Qatar Youth Survey

Gender, Education, and Employment Transitions in Qatar:
Implementing the First Survey of Qatari Youth

Executive Summary, Wave 1

December 2022

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The Social and Economic Survey Research Institute (SESRI), a social scientific survey research initiative of Qatar University, was established in October 2008 with enthusiastic support from the leadership of Qatar University. SESRI's mission is to provide sound and reliable data to guide policy formulation, priority-setting, and evidence-based planning in the social and economic sectors.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarizes the top-line findings from the first nationally representative study "Gender, Education, and Employment Transitions in Qatar: Implementing the First Survey of Qatari Youth (QYS)" of young people in Qatar (ages 18–29). The QYS seeks to capture youth attitudes toward multitudinous issues, especially those regarding the educational, professional, and social transitions in the lives of young Qataris. This first wave of the survey was conducted in April and May 2022 through a representative telephone poll conducted by the Social and Economic Survey Research Institute (SESRI) at Qatar University. A total of 1,989 Qatari youth were interviewed for the survey. A follow-up survey will consider attitudes and outcomes for the same individuals in 2023. Understanding more about the challenges and opportunities associated with young adulthood in Qatar generates basic knowledge that yields insights into the youth experience and how public sector efforts in Qatar might be targeted to assist these critical transitions. The data are intended to inform decision makers, and the academic community about the necessary measures to develop youth policies based on the Qatari youth experience. The life transitions of youth are among the most important and challenging aspects of the human experience. During these years, young men and women alike take important decisions concerning their educational and professional lives of which is marriage and new family establishment.

Key findings include the following:

- Younger survey respondents (18 to 24 years old) exhibit slightly different experiences compared to the older youth's experience (25 to 29 years old). Regarding their educational experience and academic paths choices, Younger youth are more likely to choose their favored majors than older youth. Family responsibilities also act as a more significant obstacle for older youths than younger ones in pursuing their education.

- Family-selected career paths play a significant role in youths' career choices: 59% of males chose a major to follow a family-selected career path, while 57% of females did so.

- Kawader Platform – the online employment platform for Qatari nationals under the Civil Services and Governmental Development Bureau – facilitates job search and matching according to qualifications. 48% of the Qatari respondents were satisfied with the Kawader National E-Recruitment Portal.

- There were some differences in attitudes between male and female respondents. Male respondents, for example, indicate they hope to have more children in the future than their female counterparts. In addition, more female than male youth believed that working women should contribute to family expenses. In terms of marriage patterns, younger respondents had more arranged marriages than older respondents.

- Most respondents (60%) believed that a lack of time due to work and family commitments was the main barrier that explains why youths in Qatar are not involved in volunteering or civic activities.

- The most serious concerns held by respondents regarding mental health related to financial issues (92%), job-related issues (91%), and coping with stress (91%). Respondents agreed that personal willingness to recover (99%), the support of family (98%) and friends (95%), and a stable lifestyle (95%), were the most important factors that could help people with mental health issues to recover.

SECTION 1

Demographic Characteristics

SECTION 1: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

An overview of the respondents' personal and social characteristics is presented in this section to provide a better understanding of their demographics. A total of 1,989 Qatari youth were interviewed for the survey.

Gender and Age of Respondents

Most of the Qatari youths who responded were aged 18 to 24 (58%), and 42% were aged 25 to 30. The percentages of male and female respondents were equal (see Figures 1 and 2).

Figure 1: Distribution of respondents by age group   **Figure 2: Distribution of respondents by gender**
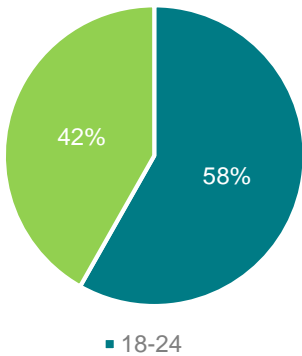
42% 58%

■ 18-24

50% 50%

■ Male ■ Female
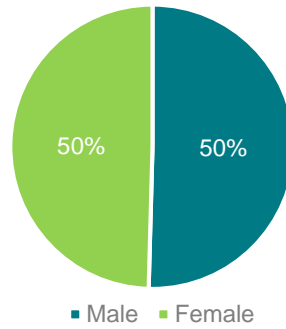
Marital Status

Three-quarters of the Qatari youths had never married, 23% were currently married, and only a few had been previously married (2%). The percentage of those who had never married was higher for males (78%) than for females (71%). Additionally, the percentage of married females (27%) was higher than that of married males (20%) (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Distribution of respondents by marital status

78% 71% 20% 27% 2% 2%

Never married   Married   Previously married

■ Male ■ Female
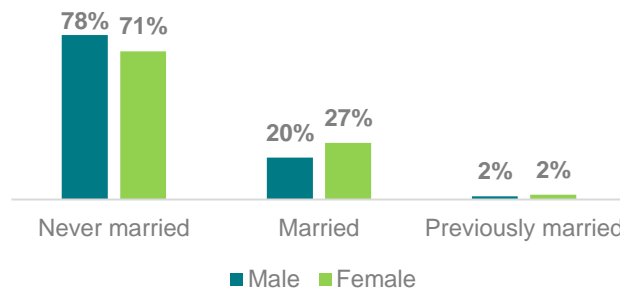
Respondents' Educational Level

The respondents were asked about their current education level. The majority had a secondary degree or less (65%), while 35% had a diploma or higher (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Distribution of respondents by education status

35% 65%

■ Secondary or lower ■ Diploma or higher
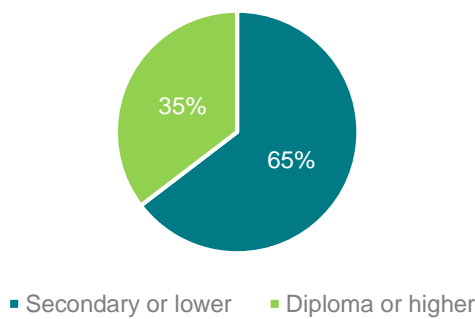
Respondents' Employment Status

A high proportion of the respondents were either employed (45%) or students (42%); only a small number were unemployed (13%). The findings show that most of the males were employed (60% vs. 29%), whereas most of the females were students (53% vs. 32%). Additionally, females had a higher unemployment rate than males (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: Respondents' employment status by gender

■ Male ■ Female

60% 29% 32% 53% 9% 18%

Employed   Student   Unemployed
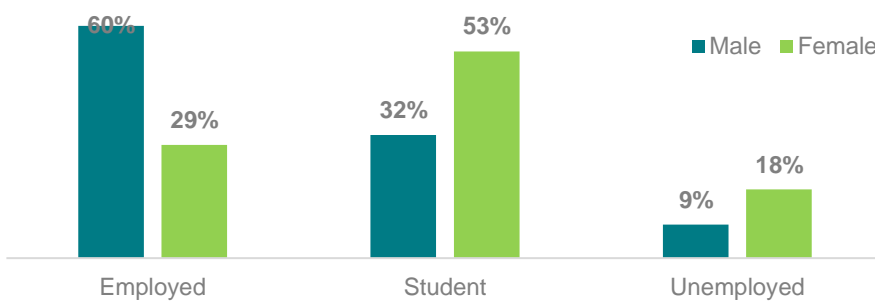
Income level

The employed youths were asked about their monthly income. The results show that more than half of the respondents earned less than 50K QR (58%), while more than two-fifths earned more than 50K QR (42%) (see Figure 6).

Figure 6: Distribution of respondents by income status

- Less than QR 50,000
- QR 50,000 or more
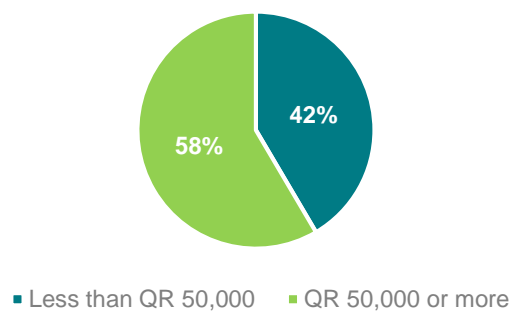
SECTION 2

Educational Experience

SECTION 2: EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Intensive investment in human capital development is an essential prerequisite for sustaining a high standard of living in today's knowledge-based economy, and it is a pillar of Qatar National Vision 2030. With the transition from a comprehensive compulsory education (from secondary education, to the university stage), exploring Qatari youths' perspectives about their educational experience provides better insight into the challenges that Qatari youth face. To what extent are Qatari youths satisfied with their higher educational experience? This section presents the survey results related to the educational experiences of young people, their choices regarding universities and academic majors, and the challenges they face during university education.

Educational Choices: Types of Universities and Colleges

The results show that the majority of females (80%) attended a public university (Qatar University), whereas the male respondents reported more diverse university or college choices; 40% of the latter attended a public university (Qatar University), and 29% attended a private university (e.g., Qatar Foundation, Lusail University, University of Doha for Sciences and Technology). Moreover, the male respondents reported higher college attendance rates than female respondents at some institutions (e.g., Community College, Qatar Aeronautical Academy, Police Academy, etc.).

Educational Choices: Academic Discipline

Choosing the right academic path is a major challenge for college students, as it impacts their future careers. Some youths reported that they could not pursue their preferred major field of study. In particular, s several majors have entry requirements that can be difficult for students to meet. About 89% of the respondents indicated that they could get into their major of choice, while 11% said that they could not. More specifically, this finding was significant among youths of different age groups: 95% of younger youths could study the major they preferred, while 87% of older youths could study their preferred major (see Figure 7).

Figure 7: Choosing preferred academic discipline by age group
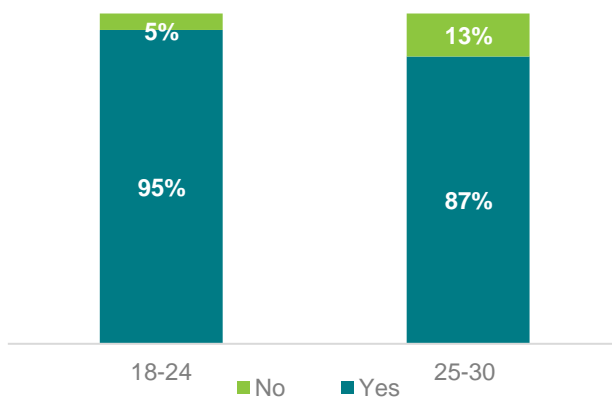
Obstacles in Choosing an Academic Discipline

The respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with a set of reasons for choosing a major other than the one they intended to select for university or college: (1) failure to meet admission requirements for majors, (2) professional and career prospects of the desired major, and (3) the extent of family support for choosing the desired major.

Table 1: Obstacles in choosing a preferred academic discipline by gender

Statements	Agree		Disagree	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
1. The entry requirements were too difficult.	39%	37%	61%	63%
2. You did not meet the English requirements of the major.	21%	9%	79%	91%
3. You did not meet the mathematical requirements of the major.	19%	20%	81%	80%
4. Your family did not support your choice of major.	11%	16%	88%	84%
5. The job opportunities related to the major are not promising.	34%	40%	66%	60%
6. Your choice of major requires more than four years of studying.	46%	39%	54%	61%
7. Your preferred major was not available at the university you attended.	53%	61%	47%	39%
8. You selected a major to follow your family's educational or career path.	59%	57%	41%	43%

- ▪ ***Entry Requirements:*** Table 1 shows that about 38% of respondents agreed that entry requirements were difficult, whereas 61% of the respondents disagreed. In particular, young males showed more agreement with the statement. The second statement was about English requirements being an obstacle, with which 84% of the respondents disagreed. Similarly, 80% of the respondents disagreed with mathematical requirements posing an obstacle. While 45% of the respondents attested that their major of choice required more than four years of study and that therefore they did not pursue it. Availability of the desired major at the university attended hindered 56% of the respondents from studying their major of choice.

- **Career Potentials:** Job opportunities are taken into consideration when making educational choices: 37% of the respondents said that they did not pursue their major of choice due to a lack of future prospects.
- **Family Support:** family support plays an essential role in youths' educational choices; the respondents were asked whether a lack of family support played a role in their inability to pursue their major of choice: 86% of the respondents disagreed. On the other hand, a large number of respondents (58%) chose to pursue a major that allowed them to follow their family's desired educational and/or career choice over pursuing their most preferred major.

Educational Retention

Students sometimes face difficulties during their studies that impel them to leave their university/college, including academic issues, financial and transportation difficulties, family responsibilities, lack of school or family support, and physical and mental health concerns. Overall, the findings show that 89% of the respondents did not leave a university or college.

Figure 8: Continuation rates of university education

- Did not leave - Left university
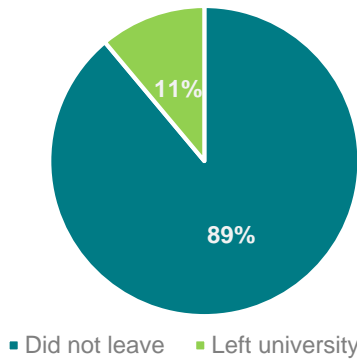
To further understand the reasons for students' educational journeys coming to a halt, the youth respondents were asked to specify these reasons. The most reported reason that respondents had to leave university was an academic difficulty, followed by family responsibilities.

Engagement in Extracurricular Activities

Extracurricular activities can provide a great way to enrich students' experience and allow them to explore their interests. To further understand their engagement in extracurricular activities, the respondents were given a list of extracurricular activities and asked to report the extent to which they engaged in any of the listed activities during their time at university or college. The most reported activity was internships, with 14% of the respondents always engaging in internships. It should be noted that there is less engagement in internships among young women than among young men (see Figure 9). The second-most reported activity that the youths engaged in was volunteering, with 18% of the respondents often doing so. Sporting activities came in third as the most engaged-in extracurricular activity, with young males reporting higher engagement compared to young females; 78% of the latter group reported never participating in sporting activities. Overall, 70% of the respondents reported never participating in student council activities. Theatre was the activity the respondents took part in the least, with 85% of the respondents reporting never having participated in theatre during their time at university/college.

Figure 9: Participation rates in internships by gender

- Always - Often - Seldom - Never
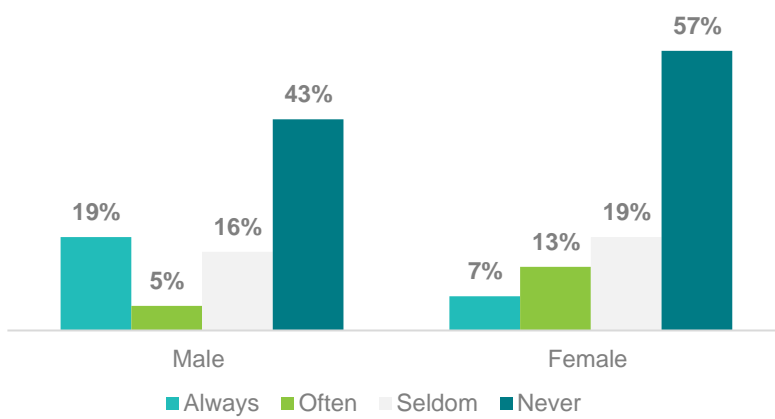
SECTION 3

Labor Market Opportunities

SECTION 3: LABOR MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

The youth of today represent a vast potential for inclusive growth and development. If youths are given the opportunity to build appropriate skills and access decent employment, they can help to accelerate progress on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and engage in meaningful work that benefits them, their families, and society as a whole. Therefore, understanding how to improve their labor market outcomes is a developmental priority for Qatar. How do Qatari youths feel about their situation with regard to the labor market? This section presents our results for the respondents' employment transitions, jobs, and youth professional aspirations; how to maintain balance between job and life's duties and stances towards female labor force participation.

Work Sectors and Occupations

Regarding the labor market sector in which the Qatari youths worked, the majority of the respondents were working in the public government sector (86%) or the semi-public government sector (9%), with only 5% working in the private sector. The findings indicate a statistically significant relationship between sector type and age group. The results show that 92% of the respondents in the 18–24 age group were working in the public government sector compared to 83% of those in the 25–30 age group (see Figure 10). Regarding occupations and work type, most of the respondents (39%) worked as clerks (e.g., secretaries, cashiers, or office assistants), with statistically significant differences for the 25–30 age group (43%) and by gender (female 65%, male 31%). The second-most chosen occupation for the respondents was working as member of armed forces or the police (30%).

Figure 10: Labor market sector by age group

	Private sector	Semi-public / government sector	Public government sector
■ 25-30 years	6%	11%	83%
■ 18-24 years	4%	4%	92%
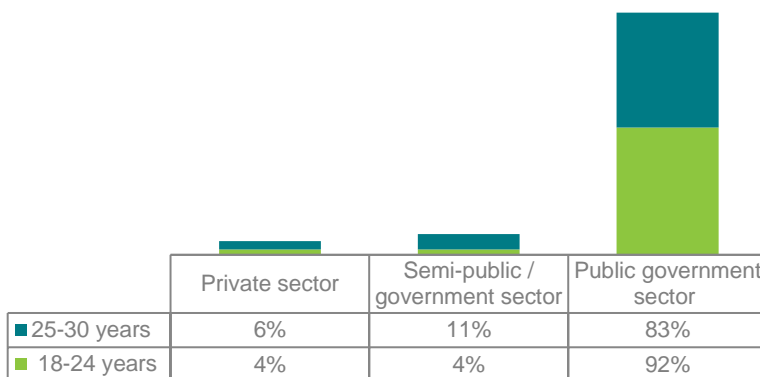
Work Settings

When asked, "Do you work in an office where men and women work together?" more than half of the respondents (56%) said no compared to (44%) who said yes (see **Error! Reference source not found.**). In terms of age groups, 65% of the respondents aged 18–24 said no. According to gender, 64% of males said no, whereas 59% of females indicated that they worked in a mixed-gender environment.

Figure 11: Work settings
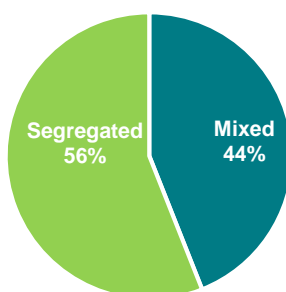
Work Experiences

Overall, the findings show that the young Qatari respondents had worked an average of between two and five years (45%). While 27% of the respondents had worked for six years or more, just 28% had worked for one year or less (see **Error! Not a valid bookmark self-reference.**2). Among the respondents with an average age of 25–30 years, the results show that 46% had between two and five years of job experience.

Figure 12: Total number of work experience years
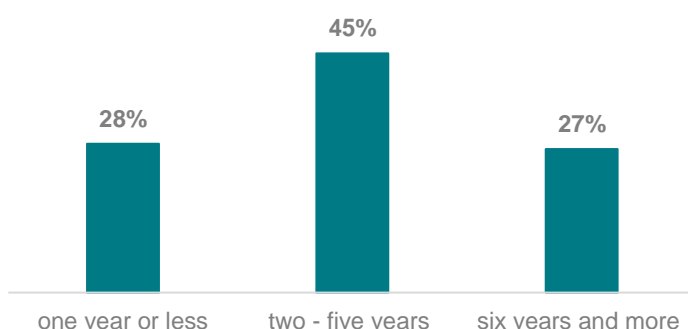
Challenges Facing Qatari Youth in the Labour Market

A set of statements were presented to the respondents about the challenges facing Qatari youths in employment which include the following: shortage of job opportunities, job requirements, job offers and salaries, challenges in private sector employment, women in leadership roles, and work-family conflicts.

Youth Employment: Table 2 shows that the three key challenges to youth employment are as follows:

- English language requirements (91%);
- Existence of personal connections or "favoritism" issue (84%);
- Nature of work demands in government with routine activities (81%).

Table 2: Challenges facing Qatari youth in the labor market

	Statements	Agree	Disagree
1.	Existing companies prefer foreign talent over local talent.	70%	30%
2.	Jobs require new graduates to have work experience immediately upon graduation.	77%	23%
3.	There is a shortage of job opportunities.	76%	24%
4.	Qatari youth are required to have good English language skills.	91%	9%
5.	There is a mismatch between educational backgrounds and job skill requirements.	65%	35%
6.	Salaries in government organizations are lower than those in the private sector.	75%	25%
7.	Government jobs are less demanding and deal with routine activities.	81%	19%
8.	Recruitment in the private sector is more difficult than recruitment in the public sector.	68%	32%
9.	Benefits and leaves are more guaranteed in the public sector than in the private sector.	79%	21%
10.	Much attention is given to personal connections or " favoritism."	84%	16%

Female Labor force participation (FLFP): The respondents were asked about the main obstacles associated with Qatari women working in mixed-gender workplaces with both men and women. The findings indicate the statistical significance of gender, as shown in Table 3. The three main obstacles facing Qatari women in mixed-gender workplaces are as follows:

- Mixed-gender workplaces undermine Qatari culture and traditions (35%);
- Mixed-gender workplaces create marital problems (21%);
- Mixed-gender workplaces positions usually have longer working hours (21%);
- Mixed-gender workplaces are contrary to Islamic principles (20%).

Table 3: Obstacles facing women in mixed-gender workplaces

	Statements	All respondent	Male	Female
1.	It undermines Qatari culture and traditions	35%	35%	35%
2.	It creates marital problems	21%	23%	19%
3.	These positions usually have longer working hours	21%	15%	26%
4.	It is contrary to Islamic principles	20%	25%	16%
5.	It harms the woman's reputation	3%	2%	4%

The respondents were also asked about their perceptions of women in leadership roles and political positions. Unsurprisingly, the data in Table 4 shows a significantly greater preference for male bosses. Around 72% of the respondents agreed that they preferred their boss at work to be a man rather than a woman. Older respondents (76%) were more likely to prefer a male boss in comparison to 70% of the younger respondents who did not mind having either. When asked whether men are naturally better leaders than women, 65% (77% males and 52% females) of respondents agreed, and 58%   would vote for men than women in political positions. Although there is still a wide range of opinions on women in leadership, 84% of the respondents agreed that the state seeks to empower Qatari women into leadership and political positions.

Table 4: Perceptions of women in leadership roles

	Statements	Agree	Disagree
1.	In general, I prefer my boss at work to be a man rather than a woman	73%	28%
2.	When it comes to politics, I would vote for men than women	58%	42%
3.	Men are naturally better at leadership than women	65%	35%
4.	The state seeks to empower Qatari women into leadership roles	84%	16%

Work-Family conflicts: sustaining a balance between family and work is often challenging for employees. Prior research has found that various stressors, such as balancing work and family life, long working hours, stressful duties, parental responsibilities, vacations, family obligations, childcare, commitment to work, gender equality, maternity and paternity leave, coping strategies, and resources available were found to affect family cohesion in Qatari society.[1] The respondents were asked to indicate if they faced these challenges based on a 12-item work-life balance scale. According to the results presented in **Error! Reference source not found.**, 75% of the Qatari youths indicated that the nature of their work required always being physically present at the workplace, and heavy workloads create another challenge for employees (32%).

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[1] Abdelmoneium, A., Badahdah, A., & Brik, A. (2018, March). Exploring the challenges of work-family balance among Qatari families: Experiences and implications. In *Qatar Foundation annual research conference proceedings* (Vol. 2018, No. 4, p. SSAHPP453). Hamad bin Khalifa University Press (HBKU Press).

Table 5: Challenges in balancing work-family responsibilities

| Statements	Always	Often	Seldom	Never
1. Lack of co-worker support	6%	15%	31%	48%
2. Lack of supervisor support	8%	11%	25%	56%
3. Inflexible work deadlines	11%	16%	25%	48%
4. Lack of flexibility where work is completed	35%	11%	13%	41%
5. Lack of dependent care services	30%	6%	11%	53%
6. Lack of work leave	18%	20%	23%	39%
7. Lack of part-time or reduced-hour programs	32%	12%	19%	36%
8. The work requires me to be physically present at the workplace	75%	13%	4%	8%
9. Meetings outside of official working hours	9%	17%	30%	44%
10. Training official working hours	11%	20%	28%	41%
11. Heavy workload	17%	25%	32%	26%
12. Long working hours	25%	21%	23%	31%

The National E-Recruitment Portal: Kawader Platform

Qatar National Vision 2030 seeks to transform the country into a knowledge-based economy[2] (GSDP, 2008). To achieve this goal, the ictQatar strategy[3] was developed to support ICT infrastructure to position Qatar as a leading country in the knowledge economy. As a result of such efforts, several government organizations, such as the Ministry of Labor, continued the implementation of their digitization strategies as part of Qatar's E-Government 2020 objectives. Kawader is an online platform that offers access to services and online job search resources in the government and private sectors through multiple electronic service channels quickly and simply.

Usage of Kawader Platform

Figure 13 shows the frequency of usage of the Kawader platform by the Qatari youths. According to this figure, around three-fourths of the respondents (74%) had not used the Kawader platform to search for a job, 22% had used it, and only 4% had not heard of it. The findings show that 80% of males had not used the platform compared to 68% of females. Younger respondents (aged 18–24) had not used the platform as much as those in the 25–30 age group (77% and 70%, respectively).

Figure 13 : Usage rates of Kawader platform
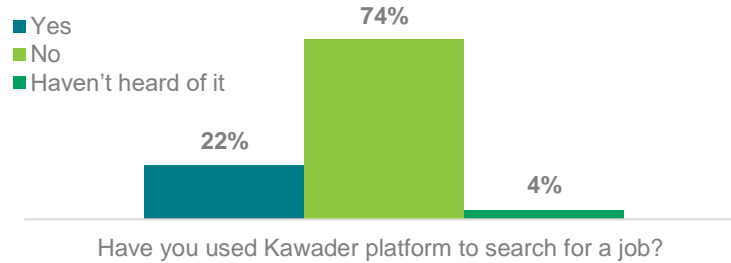
Satisfaction with using Kawader platform

Kawader platform users were asked to rate their level of satisfaction when applying for available jobs on the platform. **Error! Not a valid bookmark self-reference.** shows that among the respondents who had used the platform, 48% were very satisfied or somewhat satisfied, whereas 52% were somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

Figure 14 : Satisfaction with using Kawader platform
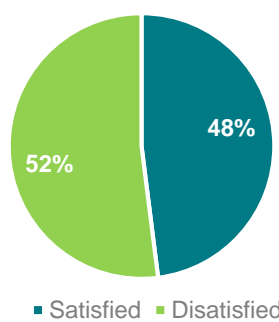
Difficulties in using Kawader platform

The respondents were asked about a number of challenges they may have encountered when applying for jobs through the Kawader platform as shown in **Error! Reference source not found.**. Around 65% (females, 73%; males, 51%) reported that the available job options are always limited, while 48% (females, 54%; males, 37%) said that the available jobs did not match their educational background, and 32% reported that most of the offered jobs required experience that they did not have. Over half (62%) reported that responding to a job application always took a long time, and 36% (females, 41%; males, 47%) reported that their job applications were always rejected for no apparent reason, while 22% reported encountering technical errors associated with the platform.

Table 6: Difficulties in using Kawader Platform

Statements	Always True	Sometimes True	Rarely True	Never True
1. Most of the jobs offered required experience I did not have	32%	40%	15%	13%
2. The available job options are limited	65%	23%	6%	6%

[2] Qatar, G. S. D. P. (2008). Qatar national vision 2030. Doha, General Secretariat for Development.
[3] ictQatar (2014). Qatar E-Government 2020 Strategy. Ministry of Information and Communications Technology. Qatar.

3.	The available jobs do not match my educational background	48%	30%	8%	14%
4.	Responding to a job application takes a long time	62%	19%	6%	13%
5.	There is a technical error associated with the platform	22%	24%	12%	42%
6.	My job application was rejected for no apparent reason	36%	14%	6%	44%

SECTION 4

Marriage Patterns and Family Formation

SECTION 4: MARRIAGE PATTERNS AND FAMILY FORMATION

Given recent social and economic developments in Qatar, this section aims to provide an understanding of how Qatari youth perceive marriage and family formation. Recent statistical findings have highlighted the increased marital age, the decreased number of children in households, and the surging divorce rate in Qatar. This section gives policy-makers insight into young people's perceptions of the causes and consequences of the aforementioned developments so as to inform family policies in matters related to marriage patterns, raising children, and attitudes toward gender roles.

Marriage Patterns and Marital Relationships

Traditional marriage practices still obtain in Qatari society along with other preferences for the continuation of extended families, the appropriate age for marriage, and the number and type of children.

Average age of marriage: The average age for entering into a marriage contract for both male and female respondents was 22 years of age. However, the ideal age of marriage for women and men was 20 and 25 years old, respectively.

Marriage Patterns: Parents play a major role in choosing a life partner (husband or wife) for their children. In addition, tribe, social class, age, employment status, and educational level are primary predictive factors of partner selection. The respondents were asked how they chose their life partner. The majority of the respondents, including 82% of males and 91% of females, had an arranged marriage (see Figure 15), while only 12% of all respondents did not have an arranged marriage. In general, the marriages of younger respondents (18-24) were non-traditional (42%), in contrast to older respondents (25-29) years (39%).

Figure 15: Marriage patterns among Qatari youths
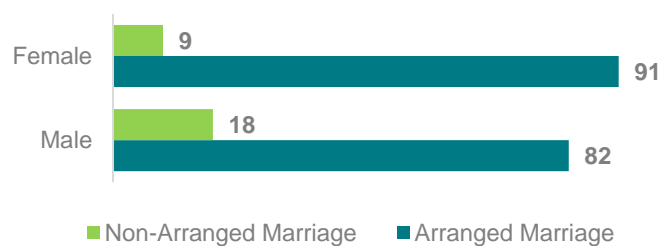
Marital Relationships: Several factors contribute to the success of the marital relationship, including mutual respect, understanding, and the ability to solve marital problems. The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the notion that it is the man's responsibility to provide for the living expenses of the family. Around 91% of the respondents agreed that a man is financially responsible for his wife and female relatives, although more male respondents (95%) than female respondents (87%) agreed with this statement. On the other hand, 65% of the respondents agreed that working women should contribute to family expenses. More females (71%) agreed that working women should contribute to family expenses, compared to 58% of male respondents.

Transition to Fatherhood and Childcare

The social changes in society gave rise to a new societal model based on individuality and the nuclear family, as the modern family preferred to have only two children, and having children was associated with high care costs in terms of education and living requirements, visiting amusement parks, private lessons, and trips.

Average number of children: Overall, 71% of the respondents had fewer than three children. Of the younger respondents (18–24), 12% had three and more children, in comparison to 32% of the older respondents (24–30). When asked about their ideal number of children, 53% of the respondents wanted 5–9 children. In general, women wanted fewer children than men, as 45 % of women expressed the desire for fewer than five children versus only 30% of men. Similarly, 16% of the male respondents wanted 10 or more children, whereas only 2% of the female respondents agreed with this statement (see Figure 16).

Figure 16: Perceived ideal number of children
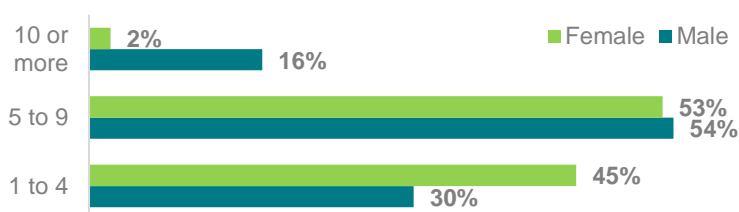
Childcare: the respondents were asked about their satisfaction with their spouse's involvement in different factors related to parenting including bathing, changing, putting children to bed, playing, reading, and dinnertime. Overall, 95% of the respondents were satisfied with their spouse's involvement with raising the children.

SECTION 5
Civic Engagement and Community Volunteering

SECTION 5: CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERING

The involvement of young people in their communities is essential to building a cohesive society. Civic participation and volunteer work have many benefits, but a number of challenges hinder young people from actively participating in society. This section presents some of the reasons that contribute to the reluctance of young people to participate in civic activities and volunteer work.

To evaluate the Qatari youths' engagement in civic activities, the respondents were asked to respond to a number of statements. The results show that the majority of the respondents had never been involved in any youth activity: 57% had never become a member of any club, association, or committee; 54% had never voted in elections for the Qatar Central Municipal Council; 43% had never voted in elections for the Qatar Shura Council; and 37% had never volunteered for an event, charity, or association (see Figure 17).

Figure 17: Engagement level of Qatari youths in civic activities

	Always	Usually	About half the time	Seldom	Never
Volunteering for an event, charity, or association	12%	19%	7%	26%	37%
Becoming a member of a club, association, or committee	5%	11%	6%	21%	57%
Voting in elections for the Qatar Shura Council	23%	12%	3%	19%	43%
Voting in elections for the Qatar Central Municipal Council	13%	12%	3%	19%	54%
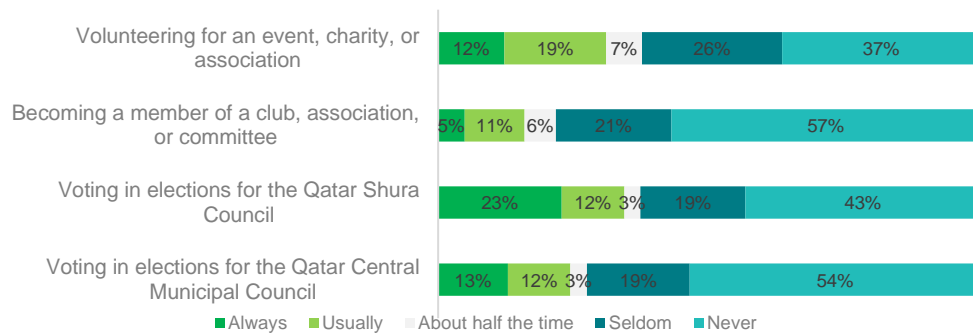
Reasons for not participating in civic activities

To understand the reasons that youths in Qatar are not involved in volunteering or civic activities, several reasons were included for their reaction (see Table 7). The majority of the respondents (60%) believed that lack of time due to work and family commitments was the main barrier. More than half (51%) believed that a lack of information about opportunities for volunteering and participation and a lack of communication channels between Qatari youths and the authorities were the primary barriers. However, the lack of financial rewards for these activities was not considered a barrier (61%).

Table 2: Reasons for not participating in volunteering or civic activities

	Statements	Not a barrier	Extreme barrier
1.	Lack of time due to work and family commitments	40%	60%
2.	Lack of information about opportunities for volunteering and participation	49%	51%
3.	Lack of a communication channels between Qatari youth and the authorities	49%	51%
4.	Lack of financial rewards for these activities	62%	39%

Political Participation

The respondents were also asked about their interest in political candidacy: 64% responded that they were very likely to run for political post in the future. In terms of gender, a significantly higher number of male (67%) respondents were likely to run for a political post in the future than females (60%).

Attitudes towards Social Values

The respondents were given a list of statements to evaluate their attitudes toward social values. A high proportion of the participants considered that family relationships (99%), financial stability (99%), friendships (94%), job security (99%), physical and mental health (99.5%), and school/study satisfaction (97%) were important values (see Figure 18).

Figure 18: Attitudes toward social values

Family relationships	Financial stability	Friendships	Job security	Physical and mental health	School or study satisfaction
99%	99%	94%	99%	100%	97%
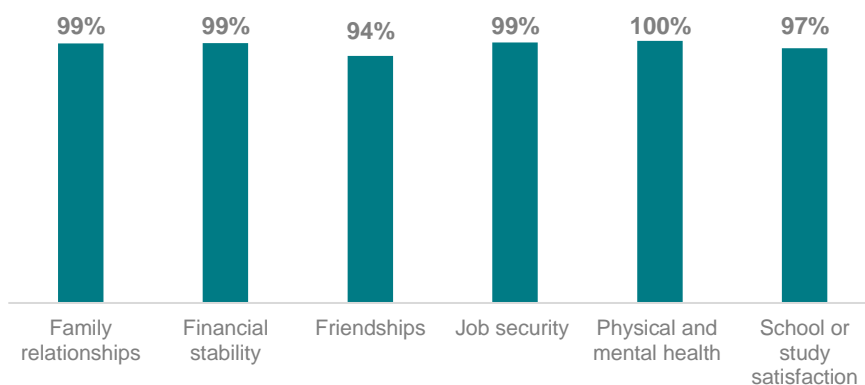
The respondents were asked how they evaluated themselves in terms of traditions and social norms. Approximately four-fifths considered themselves conservative, while more than a fifth of the Qatari youths considered themselves liberal. They were also asked how they evaluated themselves in terms of being religious. There were only 2% who perceived themselves as less religious, whereas 98% saw themselves as more religious. Furthermore, another statement was proposed to the respondents to measure their level of positive feelings toward the future. A large number (96%) reported feeling positive toward their future.

SECTION 6

Mental Health

SECTION 6: MENTAL HEALTH

Quality of life includes "physical well-being, material well-being, social well-being, emotional well-being, and development and activity."[4] Thus, in this section, the respondents were asked various questions representing multidimensional factors to measure their perceptions of their quality of life in relation to their physical and mental health.

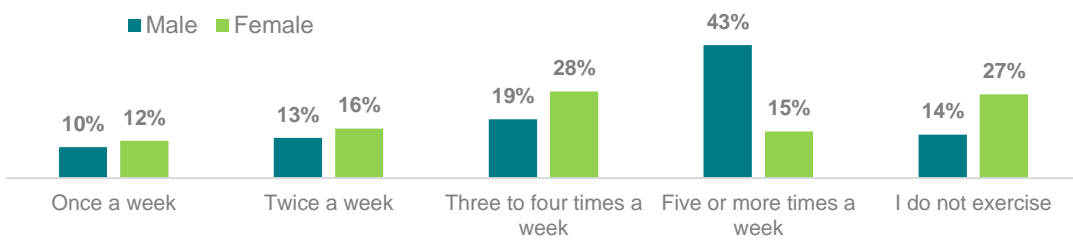### Physical health issues

The first question was about how often they exercised in a typical week. The findings showed that 30% of the respondents exercised five or more days a week, while 21% of the respondents reported that they did not exercise at all; 45% of them reported that the reason for not engaging in exercise was lack of time, while 29% said they lacked any interest in exercising. There was a significant gender difference regarding the number of days they exercised every week. The majority of males reported usually exercising five or more times a week (43%); however, the results for the majority of females were divided between exercising three to four times a week (28%) and not exercising at all (27%) (see Figure 19).

Figure 19: Number of exercise days in a typical week by gender

Mental health issues

Understanding mental health and its impacts on a person's well-being could be an important factor in achieving a good quality of life. Thus, the respondents were asked about their own level of mental health on a four-item scale of "very good," "good," "fair," or "poor." Most of them chose "very good" (57%), 12% "fair," and only 3% opted for "poor" (see Figure 20).

Figure 20: Mental health rating levels
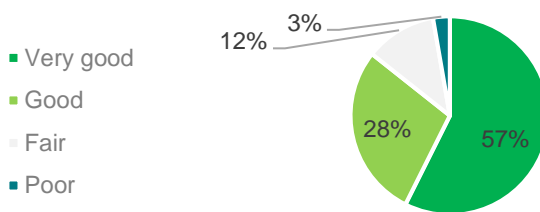
Impacts of social issues on mental health

Various factors could play an important role in causing mental health issues. The respondents were asked to rate their level of concern regarding various societal factors (see Table 8). The causes that the respondents were most concerned about were financial instability (92%), job-related issues (91%), and coping with stress (91%). In contrast, the factors that they were not concerned about were depression (25%), social media (22%), and bullying or emotional abuse (19%).

Table 3: Level of concerns due to social issues

	Statements	Concerned	Not concerned
1.	Family Conflict	86%	14%
2.	Coping with stress	91%	9%
3.	School or study problems	85%	15%
4.	Body image	88%	12%
5.	Job-related issues	91%	9%
6.	Depression	75%	25%
7.	Bullying or emotional abuse	81%	19%
8.	Discrimination	84%	16%
9.	Lack of family support	90%	10%
10.	Financial instability	92%	8%
11.	Social Media	78%	22%

Figure 21 presents the factors that exhibit a significant gender difference. It seems that females were more concerned than males about all the issues above including financial instability (94%), followed by coping with stress (93%) and lack of family support (92%). The difference between females and males is most evident in emotional issues such as depression (84% and 66%, respectively), bullying or emotional abuse (88% and 73%, respectively), and discrimination (89% and 78%, respectively).

Figure 21: Level of concern by gender

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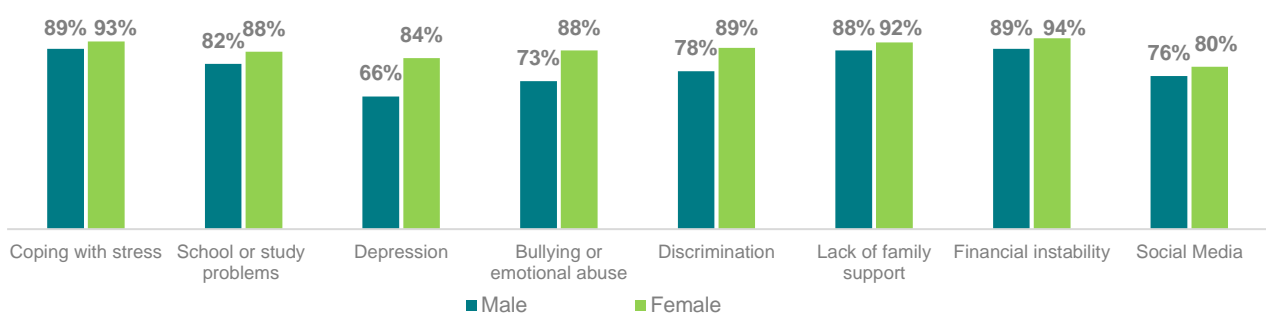
[4] Felce, D., & Perry, J. (1995). Quality of life: Its definition and measurement. *Research in Developmental Disabilities*, *16*(1), 51–74.

Perceptions of Mental Health

The respondents were asked to evaluate their level of agreement with six statements related to general perceptions of mental health issues. Interestingly, there was a significant gender difference for all the statements (see Table 9) as follows:

- A greater majority of females (89%) than of males (77%) agreed that depression is the most common mental health issue.
- More females (85%) than males (73%) agreed that most people look down on individuals who visit a counselor.
- More females (86%) than males (78%) agreed that most employers do not hire individuals with emotional or behavioral problems.
- More females (62%) than males (56%) did not know where to seek mental health help.
- Most females (62%) agreed that there are not enough mental health services in Qatar; in contrast, the majority of males disagreed (55%).
- More females (96%) than males (89%) agreed that institutions should have mental health services for youths.

Table 4: Perceptions of mental health issues by gender

Statements		Male	Female
1. There are not enough mental health services in Qatar.	Agree	45%	62%
	Disagree	55%	38%
2. You do not know where to go if you want to seek help for mental health issues.	Agree	56%	62%
	Disagree	44%	38%
3. Institutions should have mental health services for youth.	Agree	89%	96%
	Disagree	11%	4%
4. Most people look down on individuals who visit a counselor.	Agree	74%	85%
	Disagree	26%	15%
5. Most employers do not hire individuals with emotional or behavioral problems.	Agree	78%	85%
	Disagree	22%	15%
6. Depression is the most common mental health issue in young adults living in your community.	Agree	77%	89%
	Disagree	23%	11%

Recovering from Mental Health Problems

People suffering from a mental health issue can recover with the help of various factors with seeking help and advice. Generally, the respondents seemed to be a consensus that recovery comes first from within and then can be enhanced with the support of family, having a stable lifestyle, and the support of friends (see Table 10). The factors that the respondents agreed with as the most helping people with mental health issues to recover are as follows: personal willingness to get well (99%), support of family (98%), a stable lifestyle (95%) and the support of friends (95%).

Table 5: Recovering from mental health problems

Factors	Agree	Disagree
1. Stable lifestyle	95%	5%
2. Support of family	98%	2%
3. Support of friends	95%	5%
4. Medication	56%	44%
5. Counseling/therapy	93%	7%
6. Personal willingness to get well	99%	1%

Information advice, or support can be obtained from several people or sources simply by asking. The three sources that the respondents were most comfortable with were friends (85%), relatives (81%), and a community agency (64%). In contrast, they were least comfortable using magazines as a source to get information (78%) (see Table 11). A difference was found between age groups related to community agencies and friends. The younger age group was more comfortable asking for information, advice, or support from community agencies and friends (66% and 87% respectively) compared to older age groups (61% and 82%, respectively). In contrast, males (87%) were more comfortable asking relatives for information, support, or advice than females (75%).

Table 11: Level of comfort in asking for mental health support

Sources	Comfortable	Not comfortable
1. Community agency	64%	36%
2. Friends	85%	15%
3. Internet	59%	41%
4. Magazines	21%	79%
5. Relatives	81%	19%
6. School counsellor	56%	44%
7. Teacher	62%	38%
8. Telephone hotline	51%	49%

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings suggest some preliminary policy recommendations:

- Provide students with additional training in math and English – perhaps during the summer term – that would allow students to meet requirements for their preferred majors at colleges and universities.
- Expand the range of majors offered at colleges and universities.
- Promote the availability of career resources and guidance, including information about job prospects, salary, and other relevant details.
- Increase the opportunities for jobs that match students' educational background and reduce the need for connections to secure those jobs.
- Expand the number and diversity of job options available on Kawader platform, with an eye to providing appropriately matched positions based on the educational background of young people.
- Strengthen family and marital relationships, with regard to choosing a life partner, marriage success, facing marital problems, financial management, and ways to balance work and family responsibilities.
- Provide awareness programs for couples about to get married.
- Provide more resources and support for families seeking to raise children, including information about child development, and parenting strategies.
- Offer more flexible volunteering opportunities including remote opportunities. A large percentage of respondents cited a lack of time as a barrier to volunteering.
- Improve the availability and visibility of information about volunteering opportunities through platforms like social media.
- Increase awareness about mental health. Promote mental health literacy through educational campaigns and incorporating mental health education into school curricula.
- Expand access to mental health services by making it easier for people to access existing services, such as through tele-therapy or other remote options.

METHODOLOGY

Sample design

The survey was conducted by cellular phone from May 2022 to Sep 2022. The target population includes Qatari adults from 18 to 29 years old who live in Qatar during the survey reference period. Respondents were surveyed by cellular telephone using a Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) system. As the vast majority (98%) of adults in Qatar have at least one cell phone, the survey is expected to provide excellent coverage for this target population.5 Working with local cell phone providers in Qatar, SESRI is able to develop a cell phone frame suitable for the survey.

In a phone survey, the result (or disposition) from dialing a phone number can be described in two stages. First, we can get a response or no-response (e.g., non-working or disconnected numbers, immediate hang up or refusal) from the dialing. Then, in the second stage, a phone number with a response can be identified as eligible (Qatari nationals from 18 to 29 years old) or ineligible (e.g., less than 18 or more than 29 years old, expat residents) as shown in figure 1.

Figure 1: Dialing result (phone number states and probabilities)
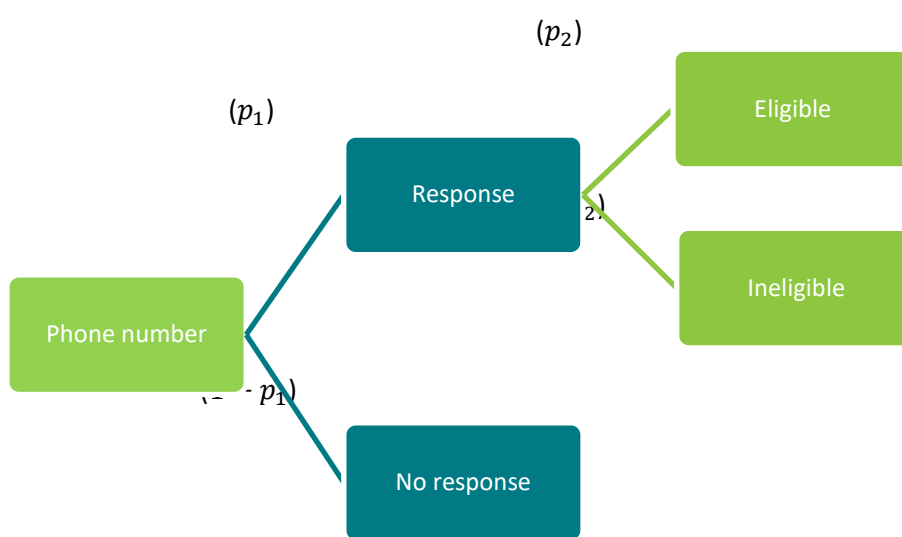
According to Figure 1, there are three possible states for a phone number. A phone number can be (1) an eligible person for the survey, (2) an ineligible person, or (3) a phone number with no response. Since we do not know the state of a phone number before the survey (before dialing), the sampling process is conducted while the state of the phone number is unknown. Accordingly, a simple random sampling (SRS) can be quite inefficient and associated with high survey cost as a large number of sampled phone numbers may end up in ineligible or no-response states.

Based on the sampling literature originally developed to target rare populations (e.g., racial or ethnic minorities, and low-income households),6 SESRI has developed a sampling process to address this issue. First, using previous phone surveys, in which the states of the phone numbers have been identified after dialing, we apply a two-stage (or nested) logistic regressions corresponding to Figure 1. In the first stage of regression, the dependent variable is response or no-response, and in the second stage of regression, the dependent variable is eligible or ineligible. For both stage regressions, the independent variables are derived from auxiliary information. Following these regressions, the probabilities p_1 and p_2 in Figure 1 can be calculated as follows:

$$p_i = \frac{e^{x_i \beta_i}}{1 + e^{x_i \beta_i}}$$

where i is 1 or 2, x_i is a vector of independent variables, and β_i is a vector of estimated coefficients from the nested logistic regressions.

The probability for each state will be the product of these two probabilities; that is, $p_1 p_2$ for eligible, $p_1(1 - p_2)$ for ineligible, and $1 - p_1$ for non-response. Since the independent variables are derived from the auxiliary information, these probabilities can be extrapolated to all phone numbers in the frame. In

5 This number is based on a face-to-face Omnibus survey conducted by SESRI in 2019.

6 Waksberg, J. et al. 1997. Geographic-based oversampling in demographic surveys of the United States. *Survey Methodology*.

Sanchez, N. et al. 2009. Health care utilization, barriers to care, and hormone usage among male to female transgender persons in New York City. *Medical Journal of Public Health*.

Chen, S. and G. Kalton. 2010. Geographic oversampling for race/ethnicity using data from the 2010 US population census. *Journal of Survey Statistics and Methodology*.

Elliott, M. et al. 2013. Using indirect estimates based on name and census tract to improve the efficiency of sampling matched ethnic couples from marriage license data. *Public Opinion Quarterly*.

Kim, J., et al. 2014. Surname Sampling: Reevaluating Kim Sampling in Korea and the United States. *Field Method*.

other words, for every phone number in the frame, we can calculate its probability of belonging to state 1, 2, or 3.

Next, we divide the frame into three strata in descending order of probability using these probabilities. The first stratum includes phone numbers that are most likely to be eligible while the last stratum consists of phone numbers that are least likely to be eligible (most likely including ineligible and no-responses). Finally, we constructed a disproportionate stratified sample from these strata. The disproportionate allocation is important to achieve efficiency whereby a higher sampling fraction is applied to the stratum with a higher probability of eligibility. With this allocation, we can reduce the survey cost as the sample is more likely to contain eligible phone numbers. In fact, we can achieve an optimal allocation of the sample into these strata by solving the optimization problem in which the objective function is the variance of an estimated mean $Var(\bar{Y})$ and the constraint is the survey cost. The optimal sampling fraction derived from this optimization is:

$$f_h \propto \sqrt{\frac{P_h}{P_h(c-1)+1}}$$

where P_h is the proportion of the eligible phone numbers in stratum h, and c is the ratio of the data collection cost for eligible phone numbers to that of the ineligible phone numbers. Further details of this optimization problem and its solution can be found in Kalton (2009), Chen and Kalton (2010), Barron et al (2015).[7] The phone numbers in the sample were released for interviewing in batches to ensure that the complete call procedures were followed for all numbers. For every phone number in the sample, there were up to eight attempts to complete the interview. The phone calls were made over different times during the day and different days of the week to maximize the chances of making contact with respondents. For phone numbers with break-off and soft refusal, dedicated interviewers would try to contact and convert them to completed interviews. Supervisors remotely monitored a proportion of calls to ensure quality control and adherence to strict protocols for reading the survey instrument. In accordance with Qatar's cultural customs, male interviewers did not interview females. Female interviewers continued interviewing a male respondent if willing to go through the survey. Otherwise, they would transfer the case to the "male only" group of interviewers. The following table shows the disposition of all dialed phone numbers during this survey.

Table 1: Calling dispositions

Disposition	Freq.
Completed	1,989
Not completed	26,011
Eligible	2,042
Ineligible	20,099
Unknown eligibility	3,870
Raw response rate (RR1)	25.2%
Adjusted response rate (RR2)	42.5%

On the basis of table 1, the response rates were calculated using standardized coding and interpretation procedure for different calling dispositions as set by the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR 2015). Completed responses included those who finished the whole survey questionnaire. Those who did not complete the survey interview were divided into three categories: eligibles, ineligibles, and unknown eligibilities. Eligibles included Qatari nationals from 18 to 29 years old who refused to participate in the study and those who agreed to an appointment, but the appointment was not fulfilled upon follow-up. People who completed part of the interview were also included in this category. Ineligibles included mostly expatriate residents and those outside the age range (18-29 years old). Unknowns consist of phone numbers with no answer. Those who immediately refused to participate in the survey and interviewers were unable to identify their eligibility were also included in this category.

We report two response rates in the last two rows of table 1. First, the raw response rate is the ratio between the number of completes and total sample sizes after excluding ineligibles: $RR1 = \frac{C}{C+E+UE}$ where C is the number of completes, E is the number of eligible responses, and UE is the number of unknown eligibility. Second, the adjusted response rate is $RR2 = \frac{C}{C+E+eUE}$ where e is the estimated proportion of eligibilities which is given by this expression $e = \frac{C+E}{C+E+IE}$ where IE is the number of ineligibles.

[7] Kalton, G. 2009. Methods for oversampling rare subpopulations in social surveys. *Survey Methodology*.
Chen, S. and G. Kalton. 2010. Geographic oversampling for race/ethnicity using data from the 2010 US population census. *Journal of Survey Statistics and Methodology*.
Barron, M. et al. 2015. Using auxiliary sample frame information for optimum sampling of rare population. *Journal of Official Statistics*.
Qatar University

With the numbers of completes presented in table 1, the maximum sampling error for a percentage is +/- 2.7 percentage points. The calculation of this sampling error takes into account the design effects. One possible interpretation of sampling errors is: if the survey is conducted 100 times using the exact same procedure, the sampling errors would include the "true value" in 95 out of the 100 surveys. Note that the sampling errors can be calculated in this survey since the sample is based on a sampling scheme with known probabilities.

Calculation of data weights

Following the data collection, we calculate the weight for each completed response. There are three components in this calculation: (1) the base weights reflecting the sample selection probability, (2) the adjustment factors to account for the non-response, and (3) the calibration to make the survey results in line with the population parameters. Additionally, we use weight trimming since highly variable weights can introduce undesirable variability in statistical estimates.[8]

First, the base weights are the inverse of the selection probability of the unit in the sample. Due to the disproportionate sampling as described in the sample design, the selection probabilities are needed to ensure unbiasedness in the analysis.

$$W_{base} = 1/p$$

where W_{base} is the base weight for the phone number, p is the probability of selection.

Second, assuming the responding and non-responding units are essentially similar with respect to the key subjects of the investigation, the base weights can be adjusted to account for the non-response by this formula:

$$W = \alpha W_{base}$$

where $\propto$ is called the adjustment factor for non-response which is derived from the propensity that a sampled unit is likely to respond to the survey.[9]

Third, calibration is used to make results in line with the population parameters. This calibration can help reduce the effect from non-response and under-coverage of the sampling frame. SESRI uses a "raking" method in the calibration to adjust the weights of the completed responses so that the proportions of the adjusted weights on certain characteristics (such as marital status, gender, and age groups) agree with the corresponding proportions for the population.

Survey Administration

The survey was administered in CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interview) mode. SESRI is strongly committed to the idea that knowledge of interviewing techniques and field procedures should be supplemented with the basics of survey research to reinforce the necessity for quality data collection. This is achieved through ongoing interviewer training, the provision of strong interviewer support during field production, adherence to a strict quality monitoring protocol; and the use of technology that allows supervisors to monitor as well as evaluate all interviewing activities during the survey production phase. In fact, prior to roll out of this survey, each interviewer received an orientation to the CATI system and participated in a training program. Fundamentals of interviewing with CATI, standard protocols for administrating survey instruments, and practice with phone interviews were among the topics covered during the training sessions. During the period of data collection, the operational management of the call center at SESRI entailed the application of rigorous quality monitoring protocol to ensure that questions were asked appropriately and interviewers accurately recorded responses.

Data Management

After the data collection, all individual interviews were merged and saved in a single BLAISE data file. This dataset was cleaned, coded, and saved in STATA formats for analysis. After weighting the final responses to adjust for the probability of selection and non-response, the data were analyzed using STATA, the statistical software for the social sciences, where both univariate, bivariate, and multivariate analyses were performed.

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[8] Weight trimming can reduce variance but increase bias in the statistical estimates. Therefore, weight trimming should only be applied to cases with very large values of weights. The goal is to reduce the overall mean squared errors. Further details can be seen in this paper: *Potter, F. (1990). A Study of Procedures to Identify and Trim Extreme Sampling Weights. Proceedings of the Section on Survey Research Methods, American Statistical Association, 1990, 225-230.*
[9] We use propensity weighting to adjust for the non-response. A good discussion of this method can be found in Varedian M. and G. Forsman (2003), "Comparing propensity score weighting with other weighting methods: A case study on Web data" In Proceedings of the Section on Survey Statistics, American Statistical Association; 2003, CD-ROM

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