>	<p>Variable fast track programs</p> <p>Four tailor-made forums per year</p> <p>18–24 months</p>
Saudi Arabia	Institute of Public Administration	<p>EE Program Services focus on skill development of civil servants to improve their productivity, efficiency, knowledge, skills, and positive behavioral attitudes leading to advanced administrative work.</p> <p>The Higher Training Program promotes and develops top administrative leadership programs for government agencies.</p>	<p>Variable. Depends on training needs of government entities</p> <p>Variable. Depends on the program</p>
Oman	Institute of Public Administration	<p>The Institute's focus is EE programs that target development of quantitative and qualitative skills of public sector employees.</p>	<p>Variable. Between 15 and 40 hours</p>
Bahrain	Institute of Public Administration	<p>Induction to Senior Civil Service (ISCS) EE program aims to develop capacity of new directors (acting directors) and prepare them for new positions starting in government sector.</p> <p>Induction to government qualifies public sectors trainees to follow rules and regulations of civil service to maintain rights and perform duties. Program includes lectures and workshops.</p> <p>Preparation for Top Management Program Kawader aims to develop leadership skills for participants who will become chief executives at high administrative level. Program objective is to train leaders for the future to increase Bahrain competitiveness and help increase benefit of Bahraini society.</p>	<p>Up to 16 weeks</p> <p>100 hours in 21 days</p> <p>132 hours in 27 days</p>

the government challenges to train executives and senior officials in knowledge and skills, (Rajasekar and Khan 2013). In 2013 the institute offered a wide range of programs tailored to the needs of over 5,000 government officials, 49 percent in executive positions across different sectors and specializations and most in administrative development (Ministry of Civil Service, 2013).

Qatar

Qatar is the smallest GCC state and possesses abundant natural resources, but it also has the world's highest rate of expatriates centered in both the public and private sectors. Around 90 percent of Qatari nationals work in the public sector, and less than 5 percent in the private sector. Although Qatar's natural resources, particularly gas, do not force it, as in the cases of Bahrain and Oman, to urgently strengthen its public sector and human resource capabilities, it has achieved some of the highest government effectiveness rates and knowledge index scores in the GCC (as shown in Table 4.2). Moreover, investment in education has been in the form of not only EE programs, but also the establishment education cities and the attraction top global universities to Qatar.

EE in the public sector has been a key enabler of excellence and effectiveness in Qatar. The government established the Qatar Leadership Center in 2008 to deliver EE for government employees in subjects aligned with the 2030 Qatar National Vision. The programs target executives, senior officials, and newly appointed employees. Empowering Qatar's pool of talent and leadership is preparing the country for challenging tasks in the public sector as a key objective of the center. In 2012 more than 27,000 government officials were trained in administration and leadership programs.

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia has vast oil resources and revenues and its government commitment to enhance human capital is impressive. The First Development Plan (1965–1970) allocated close to US\$2 billion to human resource development and the Seventh Development Plan (2000–2004) allocated more than US\$74 billion. The Ninth Development Plan stressed the provision of high-quality training to meet demands of the labor market based on revisions of the Eighth Development Plan that provided financial support to establish training institutions and regulatory frameworks aligned with strategic objectives of the government (Al Yahya 2008; Ministry of Planning of Economy and Planning Saudi Arabia, 2012).

The Institute of Public Administration established in 1961 is the government agency that provides over 300 EE programs in 15 fields dedicated to train government officials. The government also provides private sector training and customized EE programs for entities that the institute does not have capacity to serve (Al Asmari 2008).

Despite the efforts of the Saudi government to improve public sector effectiveness and efficiency through EE training its performance is still lower than the rest of the GCC. In government effectiveness it scored 57 making it the fifth among six governments in the region (World Bank, 2013). Hence, the government continues its efforts to invest in EE and training programs to lift service standards and curtail the heavy bureaucracy that inhibits effective public policy.

UAE

The UAE has invested heavily in training public sector employees in EE programs across the country. Compared to the rest of the GCC states, the UAE provides the highest number of government-funded EE training institutions. Programs and institutions target development of specific skills and competencies. As described in Table 4.3, the Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government (formerly known as the Dubai School of Government) is the main research and training arm that provides EE programs throughout the year for Dubai and the entire UAE. Its programs are customized to specific needs of each government department. The UAE's Government Leaders Program is a federal program that identifies potential leaders in the government sector and trains them in theoretical and practical subjects to become effective leaders. It targets public sector employees of different ranks and provides EE training which focuses on personal, technical, or managerial growth of employees.

The Federal Authority for Government Human Resources also provides EE programs that foster public sector skills. Since January 2014, over 180 training programs have helped more than 84,000 employees by the year end (Dubai Media, 2014).

The EE market in the UAE is growing exponentially because the UAE leaders believe that EE training is a necessity to foster the productivity of government employees to deliver the best possible services to the public.

Apart from these public sector entities, private organizations also play an instrumental role in training government executives in leadership and government management, (Muysken and Nour 2006). Currently, the trend in the UAE's EE market is Smart Government training where 700 government officials are participating. The impact of these programs on service quality can possibly be justified by the top rankings that the UAE has in government effectiveness and knowledge index indicators. Table 4.2 demonstrates that the UAE achieved 83 percent in the World Bank's government effectiveness index in 2012, making it the most effective government in the GCC, and scored 7.09 in the knowledge index, revealing it to be a GCC state with an economic environment conducive to innovation and knowledge. Moreover, the UAE's economy is continuously decreasing its reliance on natural resources, with Dubai's

GDP growth focusing on tourism and services as sources of economic activity.

Leadership EE programs: dominant feature in GCC region

The emerging primary lingua franca term of EE institutions and programs in the GCC is leadership, which permeates the majority of programs offered throughout the entire region. Government entities in the GCC realize that developing the leadership qualities of their employees will be a key factor in triggering positive change within their respective institutions. The emphasis on this type of EE is due to the influence of many political leaders in the natal and growth periods of the GCC states, such as the late UAE founder Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahyan, and the role of the Ruler of Dubai, Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al-Maktoum and his personal leadership skills in creating the Dubai phenomenon. Hence, they have engineered a variety of EE programs that are delivered by public-funded EE institutions, private training companies, or non-governmental agencies. This has created a growing and rather competitive market for leadership EE that has even attracted top business schools to open branches in the region. Furthermore, major global consultancy firms have specialized departments that offer EE leadership programs on leadership theories and practices.

There are many challenges associated with the conceptualization of leadership programs in the region. The lack of a locally defined leadership style encompassing the foundations of Arab culture, religion, and organizational context is an inhibiting factor that impacts effective local leadership EE programs in the GCC region (Abdallah and Al-Homoud, 2001; Jackson and Michie, 2014).

Jackson and Michie (2014) distinguish among numerous leadership styles in Arab countries that are different from countries in North Africa, the Levant, and the Gulf, and they even indicate that there are different leadership models in the GCC states and among the seven emirates comprising the UAE.

Most of the programs for government executives and employees in the Gulf states are based on Western contents and contexts and their relevance to the characteristics of the GCC is limited and frequently questioned by local scholars (Abdallah and Al-Homoud, 2001; Al Dabbagh and Assad, 2010). The programs do not emphasize the necessary distinction between “leader development” and “leadership development” (Gardner, 1993). While leader development aims to empower individuals with technical and hard skills to perform tasks such as financial analysis, policy design, and planning effectively, leadership development prepares individuals in emotional intelligence, communications, interaction, and teamwork.

Independent trainers and EE program managers interviewed for this study expressed concern about the lack of collaboration among different leadership centers and institutions in the region. Even at the national level, lack of a unified national “leadership” or “leader” framework leaves institutions operating in silos and missing valuable opportunities to share knowledge and best practices on program design and delivery. Even different public organizations compete to gain government training contracts and view each other as potential “rivals”.

Another challenge that exists in EE is lack of objective mechanisms to evaluate impact and how government officials deploy the skills learned when they are back in their organizations. The teaching material was originally prepared for Western audiences so theories and exercises address cultural and organizational environments that have little relevance in GCC context (Jackson and Michie, 2014) and so the impact on the behavior of GCC government officials is questionable. When leaders return to their organizations they often find striking differences between what they learned in theory and the reality they have to confront in their organizations.

Conclusion

This study attempted to draw a general picture of the importance of EE in the public sector and its trends, challenges, and opportunities within the context of the GCC. Its main conclusion is that EE programs have been the vehicle that GCC governments hope will be used to exert a transformative influence on the knowledge and behavior of its public sector employees. Since the public sector is still the main driver of development and economic growth, having well-trained and knowledgeable policy makers will have a substantial impact on the effectiveness of the machinery of government, and the private sector as well. This will be enhanced if public managers are trained to improve their people skills.

The dearth of research on EE in the GCC region is alarming. Scholarly research related to content design, pedagogical methods of delivery, motivations of government officials in attending training programs, and impact on participants’ behavior are lacking. In spite of the significant resources that GCC states invest in EE programs, the rates of return are unknown and this uncovers a critical need for objective assessment of programs and the impact on the employees in their organizations.

The GCC has a vibrant EE market and the need to nurture the competencies of public sector employees is significant and will continue to grow and countries will pursue increasing investment in human capital spending. But disparities are abundant. While some governments in the region, such as Dubai, are training government employees in programs like Smart Government, others states are still working on basic management skills of employees. Collaborations between the states nationally and globally

can increase benefits. And objective assessment mechanisms to measure EE impact are essential before increasing and targeting investment.

Note

1. <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/un/unpan002594~1.pdf>

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