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Human resource development in Gulf countries: an analysis of the trends and challenges facing Saudi Arabia

Mustapha M. Achoui

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Abstract

The objective of this study is to highlight the challenges of human capital development in the Gulf Arab countries in general and in Saudi Arabia in particular. A literature review and an analysis of the Saudi government's formal documents show that Saudi Arabia is facing several challenges in its economy system and human resource development (HRD) programmes. The main challenges are: high dependence on oil and the petrochemical industry; high dependence on foreign labour; a low rate of female participation in employment; and a weak link between educational system output and the needs of the economic sectors, especially those of the private sector, which requires skilled and professional labour. Recent studies related to HRD programmes in the private sector especially in small and medium size companies (SMEs) show that these programmes are not developed structurally or functionally. However, the case is

different in large government and private companies. As illustration of human capital development in these large companies, two cases are presented in this study.

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