





Educational governance and challenges to universities in the Arabian Gulf region

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ABSTRACT

Higher education institutions in the Arabian Gulf region today, which have mushroomed and proliferated in the past ten to fifteen years, have been constructing themselves along models of Western universities at the levels of governance, programs, and structure. At the outset of the twenty-first century, universities have globally experienced a drastic shift in their governance from 'republics of scholars' to stakeholder organizations. In this paper, we discuss and deconstruct some of the consequences of that drastic shift, paramount among which is the downsizing and neglect of some sciences/fields. We discuss some of the major problems that the Market Model of the University is facing in the West through a literature review. We also explore the academic view on some problems and challenges facing University governance today in the globe at large and specifically in the Arabian Gulf Region. We believe that universities in this region in their present state face the serious challenge of generating *indigenous knowledge* that fulfills the needs of citizens within this region, knowledge that draws upon the culture, history, and geography of the area and responds to the specific needs of citizens in this area.

KEYWORDS

Critical thinking; academic freedom; universities in the GCC; stakeholder organization; university governance; quality assurance