



عضو في مؤسسة قطر
Member of Qatar Foundation

CAREERING TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE QATARI ECONOMY



Role of career guidance in aligning the aspirations and skills of Qatar's youth with the needs of the Qatari economy.



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FOREWORD

Human development and sustainable economic growth go hand in hand. In other words, for a nation to prosper, it has to invest in its people and workforce, the cornerstone of any diversified and knowledge-based economy.

Qatar has embarked on this journey almost a decade ago with the launch of the Qatar National Vision 2030. Since 2008, the government has sponsored and supported research efforts to generate numerous reports that mainly focused on identifying the strategic foundations of human capital development, particularly among Qatari youth. However, little attention has been given to keeping track of the progress made on the career guidance, planning and development front, which represents another pillar of Qatar Foundation's human development strategies.

Equipping the workforce with diverse skills that can support the current and future needs of an economy is essential to the long-term sustainability of any nation. To achieve this, youth should have greater exposure to national career development and guidance activities. This greater exposure will nurture a career planning culture among the youth, guiding them into making appropriate

educational and professional choices as well as choosing an occupation that aligns best with their skills and aspirations. In a bid to fine-tune its career guidance strategy and further contribute to the accomplishment of our national vision, Qatar Career Development Center has conducted extensive market research over the 2016-2017 period to provide evidence-based data on the topic.

The following report, which is the culmination of these research efforts, aims to drive a more coherent approach to career development and career guidance services in Qatar, not by advising on how the Qatar National Vision 2030 should be delivered, but by highlighting priority areas with respect to career development.

The report outlines how career guidance could further contribute to the advancement of our national vision through a greater understanding of labor market dynamics and the need for the development of a qualified and skilled workforce. Thus, the report's findings will not only assist Qatar Career Development Center in better tuning its career guidance strategies but will also serve as a reference document for other stakeholders across the public and private sector with a commitment to promoting human and professional development in Qatar.

I am grateful to all those who contributed to this research endeavor and who took the time to provide their views and perceptions on national career awareness and development in Qatar. Participants include all respondent groups such as students, parents, career counselors and numerous other stakeholders with an interest in capacity building. Their feedback has helped us develop a unified view that forms the backbone of this national research report. I would also like to thank all those who helped us compile this report.

It is with great pleasure that we release this report and look forward to our ongoing partnerships with a multitude of stakeholders to support Qatari students make informed career decisions and plan a prosperous professional future.

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Director
Qatar Career Development Center



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY





1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Developing a diverse skills base that supports the current and future needs of an economy, is critical to the long-term sustainability of any nation. A foundational element of this strategy is to educate and develop young people about the world of work, and to help them to understand the career options available to them, as well as the qualifications and requirements needed to be successful in these careers. Many of the careers that young people will choose in the future have not yet been created. Therefore, preparing them for roles that may not currently exist requires foresight, planning and a coordinated approach to education and skills development. The findings of this research aim to shape the career services in Qatar to better support Qatar's National Vision 2030 and to drive policy that can support a nationwide, coordinated implementation.

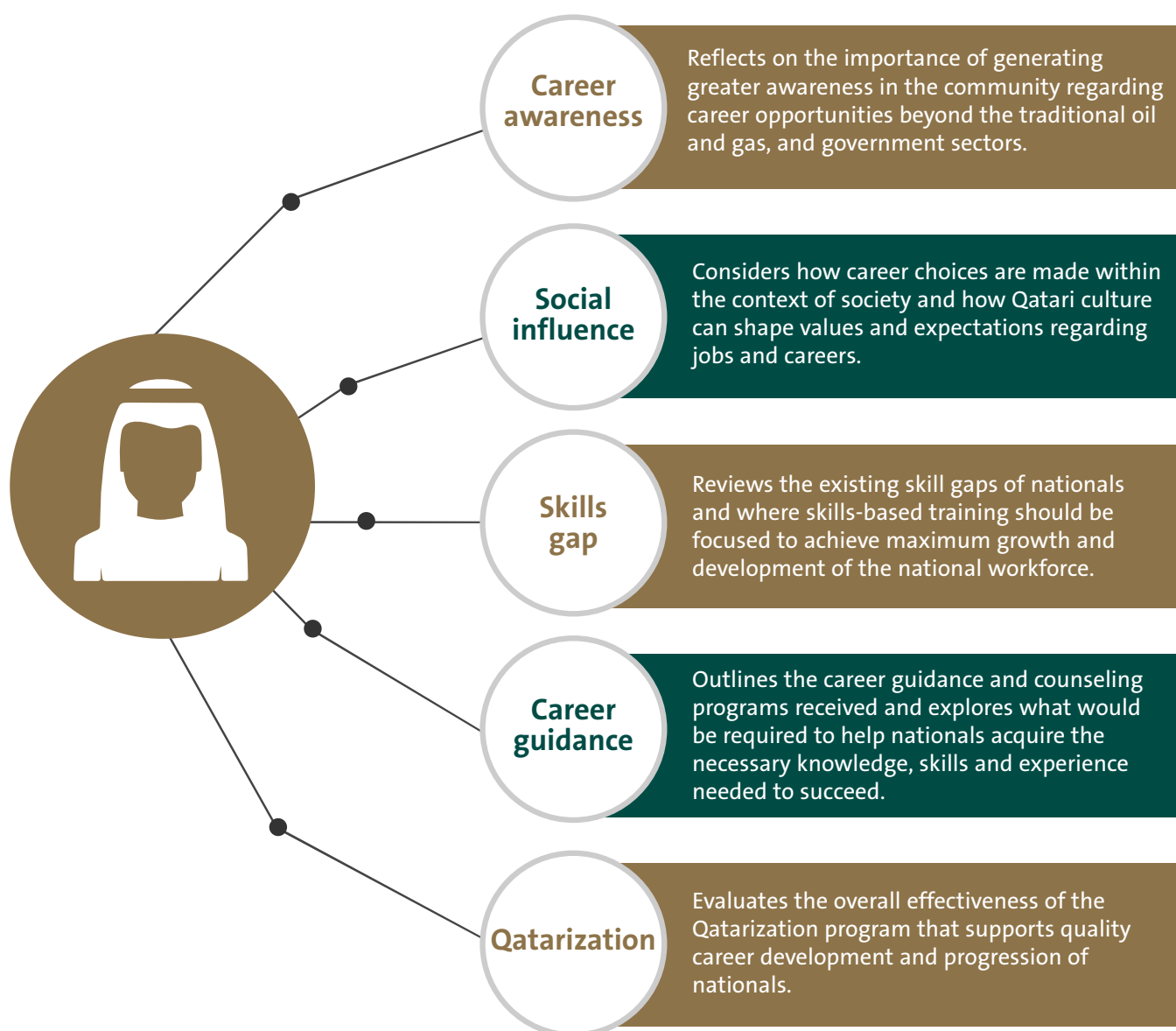
1.1 Background

Career development in Qatar has been a subject broadly discussed by many professionals, with a large number of reports and research already available. The existing research has been centered on jobs and employment, rather than building a 'career culture' among the Qatari people. To date, there is little supporting evidence of measurable, positive change towards a more progressive and mature career culture among Qatari nationals.

This research has been conducted over a 12-month period and has exclusively focused on the Qatari population. It is unique, as it

centers on a 'career culture' approach, which has not been attempted before. It builds on the existing body of research, while also employing a more comprehensive approach than any of the existing studies. Both qualitative and quantitative survey methods have been employed, encompassing a wider range of respondents from various segments of senior stakeholders across the government and private sectors. It also includes a larger survey sample of 1,001 Qatari students, graduates and parents compared to previous studies that have been conducted in Qatar, making this research survey the largest of its kind.

The data from interviews with various stakeholder segments in Qatar has been grouped into five main themes that have been summarized, analyzed and discussed. These are:



1.2 Career awareness



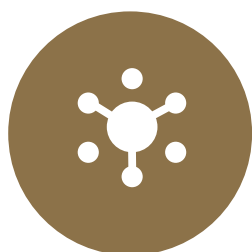
There is evidence of a low awareness of the different types of careers available to Qatari nationals in the State of Qatar. Careers are mostly referred to as the ‘traditional sectors’ of government and the oil and gas industry. University majors

are therefore generally selected based on a narrow knowledge of only these particular careers and not on the career path a student wishes to follow, or a wider knowledge and understanding of alternatives. Many factors influence career awareness, such as advice from parents, publically available information and societal pressures. One of the outcomes that can be inferred from this low awareness of different careers and the preference for traditional careers, is that the private sector is not attracting the share of graduates it needs to build a sustainable private sector Qatari workforce. This is a particular issue considering that the Qatar National Vision 2030

is concerned with economic diversification and building a sustainable, knowledge-based economy.

Qatar is at a stage in its economic development where building personal wealth is important and an indicator of individual success. Perhaps for this reason, 90 percent of all students and graduates state that high salary is the most important factor when choosing a job. This attitude is supported by Qatari parents, with 69 percent of parents agreeing that salary is the most important consideration for their children when choosing a job. Extrinsic factors, such as a high salary, having one’s own office and quicker promotion figure highly on a graduate’s career selection criteria. Contrast this with students in other countries who are driven by more intrinsic forces and want to enter industries such as public relations, where they work for little or no financial gain to garner valuable experience and knowledge of how the industry works.

1.3 Social influence



The influence of national identity and cultural beliefs have consistently been highlighted throughout the research. Qatari parents show a strong preference for their children to work in an environment that maintains the traditions of Qatari culture. This

preference extends to gender segregated work environments and to the selection of careers for their children that they perceive to be most suitable for them. The vast majority of students and parents (71 percent) believe that a job in a government organization is better than a job in a private sector organization, because it provides job security, status and high financial reward. These perceptions of the associated level of prestige offered by specific sectors, contribute further to a career culture that is motivated by money and status, rather than is driven by the desire for personal growth and development.

The Qatar National Vision’s social development

pillar articulates the need to bolster women’s role in society and empower them to be active community members. This research has highlighted some stark contrasts between the opportunities available to male and female graduates and the difficulty females have in pursuing the career of their choice. Many female graduates are passionate about their development and are very eager to actively contribute in the workplace, but are unable to pursue their chosen career because of cultural barriers and traditions. This was found when 51 percent of female students, compared to 49 percent of male students, showed a preference for engineering-based careers; but many females have been discouraged from pursuing these careers, because they are perceived as unsuitable career choices for females. This has left a largely untapped section of the graduate population unemployed. Further effort is necessary to enable female graduates to follow the careers of their choice that can contribute to the achievement of the national vision and its targets.

1.4 Skills gap



Qatar has already explored the growing skills gap and has identified it as a major challenge that threatens economic growth. The importance of developing a diversified and knowledge-based economy has also been acknowledged. A knowledge-

based economy is more encompassing than just a few sectors and there is a need to develop and maintain up-to-date and reliable labor market information to enable the development of educational strategies that meet the needs of the economy. Limited information concerning the labor market has resulted in a misalignment between the supply of skills and market demands. For graduates, this means graduating with degrees, such as engineering, communications or law, and competing for the same few jobs. The government should identify the subject areas required by the labor market, such as Science, Technology, Engineering

and Mathematics (STEM), and ensure that appropriately skilled graduates enter the economy. This will require close consultation with higher education.

It is not only academic and vocational skills that play a role in developing a young workforce. Soft skills, such as behavior, attitude and respect, play a key role in getting the job done and in managing the stress and strains of the working day. The incentive to work amongst Qatari young people seems to be not as strong, or even necessary in some cases, as it is in other economies. Young Qataris therefore miss early opportunities to develop basic soft skills, such as effective workplace communication, time management and professional conduct, which can prepare them for work. Without the driving force to enter casual work at a young age, the challenge is one of delivering soft skills training at an early age within the confines of the education system.

1.5 Career guidance



The majority of higher education students and graduates seek career advice from informal sources such as parents, friends and siblings. Channels, such as career counselors, international universities and teachers seem to be less popular. However,

formal career guidance exists in educational establishments in Qatar, but is perceived to be inconsistent and irregular. Career development programs at secondary schools are mostly focused on transitioning from school to college or university with no career management planning in place when it comes to the

necessary skills, career knowledge or labor market information. Contrast this with the international schools in Qatar, where career guidance starts from the eighth grade. Most Qatari parents have not met their child's career counselor and 20 percent of students said that they had no plans to meet their career counselor. There is a clear need to increase the perception of career counselors and to give them the tools for the job. Increased professional career counselor capacity is needed in schools, colleges and universities to educate both students and parents on the merits of discussing career options with a professional advisor.

1.6 Qatarization



The nationalization program is a necessity to develop a talent pool of qualified, skilled and employable Qatari nationals. However, there is a general agreement that the implementation of the Qatarization policy has been counterproductive to what it intended to achieve. Many stakeholders across various

sectors and segments have cited that the program has been purely number-based and has shown little regard for the training and development of the national workforce. Qataris are being recruited into positions that they are not necessarily qualified or suitable for, and have been promoted into leadership positions too quickly in their careers, resulting in many developmental stages that have been missed.

1.7 Recommendations

The transition to a sustainable, knowledge-based economy centralized around a career development culture has been happening too slowly. There is widespread agreement amongst different stakeholders engaged during the research, that the responsibility for national career development and guidance is a community-wide responsibility that involves students, parents, educational institutions, government and private sector organizations alike. The evidence highlights very clearly that there is a misalignment between the skills and qualifications young Qataris are leaving higher education with, and the needs of the labor market, and that students and parents are not receiving relevant and up-to-date advice to help them make informed career decisions. There is an urgent need for the government, particularly the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Ministry of Administrative Development, Labor and Social Affairs to develop policies that promote a collaborative culture supporting career development and guidance at a national level.

1. A national career development service should be created. A foundational element of the career service should be a centralized, integrated and coordinated career development center. This center should deliver services/programs that will enable students and graduates to make effective career decisions
2. A specific strategy should be developed to establish the private sector as a viable and alternative career choice.
3. Additional research should be conducted to obtain a deeper understanding of the labor market and to identify the necessary future skills Qatar needs to be a globally competitive economy.
4. The depth and quality of career information needs to increase to enable students and parents to make more informed career decisions.
5. The high rate of female graduate unemployment needs to be addressed by supporting the needs, aspirations and level of participation of female graduates in the national workforce.
6. A national skills development policy should be developed, aimed at improving the quality and quantity of relevant skills needed in the labor market.
7. To provide governance and controls for the career development service to foster a culture of continuous improvement.

INTRODUCTION

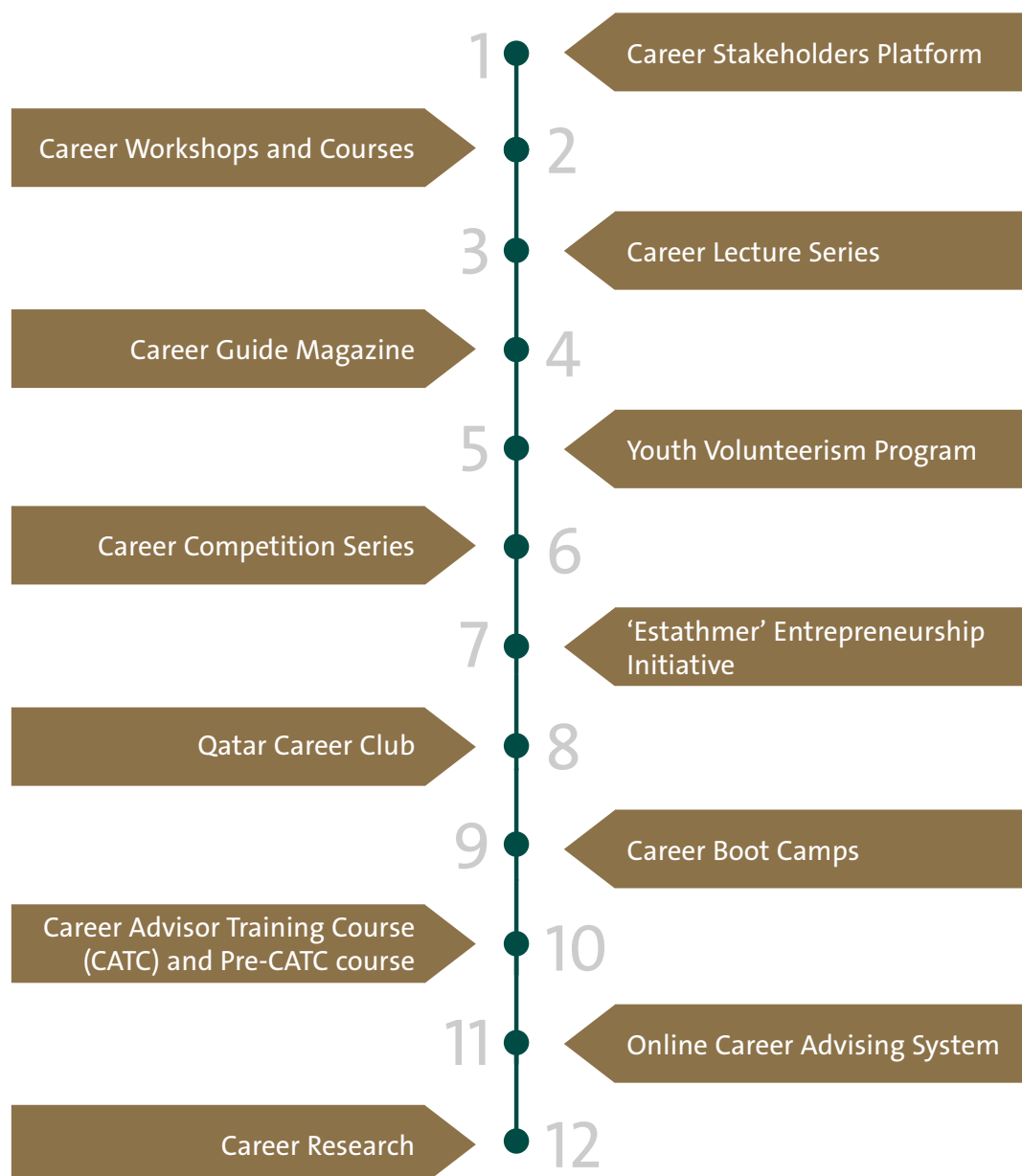


2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background and context

Qatar Career Development Center (QCDC) is a member of Qatar Foundation (QF) that aims to serve as the beacon of career guidance, planning and development; to prepare Qatar's people to respond to the requirements of the Qatar National Vision 2030 and contribute to the education and labor market outcomes already articulated in Qatar's national

development strategy. QCDC supports Qatari capacity-building and empowers youth to better plan their career paths in line with their potential, as well as the future needs of Qatar's labor market¹. QCDC has created an umbrella center for several career development projects and programs, such as:



¹ QCDC website [<http://www.qf.org.qa/participate/ventures/qatar-career-fair/qatar-career-development-center>]



As well as delivering and coordinating these career-related projects and programs, QCDC has introduced the concept of, and laid the foundations for, the 'career culture' in Qatar by organizing several consecutive editions of the national Qatar Career Fair. As part of the next phase in this process, the QCDC decided to conduct a fully encompassing research to evaluate the current perceptions and attitudes

towards career awareness and development in Qatar. There is a need for this study, as it focuses uniquely on the 'career culture' of Qatar, while existing research concentrates mainly on 'jobs' and 'employment'. The existing research is also limited to small survey samples and may not be representative of the entire Qatari national population.

2.2 Purpose of this research

Career development in Qatar has been an ongoing area of research broadly covered by many professionals who have created a significant number of reports. The purpose of this study is to incorporate and expand on this existing body of research by focusing on the central theme of 'career culture'. This is because there is little evidence to suggest significant strides have been made towards a progressively mature and diversified career culture within the Qatari community, particularly amongst the youth.

Many stakeholders within Qatar's educational institutions, as well as private and government organizations, also believe that little progress has been made to successfully implement the extensive research available. Additionally, it is believed that there is inadequate coordination of efforts in building a knowledge-based, diverse economy that aligns to the Qatar National Vision 2030.

In addition, the purpose of this research is to assist Qatar to avoid the well-studied phenomenon, called the ‘resource curse’ or the ‘paradox of plenty’. This refers to the paradox that countries with an abundance of natural, non-renewable resources, such as minerals and oil, tend to experience less sustained economic growth in the long term. Good examples of this are countries in Africa, such as South Africa and Zimbabwe, which have experienced an abundance of gold, diamonds and other mineral resources, but have struggled to convert this into long-term, sustained economic growth. Hundreds of studies have now evaluated the effects of ‘resource wealth’ on a wide range of economic outcomes, and offered many explanations for how, why and when a resource curse is likely to occur.^{2,3} One of the common themes to emerge from these studies is that too little emphasis is placed on broadening the skills and competencies of the national population outside the natural resource sector in order to ensure the wider economy is more robust. This is a substantial risk to the long-term sustainability and growth of the economy,

as there is an over-reliance on the income generated from a single source of revenue. Any downward pressure on this revenue source, such as a global decrease in the price of oil in Qatar’s case, could have a substantial negative impact on economic stability. Therefore, it is critical that more focus is placed in Qatar on a career culture that diversifies beyond the traditional oil and gas resource sector. This will ensure Qatar’s national economy is more robust and stable against global economic volatility.

The findings and interpretations of this study will be used to guide the formulation and nationwide implementation of critical career development and guidance-related programs, initiatives and activities. The resultant recommendations are intended to shape career services relating to the Qatar National Vision 2030, specifically focusing on human capital development. This research is ultimately intended to support the creation of an integrated, coordinated career development center that supports, monitors and regulates career guidance and development.

2.3 Goals and success criteria

The goals of this research are:

1. To support and expand on existing research by focusing on a diversified, knowledge-based, career culture as a central theme.
2. To qualitatively and quantitatively survey a large sample of the Qatari population and various related stakeholders in order to identify the main themes that are currently hindering progress towards a more diversified, knowledge-based economy.
3. To suggest relevant and practical recommendations that will help overcome the career culture challenges currently faced in Qatar.

The following criteria will be considered good measures of successful outcomes from this research:

1. The recommendations from this report are widely accepted and approved by relevant national entities in developing national career development policies and processes.
2. A realistic and pragmatic implementation plan is generated with timelines, milestones and performance targets to ensure the recommendations are implemented successfully.
3. An integrated, coordinated career guidance center is created that supports career guidance and development.

² Venables, Anthony J. “Using Natural Resources for Development: Why Has It Proven So Difficult?” *Journal of Economic Perspectives*. (2016). 30(1): 161–184. doi: 10.1257/jep.30.1.161

³ Frankel, Jeffrey. “The Natural Resource Curse: A Survey of Diagnoses and Some Prescriptions”. HKS Faculty Research Working Paper Series (RWP12-014). (2012).

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE





3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The research objective is to provide evidence-based outcomes that support the future design and implementation of career development policies, processes, programs, products, services and follow-up activities needed to achieve the vision as set out in the Qatar National Vision 2030. There is a need to bring together career guidance, education, training and labor market sub-systems that interact with one another to create a unified system of workforce preparation, placement and development.⁴ Both anecdotal and empirical evidence suggests that there is:

⁴ Kuder. "Building the Talent Pipeline and Providing Youth with hope for the Future – Qatar." ICCDPP 2015 Symposium. (2015).

1. A lack of proper understanding with regards to the concept of 'career', 'career guidance' and 'career development'.
2. A low awareness of the different types of careers amongst the Qatari youth who favor 'traditional' careers in government and/or oil and gas sectors.
3. A population of students graduating with the same qualifications and academic skills, suggesting that there are poor links between the majors that universities are offering and the needs of the labor market.
4. A scarcity of qualified and certified professional career counselors in Qatar.
5. A poor attitude and general lack of motivation amongst Qatari students towards the concept of work.
6. Little progress that has been made towards implementing the Education and Training Sector Strategy (ETSS) between 2011–2016.
7. Competition amongst career development organizations, showing little communication, coordination and alignment of efforts made between Qatar National Vision 2030, national sectors, and ministry strategies to support the implementation of national human capital development.
8. A slow progress towards transitioning to a diversified, knowledge-based economy.

This research study has a number of important and specific objectives:

1. To evaluate the extent of [Qatari] stakeholders' understanding of the 'Career/ Career Guidance' concept, of the 'Career vs. Job' comparison and of the objectives/ purpose/role/benefits/opportunities that these activities bring to Qatari citizens.
2. To evaluate the extent of contribution and usefulness of career development in Qatar, as well as towards replacing a public 'job oriented' culture with a 'career oriented' culture.
3. To evaluate and describe the current challenges that the career development system in Qatar faces in achieving the vision, as set out in the human capital development pillar of the Qatar National Vision 2030.
4. To evaluate current perceptions and attitudes towards career awareness and development initiatives among key stakeholder groups.
5. To evaluate the need to create a standardized, centralized, coordinated center for career development that meets the needs of the students, parents, labor market, and training and education institutions.
6. To understand what important services/ activities/features should be introduced in the future towards implementing a national career development framework.





3.1 Study outcomes

The findings from the study are wide-ranging and will form the basis of a variety of strategic recommendations that will guide the formulation and nationwide implementation of critical career development and guidance related activities. The findings will also be used to identify opportunities to enhance and improve QCDC projects so they meet the needs and expectations of key stakeholder groups.

3.2 Research limitations

The Qatari youth population is small in relation to the overall size of the population of the State of Qatar⁵ and there are many other stakeholder groups of people contributing to the growth and development of Qatar. This study does not attempt to recommend how the Qatar National Vision 2030 could be delivered through greater focus on careers for Qatari youth; but does seek to recommend how this group of important citizens could contribute more effectively through a greater understanding of available careers and the career choices available to them.

⁵ General Secretariat for Development Planning. "Expanding the Capacities of Qatari Youth", GSDP. (2012). p. 17.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY





4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Research methodology and background

This study is focused exclusively on the Qatari population. To access this relatively small population a combination of both qualitative and quantitative research methods were used. The research methods were as follows:



- ✓ in-depth interviews
- ✓ focus group discussions
- ✓ online surveys
- ✓ paper-based surveys
- ✓ interview-led surveys.

The research methods were used to target a number of specific groups of Qatari respondents:

1. High school students and graduates.
2. Community college students and graduates.
3. University students and graduates.
4. Parents (Parents of Qatari students in the three categories above).
5. The five organizations which have been jointly organizing the Qatar Career Fair: Qatar Foundation, Qatar Petroleum, Amiri Diwan, Qatar University and the Ministry of Labor.
6. Profit or non-profit private, governmental or semi-governmental organizations that have been involved in at least one of Qatar Career Fair's previous editions.
7. Career guidance counselors, academic counselors, teachers and educational institutions administrators in Qatar (independent and international high schools, college/institutes and universities).
8. Profit or non-profit private, governmental or semi-governmental organizations and Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) whose primary or secondary operations/activities are related to academic/professional/career training and development in Qatar.
9. Governmental, semi-governmental and private entities in Qatar that are related to or can affect career policy-making.

4.2 Research design and engagement methods

The research program was structured in four stages so that specific research methods could be used to target and engage the specific groups of respondents.

The research was administered on 1,105 respondents across the four stages. The four stages were:

1. Qualitative research with key stakeholders in the private and government sectors.
2. Qualitative research with students and parents.
3. Quantitative research with key stakeholder organizations.
4. Quantitative research with students and parents.

The interviews and surveys were designed to obtain an understanding of career awareness and development in Qatar and to capture the experience, perceptions and attitudes of students, parents and their future employers. The respondents were asked questions about the current challenges that Qatar faces in achieving the nation's human capital development goals; and to provide their perceptions on career guidance and development of careers for young Qataris.

Further questions were asked relating to how students can be best prepared for the working world with a particular focus on career information, educational preferences, career development behavior, motivations, support and guidance.



Specifically, five topics were addressed in the research design:



4.2.1 Qualitative research with key stakeholders

The stakeholder sample incorporated representatives from a number of organizations across the government and private sectors in Qatar (*Figure 1*). Twenty-two face-to-face, in-depth interviews were conducted in both Arabic and English by experienced research consultants at the stakeholders' premises. They ranged

from one to one-and-a-half hours in duration, and were audio recorded with the consent of the stakeholders. A summary transcript of each interview was prepared so that the common themes could be identified across the key stakeholder segments.

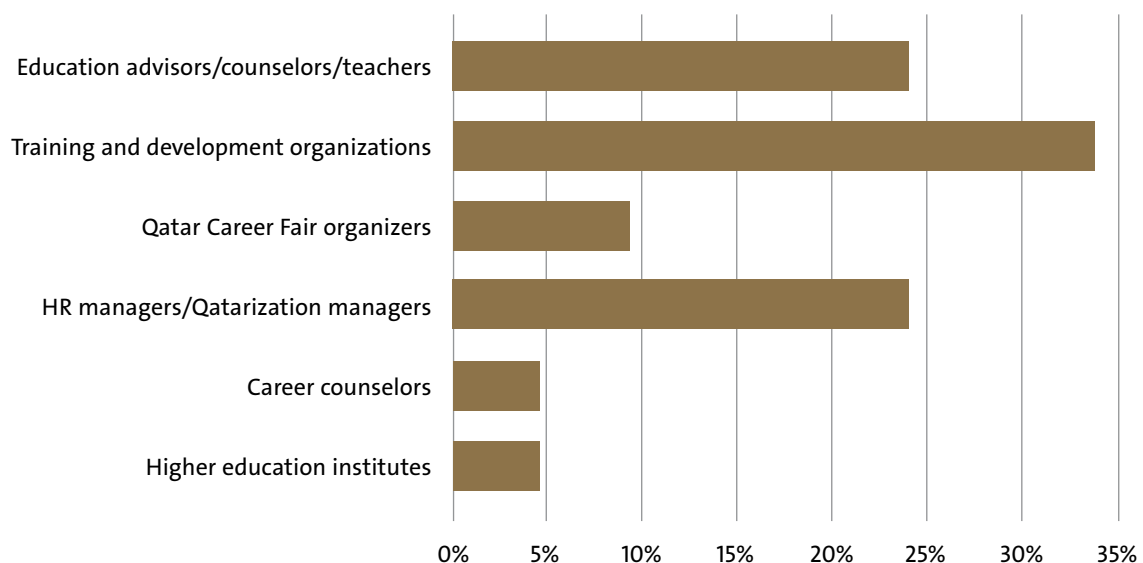


Figure 1. Stakeholder profile across segments



4.2.2 Qualitative research on the perceptions and attitudes of Qatari students and parents

This research stage drew from four focus group discussions and twenty-four in-depth interviews with Qatari youth (prospective students, higher education students) and their parents (*Figure 2*). These discussions were conducted by an experienced Arabic speaking moderator and ranged from one to one-and-a-half hours in duration. The aim of the

discussions was to gain an understanding of the overall perceptions and attitudes of Qatari students and parents of career development and guidance in Qatar. A summary transcript of each focus group and interview was prepared so that the common themes could be identified from the students and parents.

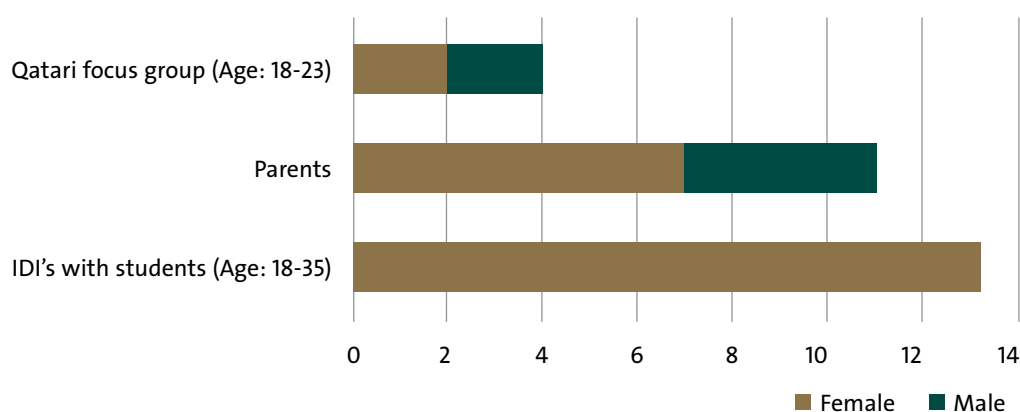


Figure 2. Students and parents respondent profiles

4.2.3 Quantitative research on a stakeholder's perspective of the Qatar Career Fair

This research stage delivered a quantitative online, self-completing survey designed to evaluate the overall satisfaction levels and value that is placed on the national Qatar Career Fair by previous exhibitors and participants (Figure 3). The survey consisted of 13 questions that were transcribed into both Arabic and English and required approximately

10 minutes to complete online. The survey contained open-ended questions and a rating scale of one to 10. The findings were collected from 48 survey respondents who shared their insights and suggestions on what they believe are the necessary improvements required to enhance the effectiveness of national career development programs.

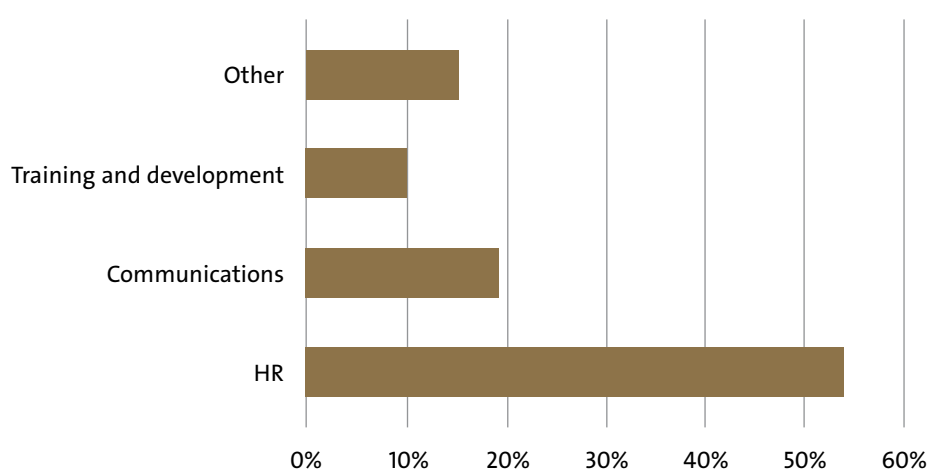


Figure 3. Stakeholder profile by role in the organization

4.2.4 Quantitative research on Qatari students, recent graduates and their parents

A national survey was developed to determine the perspectives of a statistically significant sample of Qatari high school students, higher education students and graduates, as well as their parents. The aim of the survey was to quantify the influencing factors, attitudes,

perceptions and barriers to career awareness and career development in Qatar. Interviewed and self-completing online surveys were conducted with a sample of 1,001 respondents. The makeup of the 1,001 respondents is shown in Table 1.

The student and parent surveys consisted of 24 and 28 questions respectively, pertaining to:



- ✓ The meaning of a career
- ✓ Career considerations
- ✓ Career-related attitudes
- ✓ Educational preferences
- ✓ The factors involved when choosing a major and specific career path

Both the student and parent surveys were transcribed in Arabic and English and required approximately 15 minutes to complete. A total of n=644 surveys were conducted with Qatari high school students, university students,

Community College students and recent graduates. Students who participated in this study were mostly high school and university students, aged 17 to 24 (*Figure 4 and 5*).

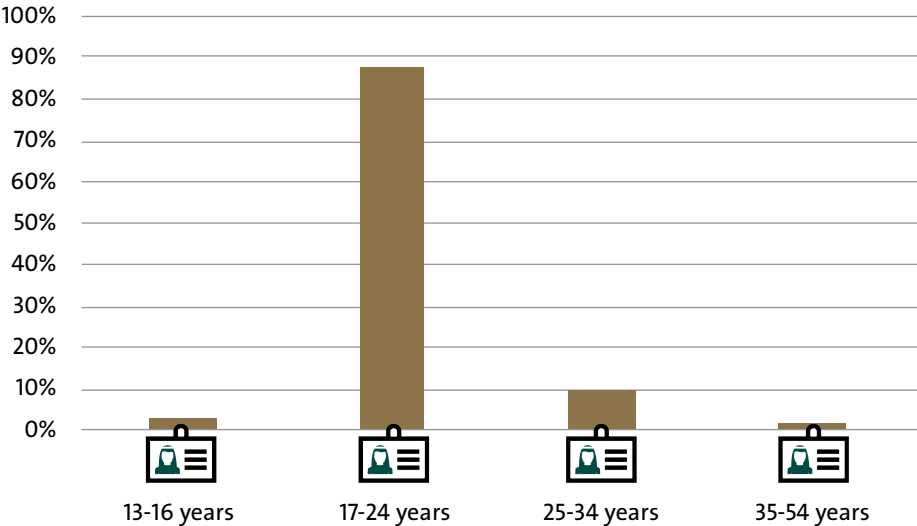


Figure 4. Student respondents age groups

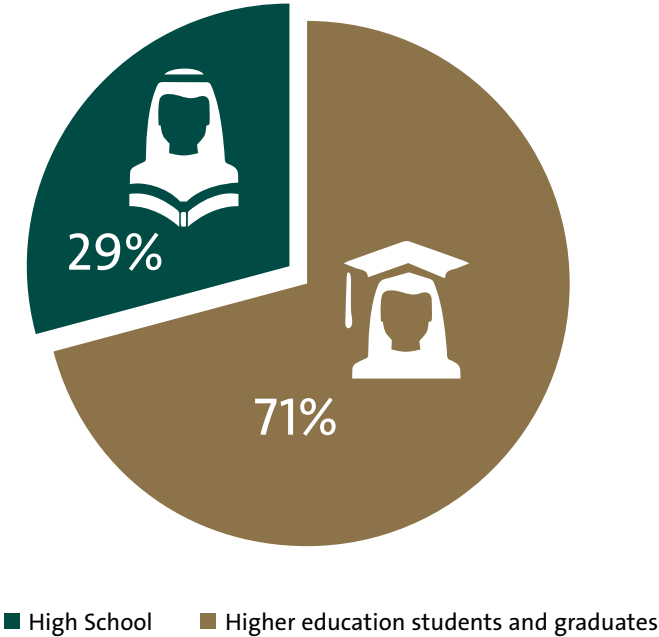


Figure 5. High school and higher education students and graduate split

The respondent profiles of the students mostly attended independent schools or Qatar University (Figures 6 and 7 respectively).

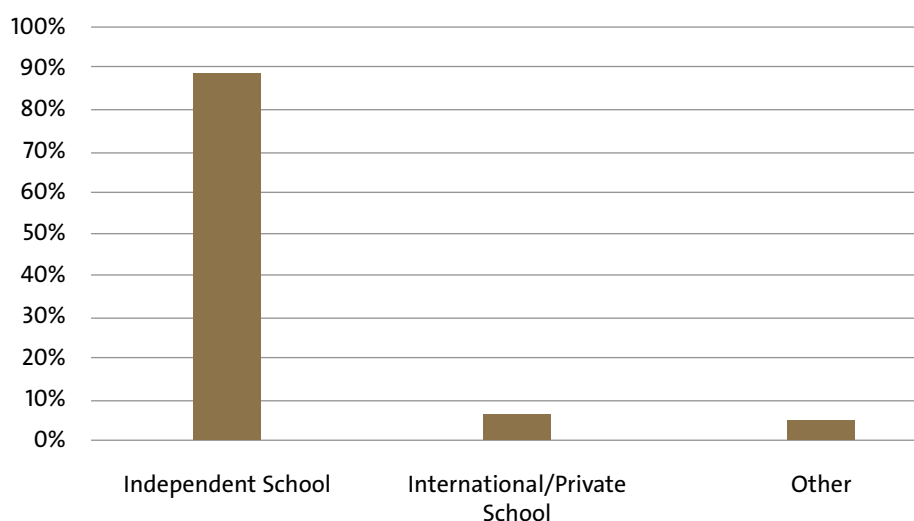


Figure 6. Type of school

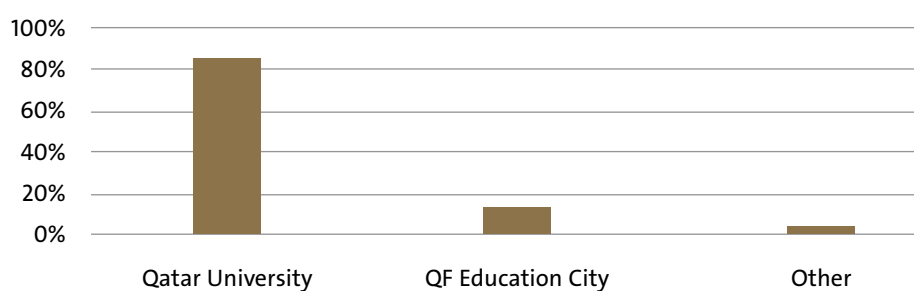
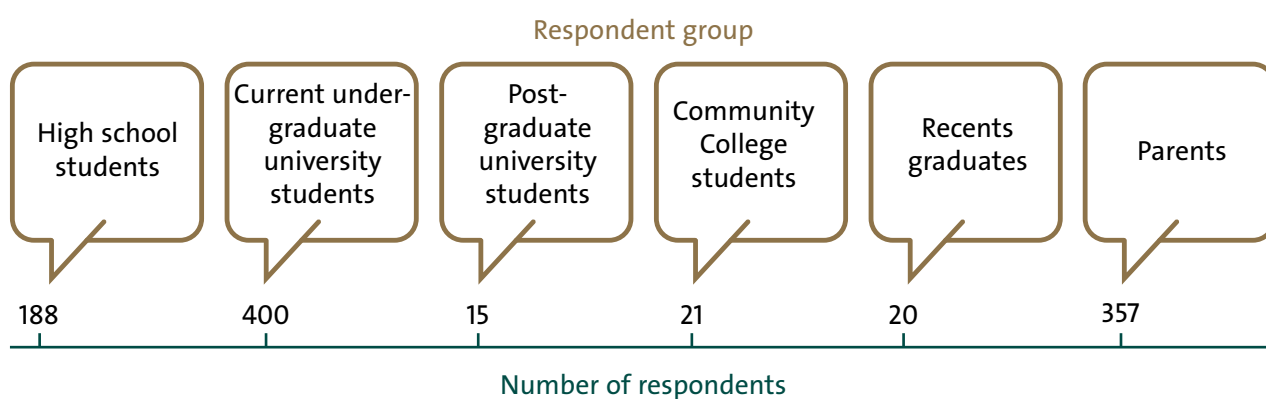


Figure 7. Universities

Make-up of the 1,001 respondent sample (Table 1).



Total number of respondents: 1,001

The margin of error on the total sample size of 1,001 students and parents is ~3.01 percent, at a 95 percent confidence level. This exceeds international best practice standards of ~5 percent.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS





5. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The analysis and interpretation of the data brings together both the qualitative and quantitative research that was conducted across all the stakeholder segments. The data is analyzed, interpreted and summarized in this section and recommendations relating to each major finding are presented.

Stage one of the research, 'Qualitative research with key stakeholders' was open-ended and exploratory in nature to identify those themes, relating to career awareness and development, that business leaders and stakeholders in the government and private sector's believe to be important. These 22 interviews led to five major themes related to careers and making

career decisions in Qatar. The five themes represent the factors that influence career choice by Qatari youth. Many of the themes are interrelated and provided a framework from which further questions were developed focusing the research and creating dialogue with stakeholders. The insights collected from the initial qualitative research were further explored, examined and tested through the quantitative surveys.

For each major theme, a number of supporting sub-themes emerged from the research. Each major theme and its sub-themes is discussed and analyzed in detail in this section of the report.

The five major themes are summarized in (Figure 8) below:

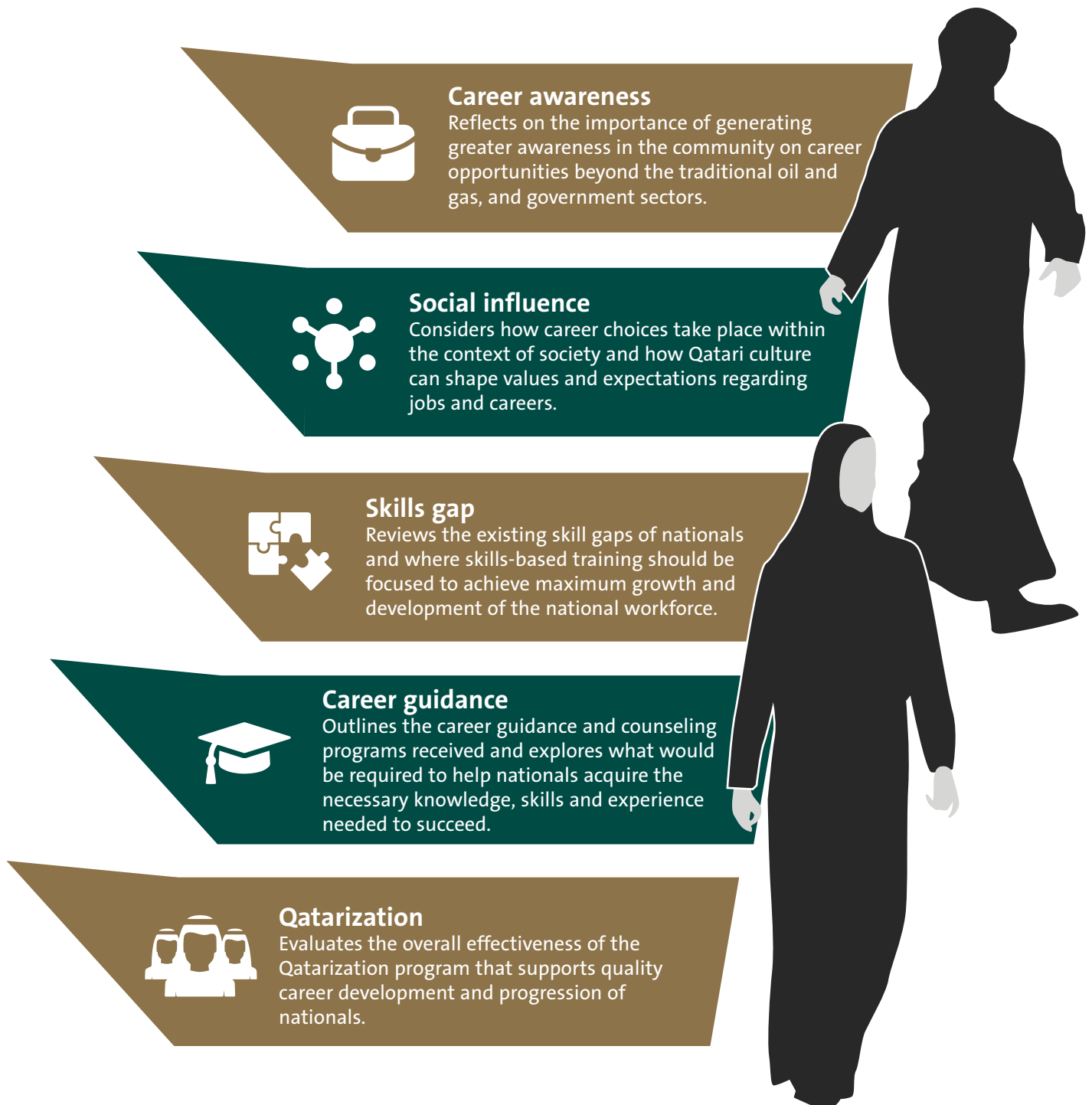


Figure 8. Five major themes relating to career development

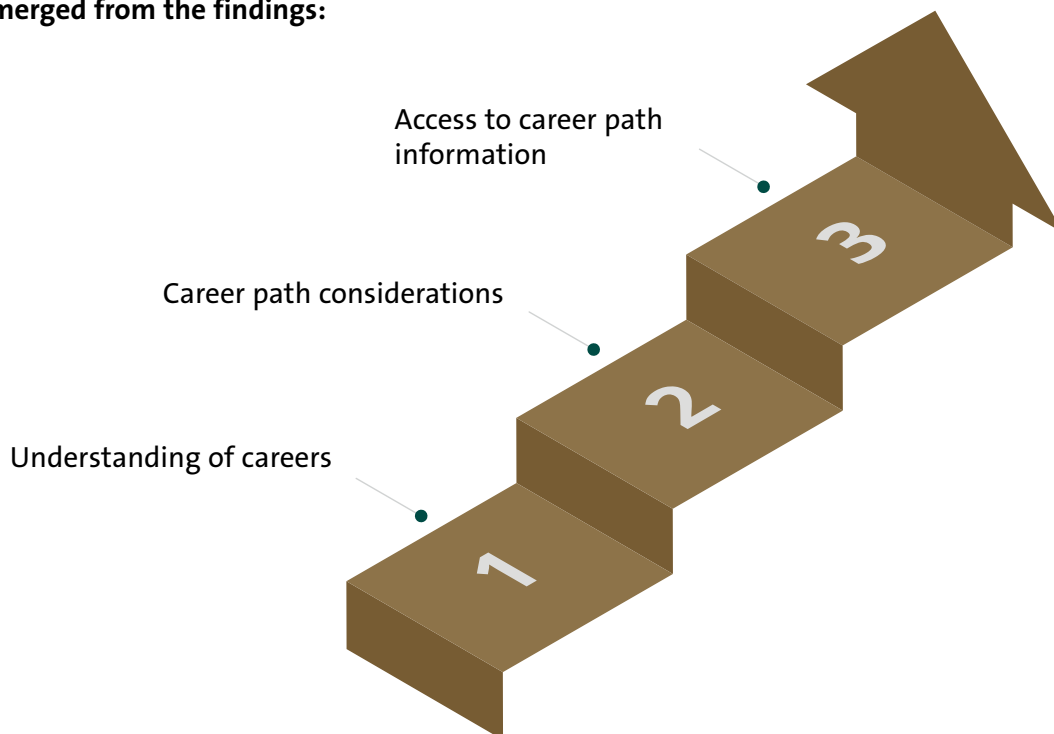
5.1 Theme 1: Career awareness

The awareness of available career options and how to learn more about them, is a fundamental component in national career development. There is a significant amount of existing research that relates to career awareness. It is a common concept across most global markets in relation to building national development strategies. Similar research reports indicate that school students benefit, both academically and vocationally, from career development programs that promote career exploration skills, as well as increased knowledge of career options and paths.⁶

The findings in this national research highlight the importance of generating greater awareness in the Qatari community of the variety of career opportunities beyond the traditional government, and oil and gas sectors. Currently there are a number of fundamental challenges

that the youth, educational sectors and the workforce are faced with that continue to prevent the growth of a diversified national workforce. It is evident that there is a need at a national level to improve strategies that support students and parents in developing their knowledge of the alternative career paths and job opportunities available in Qatar, such as nursing, teaching, human resources, information technology, and marketing. At the same time, improving self-awareness among the Qatari youth and a better understanding of what is required to be successful in these career paths, is necessary. A broader connection is required between career development and education that exposes young students to a variety of career paths. This should be accomplished from the earlier stages in life development, such as middle and high school.

Three sub-themes relating to career awareness emerged from the findings:



These sub-themes are further investigated below.

⁶ Magnuson, C. and Starr, M. "How Early is Too Early to Begin Life Career Planning? The Importance of the Elementary School Years." *Journal of Career Development*, 27:2.(2000).

5.1.1 Sub-theme 1: Understanding of careers

A 'career' is an occupation undertaken for a significant period of one's life, with opportunities for progression. A 'job' is a paid position of regular employment. The difference between a career and a job is an important distinction, as it influences work-related attitudes that can impact career planning and development. A clear understanding of the definition of a career creates the foundation

that drives educational needs, behavior and learning experiences that are required to achieve life goals and obtain a better sense of purpose that contributes to society.

The key findings below summarize the 'understanding of careers' of a select group of Qatari high school, higher education students, and their parents.

Key findings

- High school students are most likely to define a 'career' as 'having a job'.
- Higher education students and graduates are more likely than their parents to think that a career is 'following your lifelong ambitions'.
- Parents are more likely than university students and graduates to think that a career means 'having a job' (*Figure 9*). This is the highest mentioned career association amongst parents by 67 percent.
- Parents are also more likely than students to define a 'career' as 'something you do to earn money' (46 percent) and 'specializing in something' (28 percent) (*Figure 9*).
- Almost half of the higher education students and graduates define a career as 'following your lifelong ambitions', compared to only a third of parents (48 percent vs 34 percent respectively) (*Figure 9*).
- An equal proportion of parents, university students and graduates believe a career relates to your future dreams and wishes (mentioned by 31 percent of each group) (*Figure 9*).
- University students are more likely to think a 'career gives people personal satisfaction' and is a 'long term learning process' than high school students.
- A relatively high 40 percent of university students feel a 'career is serving my country with a constructive role in society', compared to 1 percent of high school students (*Figure 9*).



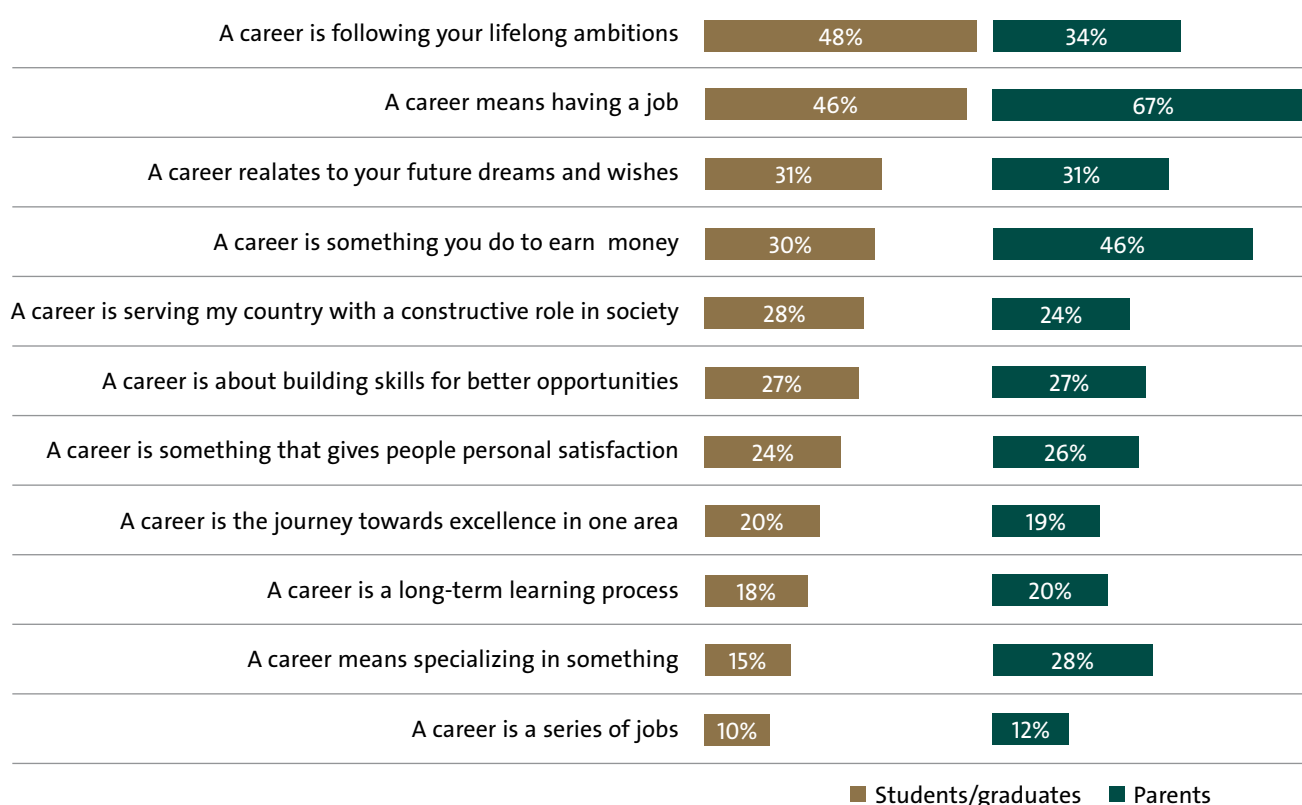


Figure 9. Understanding of a career

Discussion

University students have a good understanding of the difference between a ‘career’ and a ‘job’. They understand a career to be a lifelong pursuit of goals, whereas a job as something one does in the short-term to earn an income. They associate careers with something that one would like to do and ultimately develop throughout one’s lifelong work. From the research data, it is evident that university students have a much better understanding

than high school students of the long-term learning experience that is necessary to progress towards reaching future goals. University students understand that jobs and careers are not mutually exclusive and that they feed into one another. The importance of jobs in establishing careers does not appear to resonate with high school students; perhaps showing a gap in career development programs in the earlier development stages.

5.1.2 Sub-theme 2: Career path considerations

‘Consideration’ is a term used to describe careful thought, typically over a period of time. A ‘career path’ is the steady progress an individual makes in his or her line of chosen work. Therefore, a ‘career path consideration’ is the careful thought over a period of time around one’s desired future career path. This report suggests that many Qatari higher education students, and graduates are not selecting majors that are most relevant to the career path they wish to follow. Career

path considerations are limited to those common career paths such as engineering, business management, or exclusively pursuing employment opportunities in government or oil and gas sectors. This highlights the need to begin educating youth about the range of different career opportunities that are available in Qatar. Promotion of different career paths will, over time, promote the advancement of a diversified economy. The key findings below support this premise.

Key findings

- A relatively high proportion of university students and graduates (72 percent) has some direction on potential careers but are still undecided on which career to follow. Only 15 percent of university students and graduates have a clear direction on their career path and are sure of the kind of career they will follow; while 12 percent do not have any direction or preference on the work they will be performing (Figure 10).

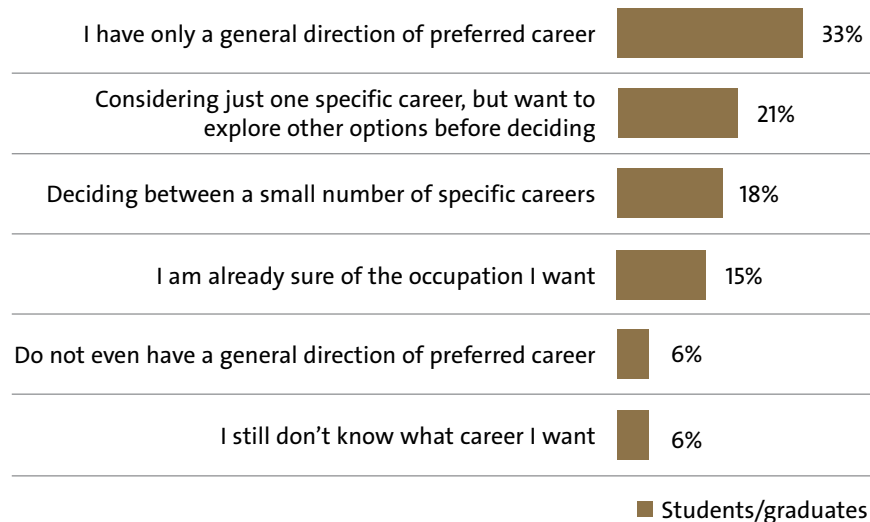


Figure 10. Career considerations

- Three in ten university students and graduates claim that career decisions will be made before choosing a university major and an equal proportion claiming they will be made after choosing a university major (Figure 11).
- Some 29 percent of university students and graduates said they would not choose their career path until after they had selected their university major (Figure 11).

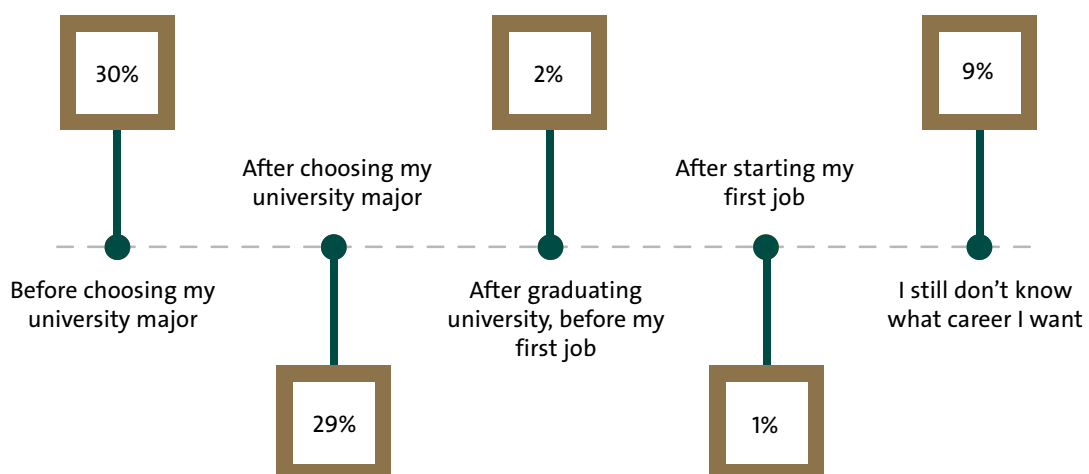


Figure 11. Timeframe: When a career is chosen by university students and graduates

- Among the university students and graduates, 35 percent were interested in owning their own businesses, while 21 percent were interested in a career in business consulting, 20 percent in political international affairs and 19 percent in engineering (*Figure 12*).

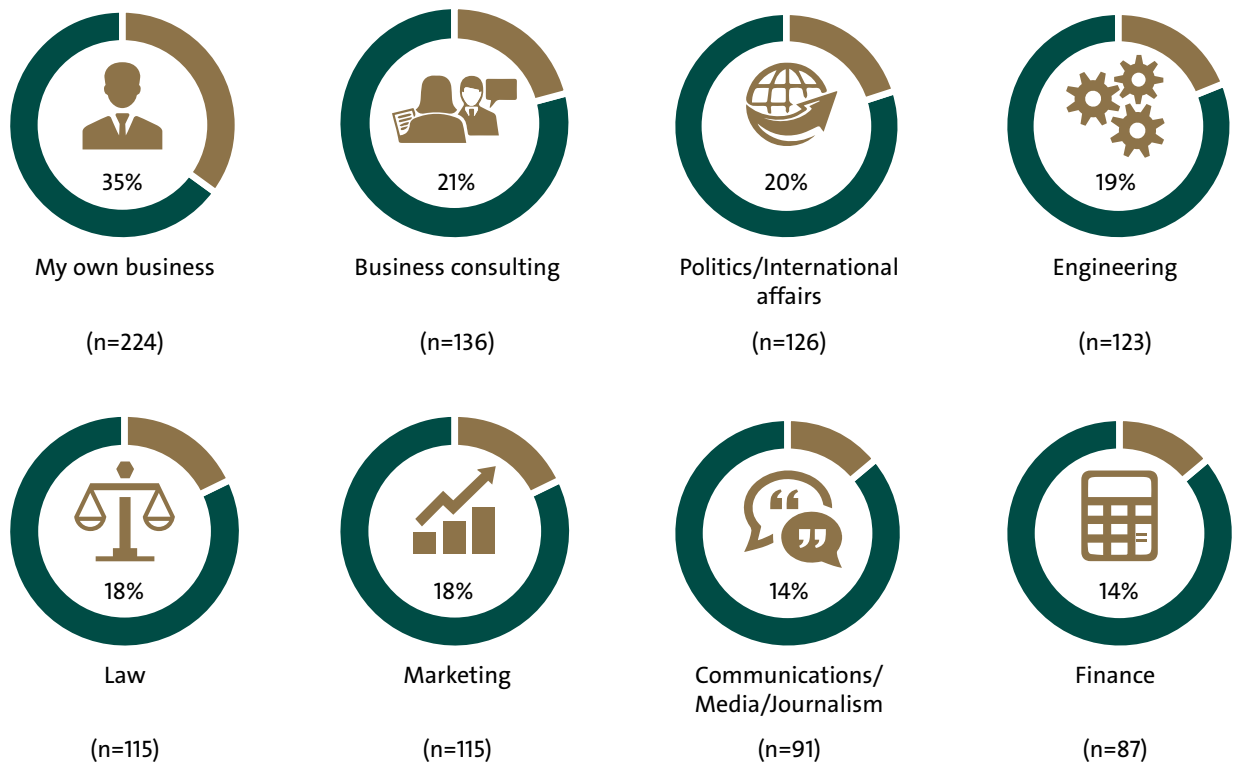


Figure 12. University students and graduates' careers of interest

- The quantitative survey found that over a quarter of university students (28 percent) were studying business administration. One in five high school students surveyed were thinking about studying this as a major (*Figure 13*).
- The quantitative survey found that only 3 percent of high school students were considering studying teaching and education (*Figure 13*).
- Most mentioned examples of a dream job by parents is cited to be 'joining the military', 'becoming an engineer' and 'working with the police'.



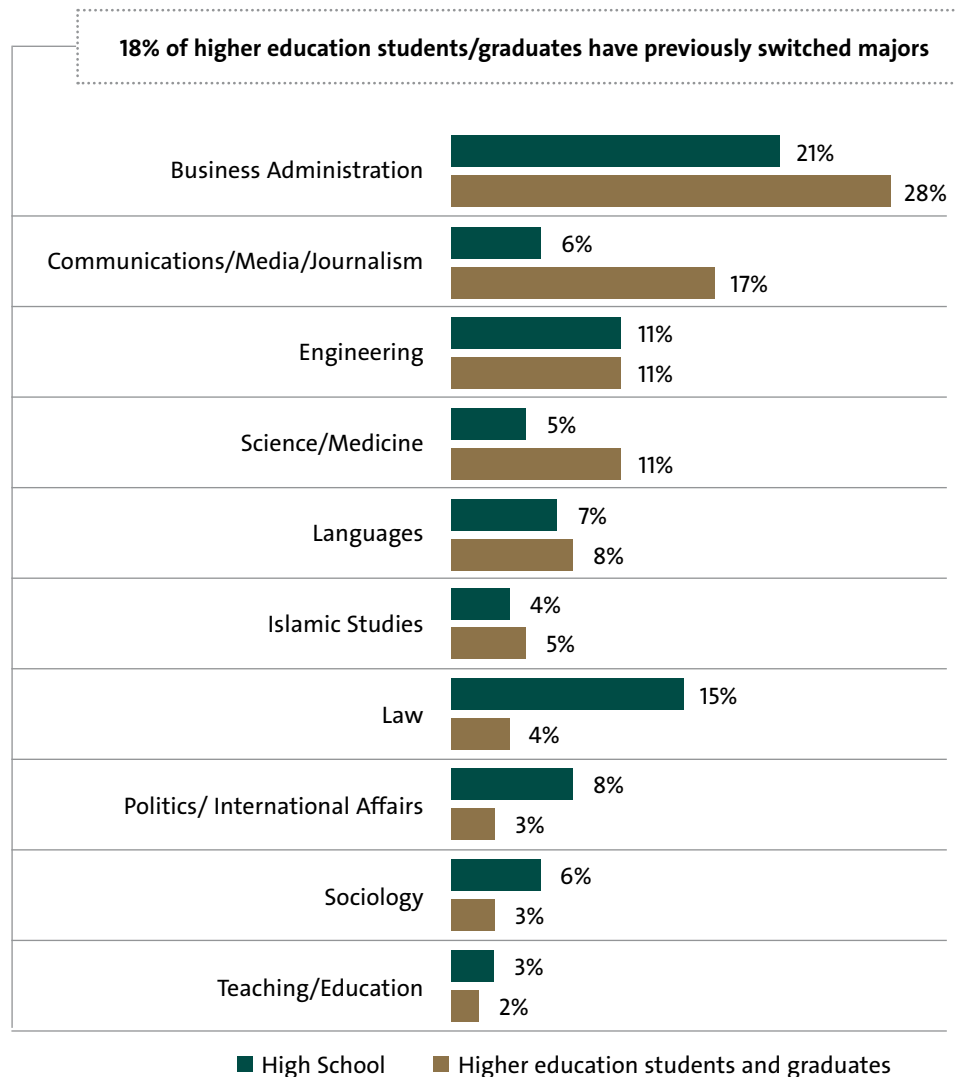


Figure 13. *Majors considered by high school students and undertaken by higher education students and graduates*

Discussion

Students have mentioned they want to have a career, although not all students have formed a clear idea of what this might look like or what it might involve. High school students, university students and graduates held only a general idea of their preferred careers. They still expect to explore other options before deciding. However, before they can select a career path, it would be beneficial if they were exposed to, and gained experience in, what a particular career is like and which skills, knowledge and attributes they would need to have to be successful in it.

Many of the respondents from the private and government sector cited that there is a need to educate the youth on different career

opportunities that are available in the market. Additionally, they believe that students should be guided to make more informed career decisions at the right time. Most high school students' career considerations are still at the early, formative stages. There seems to be more emphasis placed on the type of university or college that they will attend, rather than the kind of work that interests them. Conversely, many of the higher education students have started to form stronger opinions about the kind of work they find interesting; suggesting that attitudes and opinions about careers may begin to change once students reach university and they are exposed more to the world of work.



Career awareness programs should start as early as possible in a child's education in order for them to learn about the concept of what work is, the reason for working, the different types of work and the diverse range of career opportunities that are available to them. This will make their learning more purposeful. Many of the university students cited they would typically still consider the most common career options available, such as engineering, business management, or exclusively pursuing employment opportunities at Qatari companies. This suggests that many of the university students and graduates are not selecting majors that are most related to their personal strengths and preferences.

The preferred career option for those who do not go to university or college is most often the Military, Ministry of Interior or business ownership. For many students, these career options are the most familiar choices, influenced by the significant proportion of the Qatari population already working in these industries and sectors. There seems to be a low awareness of other vocational, less common

and emerging career opportunities in Qatar. Job roles in fields such as human resources, nursing, teaching, finance, hospitality and information technology were mentioned by stakeholders as being the most difficult to recruit for, because of the low level of interest and awareness within these sectors within the Qatari community. The survey results show that careers in these sectors are least considered as viable career options.

These findings support the hypothesis that the limited range of careers currently considered by Qatari nationals is a potential hindrance to the nation achieving its vision of economic diversity. There is a considerable amount of work that can still be performed to promote better awareness of career options that expand beyond the most common paths of engineering and business management. Generating awareness and understanding of the steps; from subject choices at secondary school to majors at university, to graduate positions and the type of organization to work for; is essential to following a well-planned career pathway and ensuring critical decisions are made correctly.

5.1.3 Sub-theme 3: Access to career path information for parents

‘Information’ is regarded as data or facts provided or learned about something or someone. Therefore, ‘career path information’ can be defined as data and facts provided or learned about a particular career path.

The key findings below summarize the findings from the survey regarding the ‘access to career path information for parents’ sub-theme.

Key findings

- Just less than half of parents in this study (49 percent) are interested in receiving career development support.
- Many parents quoted that “we need information on the labor market situation for different industries”; “help us to learn how to motivate students so that they are

encouraged to take the needed action to reach their desired goal”; “full knowledge of what needs to be done to achieve a happy future for the child and knowledge of the basics of choosing a career path and how to deal with recruiters”.

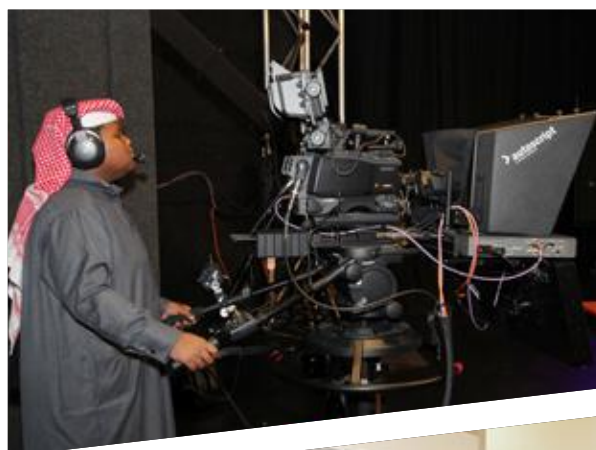
Discussion

Parents have cited their challenges around the limited access to information of the various career opportunities that are available to them and their children. There is evidence that supports the perception that there are limited career awareness programs for both parents and students. This supports the findings from the career awareness sub-theme. In most cases, parents gain and share knowledge from friends and family members.

Most parents are aware of the common career options such as military officers, engineering, business ownership and jobs in the government sector, but show little knowledge or awareness of alternative career options in the market. In many cases, parents use the experience of other families to guide and steer their children towards choosing a ‘successful’ career, based either on the value that is placed on the career path and/or the successes or failures observed by others. Parents feel that these familiar career options are viable and create the greatest job security for their children. Parents have also stated that they are not entirely certain what careers are best for their children, even if they have been directing their children towards a particular career path.

Many stakeholders share the belief that a crucial part of successfully expanding awareness and consideration of a more diverse

range of careers lies in targeting parents as an independent segment. There is an opportunity to work more closely with parents at a national level to encourage them to support their children in considering alternative career pathways. This will help Qatar achieve its vision of a diversified economy and workforce.



5.2 Theme 2: Social influence

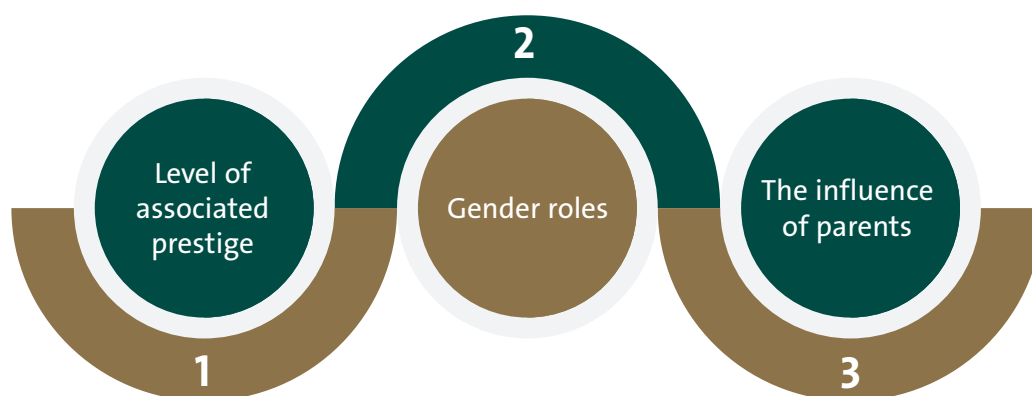
Choosing the right career can be a difficult decision for many students, especially during their formative years, when basic learning and development occurs and students are starting to understand the nature of work and what it takes to hold down a regular job. Children at a young age may often start to form ideas of what they would like to do, such as a being a pilot, police officer, doctor etc. However, only when students begin to explore and become more self-aware of their personal interests and strengths, do they start to develop firmer ideas of what their future career may entail. Effective career development or career management happens over a long period and involves a constant re-evaluation of personal objectives, interests, skills and opportunities.

Many external factors influence a student's career decision in Qatar, such as parents, career counselors, peers, the socio-economic conditions, cultural context or role models. This decision making process very often involves

observing others, gaining industry exposure and experience through trial-and-error before deciding on a career choice that fits best.

The research examined the extent to which social influences play a role in shaping student career choices in Qatar. Qatar's 2030 National Vision sets out clear objectives for better opportunities and a better way of life for the country's citizens and articulates objectives for an increased and diversified participation of Qataris in the workforce.⁷ Meeting the aspirations of a long-term vision, such as that of the Qatar National Vision 2030, is going to need a clear matching of the skills needs of the country with skills and capabilities of young Qataris graduating. Choosing the most appropriate career path is becoming critical for young Qataris if they are going to play their part in creating a prosperous and sustainable Qatar and contributing to meeting the aspirations of the Qatar National Vision.

Three sub-themes relating to social influence emerged from the findings:



These sub-themes are investigated further below.

⁷ Qatar General Secretariat for Development Planning. "Qatar National Vision 2030". Doha. (2008).

5.2.1 Sub-theme 1: Level of associated prestige

Roles with higher social status and a higher level of prestige, are likely to attract greater admiration from the community, friends, and relatives. Roles with a higher perceived social status are those that offer higher remuneration, job security, attractive benefits

and quicker promotions. The more prestigious a career is perceived to be, the greater the level of interest and participation. The level of prestige associated with a role is a major factor influencing the choice of careers in Qatar.

Key findings

- The quantitative survey found that 90 percent of all students and graduates, and 87 percent of parents; consider a high salary as the most important factor when choosing a job (Figure 14).
- In addition to this, 78 percent of all students and graduates said it is true of them that 'salary is the most important thing to me' (Figure 16). This attitude is supported by Qatari parents, with 69 percent of parents either 'agreeing' or 'completely agreeing' that salary should be the most important consideration when choosing a job' (Figure 15).
- Six in ten Qatari students and graduates and parents rated the 'promise to be promoted quickly' as important when choosing a career (60 percent and 61 percent respectively) (Figure 14).
- Salary and promotions are considered more important than an organization that gives you the 'best training and development' (mentioned by 55 percent of all students and graduates, and 38 percent of parents) (Figure 14).

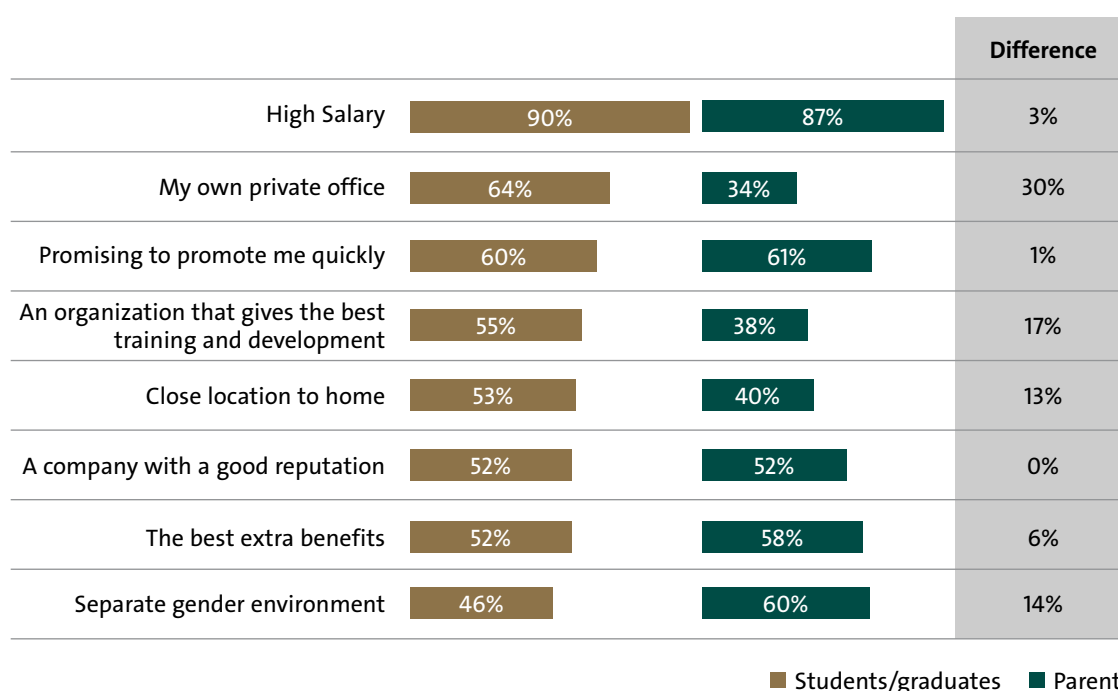


Figure 14. Influencing factors when choosing a career

- Parents who participated in the qualitative research mentioned that they ultimately wanted to have their children work in a sector that can provide prestige, security and financial reward.
- 71 percent of parents either completely agree or agree that ‘a job in a government organization is better than a job in a private organization’ (Figure 15). Although parents were not asked why this is the case, the data suggests that it is because of the level of associated prestige.
- A high percentage (71 percent) of all students and graduates said it is true that ‘a job in government is better than a job in private organizations’ (Figure 16).
- Parents held the opinion that their children should not have to work hard. Two thirds of Qatari parents surveyed (66 percent) either ‘completely agreed’ or ‘agreed’ with the statement that their child should not have to work very long hours (Figure 15).
- Parents who participated in the qualitative research quoted that they will support their children in any career they choose, so long as it is ‘prestigious’, ‘secure’ and ‘financially rewarding’.

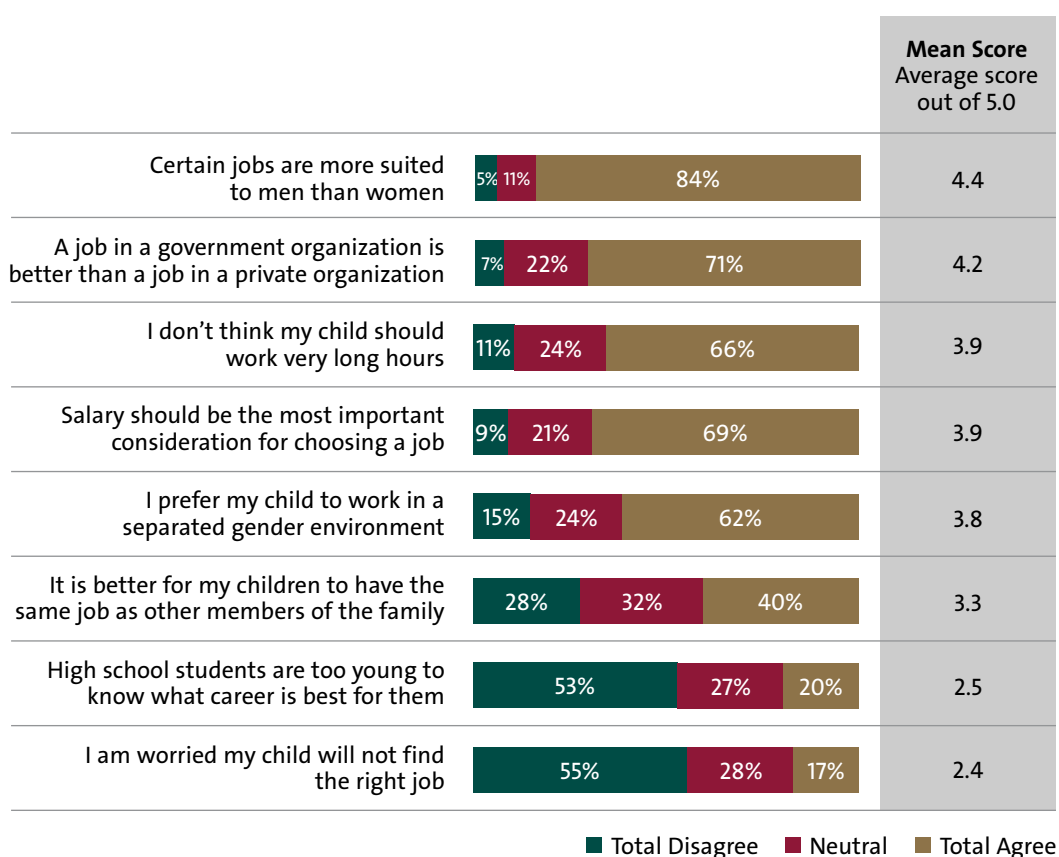


Figure 15. Parent career expectations for their children

- More than half of the higher education students and graduates surveyed (51 percent) said it is true of them that they wanted an easy and low stress job, (Figure 16).

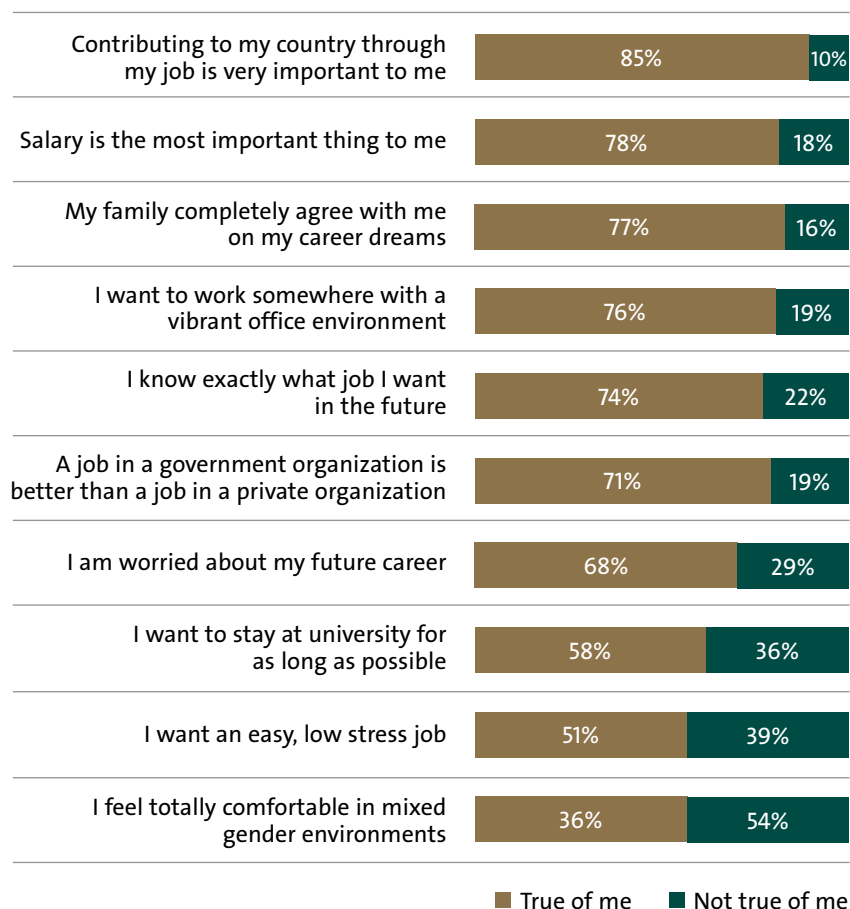


Figure 16. Student career expectations

Discussion

The concept of ‘prestige’ is a highly important one for both parents and students. It influences a student’s choice of education institutions, subjects and majors and possible career options from a relatively young age.

The research findings confirm that many Qatari nationals are more likely to associate a government sector job as more prestigious or desirable compared to a similar position in the private sector (Figure 15 and 16). A high 71 percent of university students and graduates said it is true that ‘a job in government is better than a job in private organizations’ (Figure 16). This is because the incentives that are offered by the government sector jobs are important

factors that are taken into consideration by most of the students and graduates when choosing a job. These incentives include higher salaries, flexible and/or reduced working hours, less stressful working day and greater job security. Stakeholders claimed that this societal mindset is so strong amongst Qatari nationals, that the private sector generally finds it difficult to compete with the government sector on remuneration and benefits packages, role status and, therefore, the ability to attract and recruit students into private sector organizations. The research suggests that greater importance is placed on monetary gain, prestige and position, rather than personal growth and development.



Perceptions about role prestige are contributing to a career culture where important career decisions are motivated by external factors such as prestige and salary, rather than on internal factors, such as personal passions and interests.

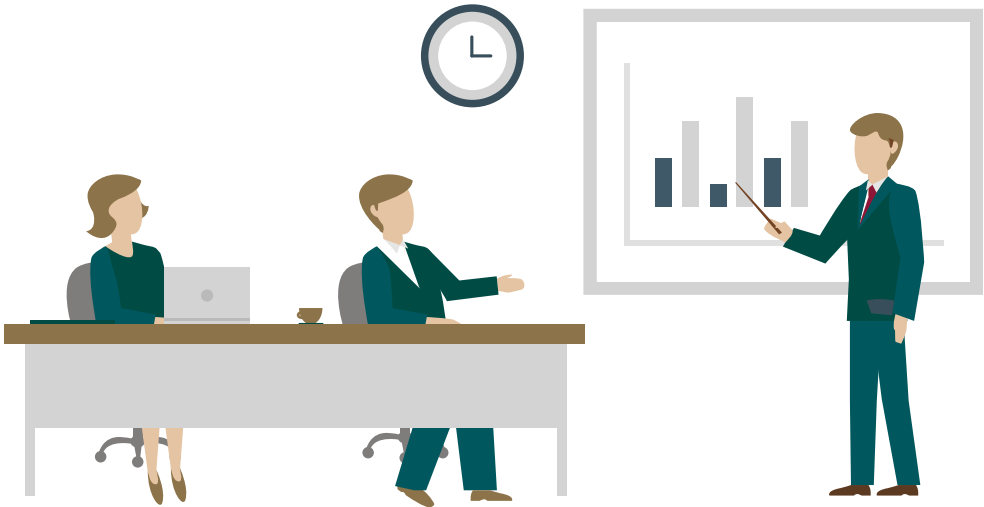
The findings in this research have also indicated that parents are not overly worried about their children finding employment (Figure 15). The parents' perceptions, together with the Qatarization employment quota that organizations need to achieve, suggests that there is a general belief that secure, prestigious and well-paying government sector jobs are readily available and waiting for Qatari nationals after graduation. This can provide little incentive for students and graduates to strive for career opportunities that offer growth and development in diverse sectors. However, on the contrary to previous research

conducted on youth challenges within the GCC countries, the government sector is over staffed with the majority of the Qatari workforce⁸. Therefore, the ability to secure employment in government sectors is not readily available. This contributes in many graduates being unemployed.

When the students were asked about their career expectations, the majority commented that, 'contributing to my country through my job is very important to me' (Figure 16). However, this contradicts with the career choices made to work in the government and oil and gas sectors only, as contributing to one's country would involve developing the necessary skills and motivation to work in sectors that support the development of a diversified economy stretching beyond the 'traditional' career choices of the past.

⁸ Booz and Company. "Youth in the GCC Countries Meeting the Challenge". (2011). p.31

Several stakeholders who participated in the qualitative research mentioned that for many students, this extrinsically motivated mind-set would need to change in order to:



1	2	3	4
Generate awareness and consider a broader set of career choices.	Successfully foster a hardworking and ambitious career orientated culture.	Develop a generation of workers that earn their position through good performance and hard work rather than having a sense of entitlement.	Boost consideration of the private sector as a viable and significant career option.

Students can make poor career decisions due to lack of information, peer pressure, social modeling, or because of the associated prestige attached to certain careers without receiving adequate career guidance and career counseling. It is commonplace for students to change their views when making career decisions once they have a more in-depth understanding of the types of industries, skills and roles that are available. It is also a commonplace for students’ personal preferences to evolve when they start to experiment and learn through self-discovery about their strengths and interests.

There is evidently a need to encourage a more balanced approach to making career decisions that is motivated by both internal and external factors. This approach should place just as much importance on personal attributes, knowledge, expertise, and careers that can offer learning opportunities, rather than basing career choices purely on the associated level of prestige. This shift in mindset can contribute towards a more diverse, career-orientated culture that can positively enable informed career decisions and provide youth with the skills and motivation to effectively contribute towards society.

5.2.2 Sub-theme 2: Gender roles

Gender roles are an important factor to consider when discussing career development in the context of Qatar. Both segments are equally necessary to participate in the working world, developing human capital in order to build a diversified sustainable economy. However, in a society where a degree of gender segregation is part of everyday life, this often poses challenges to the career choices that are acceptable for both men and women. There are

significant gender differences when it comes to labor force participation. Qatari women are the least represented in senior or leadership positions in both private and government sectors⁹. It is necessary to take into account the cultural context in Qatar and recognize the social barriers faced by many women that can influence their academic major and career choices.

Key findings

- As high as 84 percent of parents participating in the quantitative research 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that 'certain jobs are more suited to men than women' (Figure 15).
 - More than six in ten parents (62 percent) prefer their child to work in a gender-segregated environment, while 54 percent
- of higher education students and graduates said they do not feel completely comfortable working in a mixed gender environment (Figure 15 and 16 respectively).
 - 60 percent of graduates are still looking for employment after graduating, of which most are female (92 percent) (Figure 17).



Figure 17. Graduate unemployment

- The qualitative research also revealed that the female students overwhelmingly sought governmental jobs, because of the flexible working hours, attractive remuneration packages and segregated office spaces.
- Stakeholders that participated in the research held a perception that there is a lack of meaningful representation of Qatari females in certain industries and in leadership positions.

⁹ Elder, Dell and Vuollo, Mirka, "Qatari Women in the Workforce". (August 2008). RAND Education Working Paper No. WR-612-QATAR.

- Male students are slightly more likely to show interest in studying science/medicine and mathematics/science than females; while female students are more likely than males to consider Islamic studies, sociology, art/design and teaching (Figure 18).
- There is little difference in male and female preference for careers such as engineering (49 percent of those who prefer engineering as a career are males and 51 percent are female) (Figure 18).

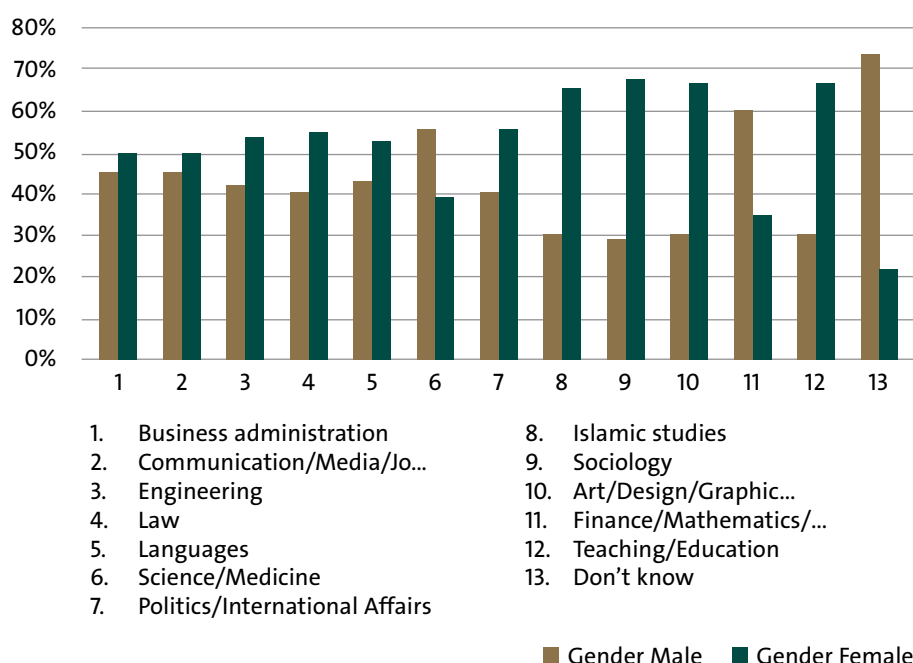


Figure 18. Majors selected by male and female students and graduates

Discussion

Qatari nationals hold a range of gender-specific preferences and job requirements that are prerequisites when making career choices. The research found that there is a strong preference for the youth to work in an environment that maintains the traditions of the Qatari culture. In particular, the traditions relating to gender segregation and gender-appropriate duties and working environments.

The research findings have suggested that parents influence their sons and daughters differently regarding possible career paths. Daughters are encouraged to seek culturally acceptable jobs such as teaching or government jobs, with flexible working hours, attractive remuneration packages and segregated office spaces. Sons however, have greater expectations placed on them to consider roles that have a higher social status, such as engineering and the military. Respondents from the qualitative researched cited that there is less pressure

for the females to think about their careers during childhood, whereas the males tend to be 'reared' for certain jobs from a young age.

Through the focus group discussions with female students, it was identified that parents may create certain barriers preventing their daughters from following their preferred career paths. An example of such a barrier is only allowing their daughters to study at a gender-segregated university, which limits the choices of academic majors that female students can select to Islamic studies, sociology, art/design and teaching. Qatar University is the most preferred option for parents with daughters, even though other universities could be better suited to their daughter's interests and needs. Students from the qualitative research also believe that an education at international universities is superior to that of local universities.

However, many female students are not permitted to attend universities abroad which limits them to the local universities, such as Qatar University. Conversely, some male secondary school respondents expressed a strong preference to study abroad, exposing

them to more diverse qualification options. Many female students identified a number of barriers that prevent them from following a preferred career option. The barriers identified by many of the female student respondents during the qualitative research are:

1	2	3	4
Mixed gender university campuses	Male dominated industries	Non-female friendly workplaces	Home duties
Many female students are restricted to studying the subject majors offered at Qatar University only, as it is the only university that has a segregated campus.	Some career options are not considered culturally appropriate for females, especially those that are labor intensive or considered to be relatively masculine such as engineering and the military.	Women are less likely to compete for the jobs in the private sector, which they consider non-female friendly work environments.	Husbands can prevent their wives from working, preferring them to stay at home to raise the children.

The findings relating to gender roles reflect the cultural beliefs within Qatari society that women are more ‘suited’ to some industries only, such as teaching or social sciences. As a result, many of the female students may not get the opportunity to gain exposure or get educated in marketable skill sets, such as mathematics, medicine and sciences. This limits their future opportunity to obtain available jobs in the labor market. Interestingly, over half of the females surveyed were interested in engineering as a future career choice, however not many of them pursue these roles as these types of roles are perceived to be male-dominated industries. The research findings have already shown that nearly all unemployed graduates are female (92 percent) (*Figure 17*), suggesting that females are less likely to enter the workforce immediately compared to their male counterparts because of the fewer vacant opportunities that are readily available in the government sectors. This ultimately results in a

larger percentage of the female graduates being unemployed, which in turn, raises graduate unemployment rate in the country.

The social identities that have been formed by the traditional thinking of gender roles are an important factor influencing national career development, as it influences how career choices are made amongst many female students. However, it appears from the interviews and focus group discussions that many young Qatari women are ambitious, interested in having satisfying careers, are willing to work hard and eager to participate in the working world. This segment of employable female graduates is an essential prospect to help achieve the Qatar National Vision 2030 human development pillar. Supporting Qatari women to follow careers of their choice can help achieve Qatar’s economic development goals.



5.2.3 Sub-theme 3: The influence of parents

Parents influence the level of education or training that their children achieve, the knowledge they have about work and different occupations, the beliefs and attitudes they have to working, and the motivation they have to succeed. Students mostly learned these behaviors and attitudes from their parents sub-consciously during their formative years.

Key findings

- The qualitative research found that parents believe their children should follow their dreams and desires to be happy and motivated. However, parents tended to hold strong opinions on what career their children, especially their sons, should pursue upon graduation.
- The survey found that 65 percent of Qatari students went to their parents for career advice. Some 8 percent of higher education students and graduates said they would choose or had chosen their major based on their parents' preferred option (*Figure 19*).
- Comparatively, only 78 percent of parents said their children relied on them for career development and advice (*Figure 19*).
- In addition, 41 percent of higher education students and graduates sought career advice from their peers and friends. Compared to 30 percent of parents who also discussed the best approach to their child's career development with friends (*Figure 19*).

- The survey found that 26 percent of higher education students and graduates sought career advice from siblings. Comparatively, 17 percent of parents also discussed the best approach to their child's career development with siblings (*Figure 19*).
- The qualitative research also found that older siblings and extended family members often encouraged their family members to attend the same university or follow the same career pathway.
- Among the Qatari parents surveyed, 40 percent either 'agreed' or 'completely agreed' with the statement, 'it is better for my child to have the same job as other members of the family' (*Figure 15*).

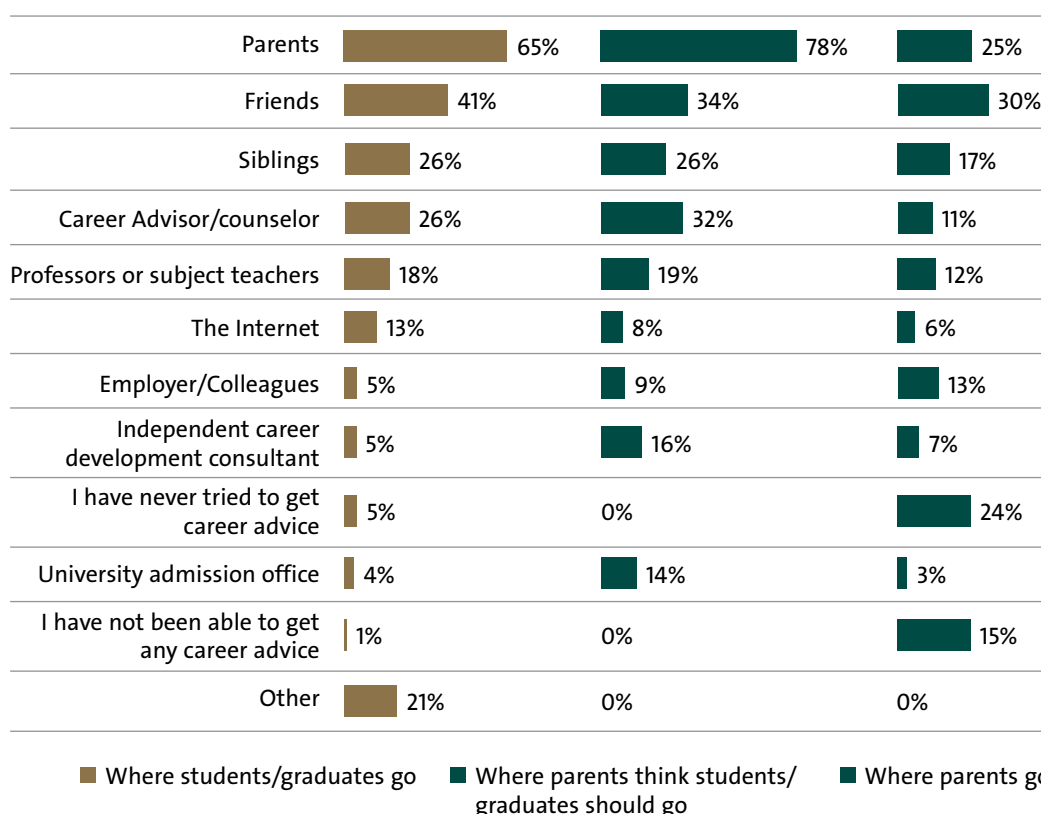


Figure 19. Career support channels

- The quantitative survey also found that three in ten Qatari parents (30 percent) said they were happy with any career their child chose, but had their own ideas on what they should choose (*Figure 20*).
- Some 5 percent of Qatari parents said they would only support their child in choosing from certain career options (*Figure 20*).

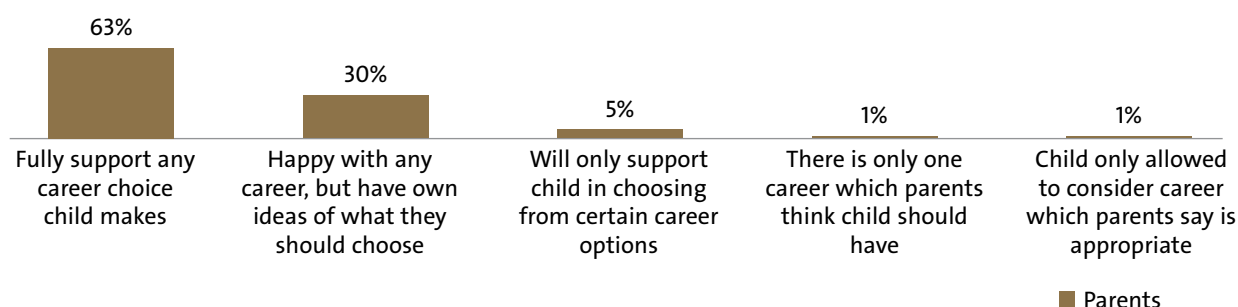


Figure 20. Parents involvement in their children's career choices

- A large group of parents are employed in the government sector (45 percent), and 16 percent are currently not working (*Figure 21*).

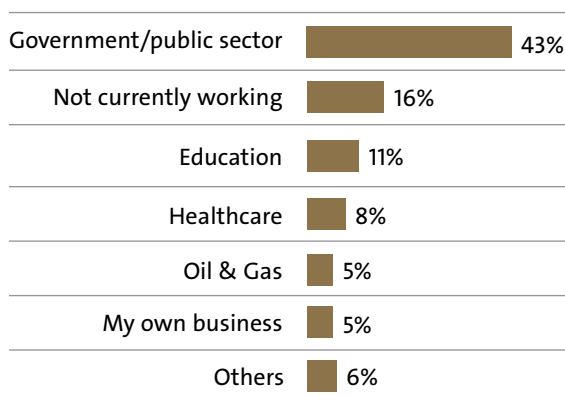


Figure 21. Parents sector of employment

Discussion

Parents were asked to describe the extent to which they are involved in their children's decision on career choices. They were also asked where they think their children should go to seek career advice and where they, as parents, would seek advice on how to guide their own children's career choices.

The research confirms that parents have the most significant influence on their children's career development (*Figure 19*), and play a key role in supporting and guiding students in their career choices and the industry sectors they decide to work in. There is broad agreement amongst stakeholders that peers, siblings and career counselors are also important influencers. However, professors, school teachers and professionals have much less of an influence over their children's career choices.

A number of career counselors cited that Qatari students are often overruled by their parents when making university and subject choice selections. Parents seem to provide guidance and support based on what they perceive to be important or what is most familiar to them. The research further confirms that the majority of the parents also work in the government sector

(*Figure 21*). This suggests that when students begin to explore career paths, they do not have any alternative role models that can expose them to different career paths and are further encouraged to follow the same career paths as family members (*Figure 19*). Stakeholders from the private and government sectors, as well as career counselors, suggest that career awareness programs should target parents to educate them on how to best support and assist their children to make independent career choices, rather than on those careers that seem to be more prestigious and most familiar within the community.

This reinforces the hypothesis that there is limited career awareness information relating to labor market exposure. Parents need to become more aware themselves to be able to offer their children the necessary support and encouragement to consider a more diverse range of career options and make a more considered career decision. They need to improve their ability to motivate and encourage their children to choose a career that supports the Qatar National Vision of a diversified, knowledge-based economy.



5.3 Theme 3: Skills gap

There are careers today that did not exist generations ago. Interestingly, it is estimated that some 65 percent of children entering primary school today will likely work in roles that currently do not exist in the labor market¹⁰.

The world of work is constantly evolving; so too do the skills sets that the labor market demands. According to the Global Economic Forum, there is a worldwide expectation that certain routine type jobs will eventually become obsolete, such as office administrative work. Strong employment growth is anticipated across the architectural, engineering, computer, and mathematical job families¹¹, making these skills in high demand for the future. Although these changes in labor markets vary from industry and region, it advocates a compelling case for policy makers, educational institutions

and students to anticipate and prepare for future skills requirements.

Globally competitive economies need trained and qualified people to exploit opportunities and deliver economic growth. Economies, large and small, are focused on making sure that they have the right knowledge, experience and skills, both in their experienced work force and their young population. Qatar has already explored the growing skills gap as a major challenge that threatens economic growth¹² and has acknowledged the importance of developing a diversified, knowledge-based economy.

Two of the largest and most diverse economies in the world, the USA and the UK, have been focused for some time on developing Science, Technology,

¹⁰ World Economic Forum "The Future of Jobs, Employment, Skills and Workforce Strategy for the Fourth Industrial Revolution" (January, 2016).

¹¹ Ibid

¹² Ernst and Young, "How will the GCC close the skills gap?" (2015).

Engineering and Mathematics skills (STEM). This starts from school-aged children. American policy makers set targets for STEM education¹³. The UK government, under the auspices of the Wakeham Review, investigated those disciplines where “employment outcomes appear to be particularly poor, and where it can therefore be inferred that graduate skills and knowledge are not delivering what the associated economy and business community require”¹⁴. The UK economy has a larger and more diverse private sector than Qatar. However, what Qatar

can learn from the Wakeham Report, is that better collaboration is needed between the private sector and higher education. This will ensure that appropriately educated and skilled graduates enter the economy.

Survey participants were questioned on their opinions regarding the skills gaps currently existing amongst graduates entering the labor market in relation to the skills that are in demand.

Three sub-themes, relating to skills gaps, emerged from the findings:



These sub-themes are investigated further below.

5.3.1 Sub-theme 1: Curricula alignment to skills in demand

Understanding the changes in both the global and local labor markets can provide valuable insight into the evolving skill sets that can help prepare graduates for the skills needed for today and in the future. Therefore, it becomes a necessity to forecast and plan future skill requirements and align learning curricula and training programs.

Many government and educational institutes from various countries, such as Australia, Canada, France, UK and the USA, have been conducting national skills forecasting research on a regular basis for some time. This research is then presented and shared with all relevant interested stakeholders, such as government, employers, individuals and service providers¹⁵.

¹³ U.S. Department of Education [<https://www.ed.gov/>]

¹⁴ Wakeham, William. “Wakeham Review of STEM Degree Provision and Graduate Employability”. (2015). updated May 2016.

¹⁵ OECD. “Better Skills, Better Jobs, Better Lives: A Strategic Approach to Education and Skills Policies for the United Arab Emirates”. (2015).

Key findings

- Some parents who participated in focus group discussions expressed frustration that the government has not been doing enough to coordinate and align curricula at high schools and universities to address the current and future skill gaps in the labor market.
- Six in ten parents (60 percent) who participated in the quantitative research said that 'labor market awareness' should become a priority information area provided to students and graduates. More than a third of higher education students and graduates (37 percent), and 22 percent of high school students, agree with this priority area (Figure 22).

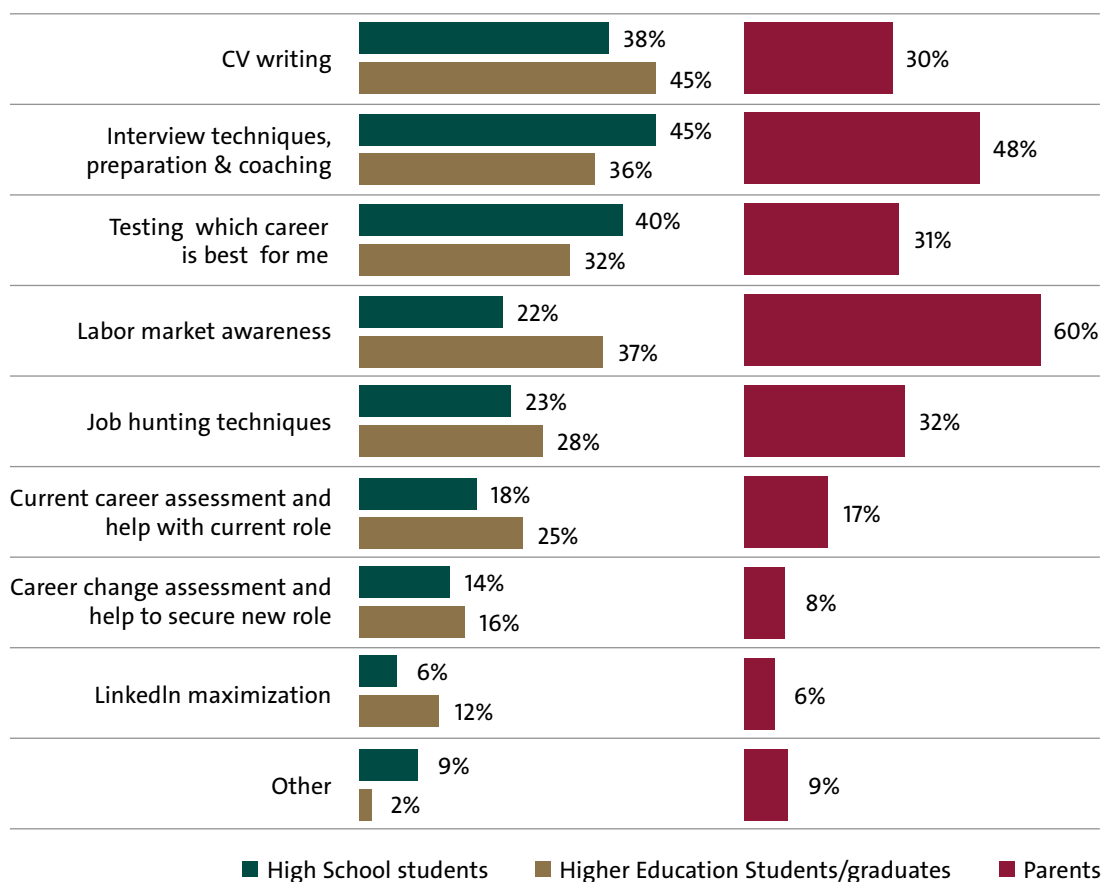


Figure 22. Career development priorities

- One parent from the qualitative research mentioned that there is an overflow of Qatari graduates with identical educational qualifications and skill sets, but only a limited number of roles are available in the labor market for graduates with these qualifications.



Discussion

The research findings gathered by the respondents from the private and government sectors, career counselors, training and development institutions, students and parents all agreed that there is 'limited up-to-date labor market information in Qatar'. Many of the respondents from the research all seem to have limited knowledge of what skills the market is currently looking for and the range of career options that are available in Qatar. As a result, many of the Qatari students are graduating with the same qualifications, such as business administration, communications/media/journalism and law (Figure 13), which may be in low demand by the labor market. Conversely, less popular fields of study, such as science and medicine (Figure 13), may be more in demand. It seems that there is an oversupply of graduates with the same qualifications and skills sets, which results in a high level of graduate unemployment (Figure 17). This suggests that there is a misalignment between the supply and demand of skills in the labor market. It is therefore questionable whether the educational systems have identified the skills Qatar needs to

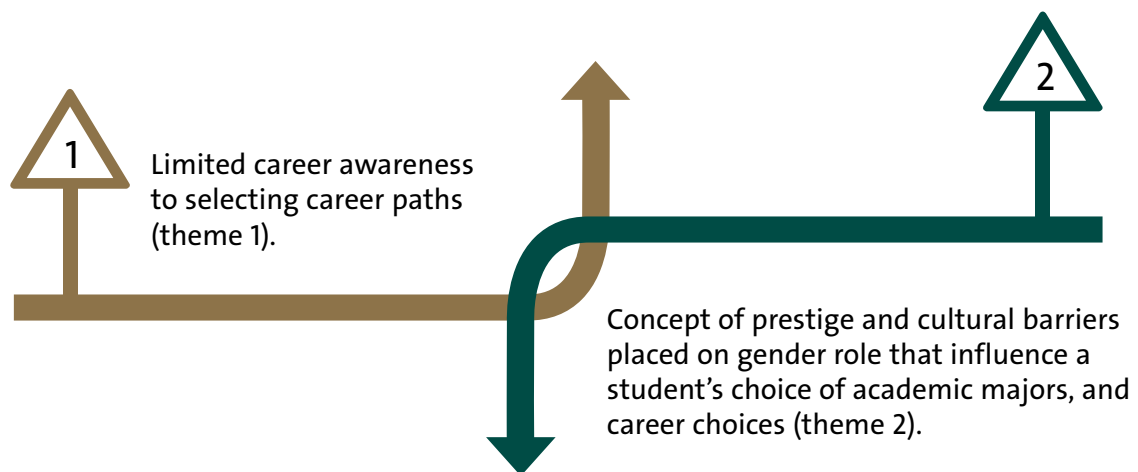
be a globally competitive economy; and if they are collaborating sufficiently with private-sector organizations to forecast future skill requirements.

Multiple stakeholders from both higher education and corporate entities highlighted the need to plan educational strategies that are based on accurate labor market information and projections. Similarly, parents and students both expressed a desire to obtain information about new industries and future skills to help improve their career planning and to choose majors that meet future labor market needs. For this reason, future employers, ministries and educational institutions have a shared responsibility to help align curricula to the fields in higher demand that can better prepare graduates for the skills needed for today and in the future. Simultaneously, parents, students and graduates also have a responsibility to actively participate in learning opportunities that help cultivate the necessary skills that contribute to Qatar's economic growth.

5.3.2 Sub-theme 2: Misalignment of academic majors to selected career paths

One strategy to minimize the skills gap is to assist students to study academic majors that align to the career path they ultimately select. There is a risk that if not guided correctly in the early developmental stages, students may follow career paths that they may not be suited for, or studied towards. This is often a result of students being unaware and unsure of which career path to pursue before they

choose a major, or being influenced to follow a career that may not be suitable to them. This misalignment can create a significant skills gap in the market place. A number of data points from the previous themes discussed in this report, support the hypothesis that there is a misalignment of academic majors to selected career paths, such as:



Key findings

- Almost three in ten higher education students and graduates (29 percent) consider their career after they have chosen their university major (*Figure 11*).
- Parents, as well as university students and graduates, agree that career decisions are most often made before choosing a university major (mentioned by 40 percent and 30 percent respectively) (*Figure 11 and 23*).

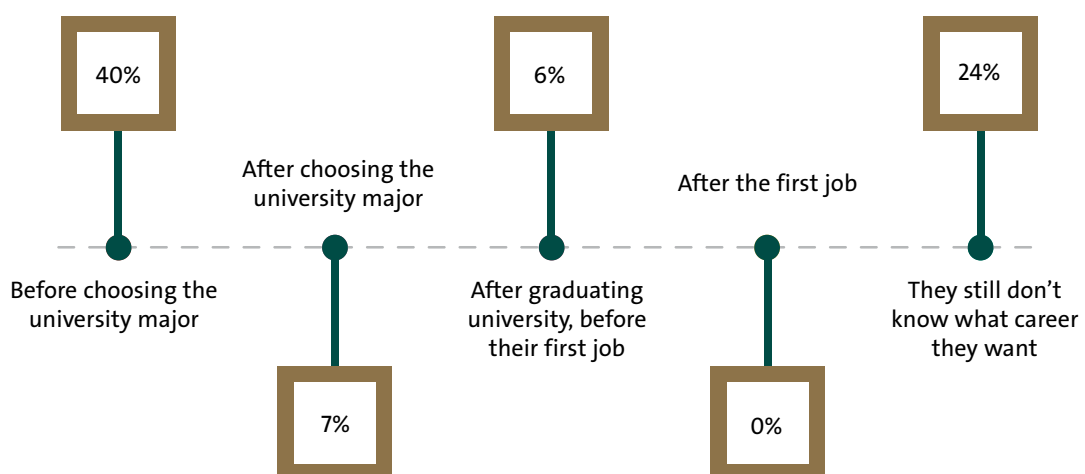


Figure 23. Timeframe: When parents say a career is chosen

- Of the university students and graduates surveyed, 16 percent are sponsored by an organization that pays their university fees. Only 29 percent of these students and graduates said they chose their sponsor because it was the organization they wanted to work for. Approximately one in five university students and graduates indicated that they had limited choice and accepted the only sponsorship that was offered to them (*Figure 24*).

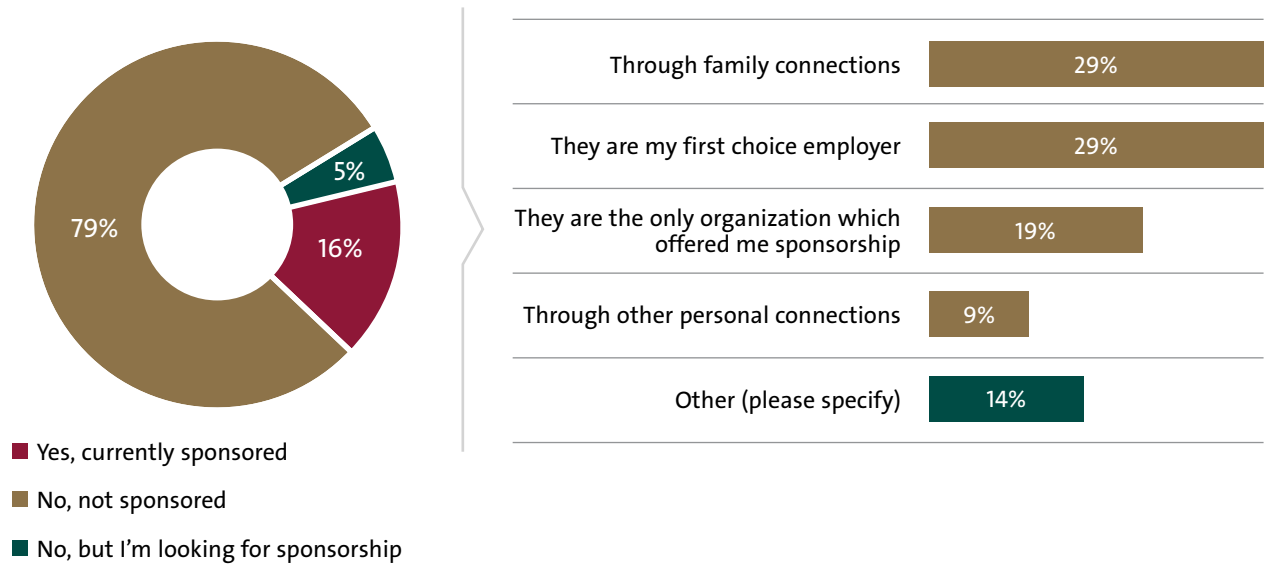


Figure 24. University students sponsorship status

- Half of the female respondents (51 percent) would prefer engineering as a choice of career, compared to 49 percent of males (*Figure 18*).
- The majority of the university students and graduates surveyed (70 percent), selected a university major based on their personal interests and strengths. Whereas 48 percent select a major based on the best option for their planned career (*Figure 25*).

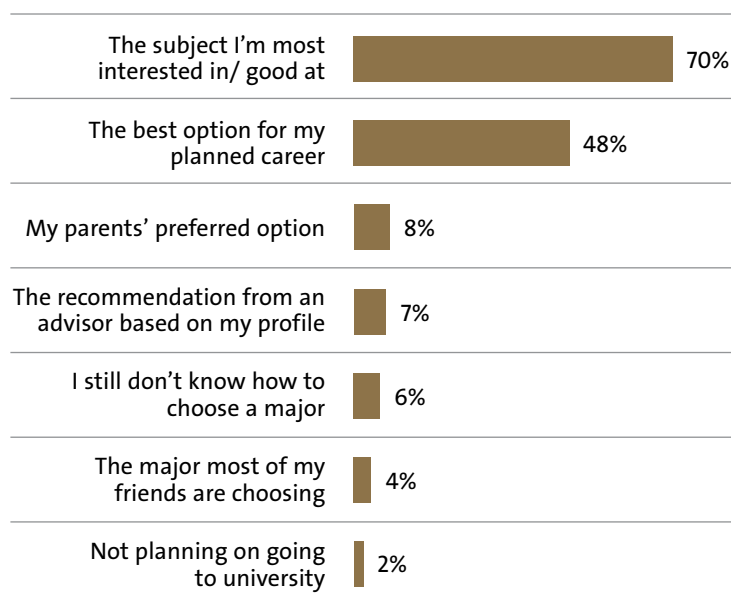


Figure 25. Reasons university students and graduates choose a major

Discussion

The research identifies that the majority of university students and graduates surveyed (70 percent), select a university major based on their personal interests and strengths. 48 percent select a major based on the best option for their intended career (*Figure 16*). The research also indicates that many university students and graduates (29 percent) are selecting a career path after they have already chosen a university major (*Figure 17*). This suggests that students may be selecting majors that are not necessarily aligned to the careers they ultimately pursue. It is therefore reasonable to assume that most students may not know what career they wish to pursue at the stage of selecting their academic majors. Majors are understandably selected based on personal strengths and interests,

as well as academic results from entry-level exams. Students have therefore used their undergraduate studies to explore and assess if they would be suited to that particular career in the long term. However, the career they ultimately follow may be vastly different to their qualification. This supports the hypothesis that a misalignment exists in Qatar between the academic major chosen by students and the career path they ultimately select.

A few examples have been cited from respondents during the qualitative research that indicate graduates apply for, and are selected in, positions in certain sectors without having a good knowledge of what these positions entail. This may include:

1	2	3	4
Not knowing which department they will work in.	Not understanding which role they will be fulfilling.	Not having a formal qualification aligned to their role.	Accepting a role that is not matched to their personal preferences, interests or strengths.

A common viewpoint that emerged from the qualitative research was that many organizations are employing a numerical approach to the Qatarization strategy, by recruiting national staff to fill the quotas regardless of the candidate's ability to fulfill the job responsibilities. Concurrently, university students have been accepting positions in companies that are offering attractive sponsorships (*Figure 24*). This suggests that there are students who accept scholarships and corporate sponsorships that may not necessarily align to their preferred career paths. It is most often the larger, well-funded organizations that can offer these scholarships and sponsorships. These organizations invest heavily in creating lucrative sponsorship structures that could be attracting graduates with skill sets that are not suited to the specific roles they fill. This may

diminish the quality and level of engagement of the organization's workforce, resulting in the undermining of sustainable national career development.

In Theme 2, the research points out that a number of social influences, such as the level of associated prestige and gender roles also influence the career choices that are made. For example, half of the female students and graduates surveyed cited that they are interested in careers in engineering (*Figure 18*). However, they do not follow these career paths, as they are not perceived as suitable for women. Therefore, it can be inferred that many female students are selecting majors that are misaligned to their personal preferences, interests and likely strengths.

Qatar Petroleum, Shell Qatar and Qatar Tourism Authority have started to support career development programs and are taking initiatives to promote STEM¹⁶ to school students through their Energy World Qatar exhibition. Energy World Qatar was launched in November 2015 and is an interactive exhibition that celebrates STEM. It aims to inspire young people to embrace

STEM skills in order to become the scientists, engineers, technologists, innovators and leaders of tomorrow. Students will benefit from career development initiatives such as these, together with psychometric assessments, to provide insights and guidance when selecting academic majors and seeking careers that are best suited to their strengths and skill sets.

5.3.3 Sub-theme 3: Soft skills development

‘Soft skills’ refers to a combination of competencies that are necessary for workplace success. It includes the knowledge, behaviors, attitudes and personal qualities that enable people to effectively navigate through their environment, work well with others, handle workplace stress, and make better decisions to achieve personal and workplace goals. These skills are broadly applicable and complement other skills, such as technical, vocational and academic skills. Soft skills development is generally seen as central to human capital enhancement and workforce success. Students and graduates can develop their soft skills through workplace training, as well as a variety of other career development programs that provide hands-on exposure and experience in the working environment.

Key findings

- Several respondents during the qualitative research, particularly those in the training and development segment, mentioned gaps in soft skills amongst Qatari national students/graduates.
- Most (82 percent) higher education students and graduates participated in career development activities. However, given that these activities are compulsory for students, it is worth noting that the remaining 18 percent are still not participating in any career development activities (*Figure 26*).
- The most popular career development activities are those that involve hands-on experience, such as volunteering programs (36 percent), internships or work experience (35 percent), with a third of students and graduates having participated in career fairs (33 percent) (*Figure 26*).



¹⁶ Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

- Only a minority of students and recent graduates participate in activities that are related to training and skills development, such as CV writing (19 percent), presentation skills (18 percent), interview skills (16 percent) and training by independent organizations (9 percent) (Figure 26).

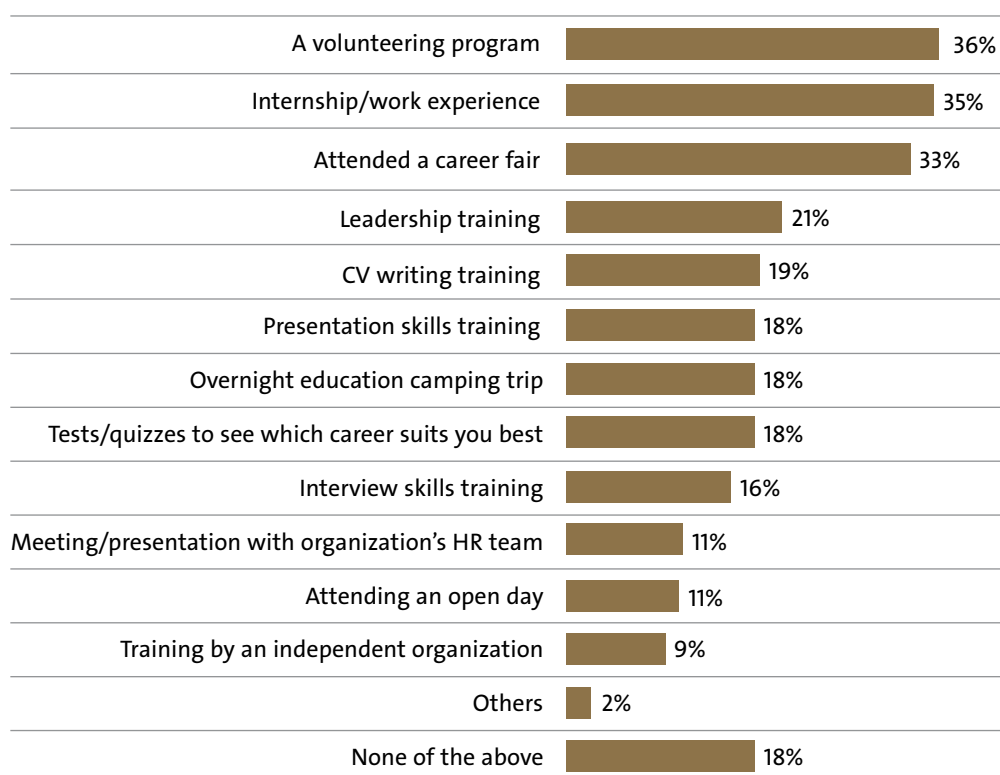


Figure 26. Higher education students and graduates' participation in career development activities

Discussion

In many economies, young people enter the world of work at an early age, taking on part-time work or voluntary work. Much of this also happens while studying at university to supplement living allowances received from parents, government or through bursaries. While other countries have a more competitive workplace environment, it would appear that the incentive to work amongst young Qatari nationals is not as strong, or even necessary. The research findings suggest that students in Qatar do not tend to undertake part-time work whilst studying at university or college. They, therefore, miss the early opportunities to explore different career options and to simultaneously develop basic experience and soft skills training that can prepare them for the working environment. A good example of such soft skills is effective

communication. This includes oral, written, non-verbal and listening skills, as well as time management, professional conduct, decision making and problem solving skills.

Career awareness activities enable educators to introduce technical skills, vocational and soft skills development into academic curricula, and is one of the most important levers within the nation's control to drive a more service-focused, diversified economy. According to a recent US study on 'Key Soft Skills that Foster Youth Workforce Success'¹⁷, it was observed that students who are competent in these soft skills are generally seen to be more effective in their job searches and interviews and are, therefore, more likely to be hired. It was further reported that students who show competence

¹⁷ Lippman, L., Ryberg, R., Carney, R. and K. Moore, "Workforce Connections: Key "Soft Skills" that foster Youth Workforce Success: Toward a Consensus across Fields", June 2015.



in soft skills are most often more productive, engaged and quickly promoted. Therefore making soft skills development central to human capital enhancement and workplace success.

Some respondents from the qualitative research indicated a general lack of interest in work and poor attitude towards workplace etiquette, skills and general work ethic that they believe originates from early childhood development. Examples cited include lack of respect for teachers and adults, disruption in the classroom and a sense of entitlement that supersedes the need for hard work. This may translate into poor soft skills development amongst students and graduates as they transition into the working world. For this reason, respondents believe that soft skills training should be incorporated into career development programs from a much earlier age.

Respondents have also observed that many Qatari nationals progress very quickly up the career ladder. This may be due to preferential treatment, family networks and influence, and Qatarization.

There are associated risks and consequences to progressing too quickly as necessary developmental experiences are often missed; resulting in many executives in positions who may be inexperienced and unprepared to take on some roles that require higher order thinking, such as problem solving, critical thinking, and decision making. These executives may be unable to manage systems and processes, interact with peers across all levels of work, regulate emotions in times of crisis, and manage and motivate people by providing assistance, direction and leadership as needed.

Soft skills training is usually introduced to students at university or when they enter the workplace. However, training organizations and employers have developed numerous additional community outreach programs aimed at developing soft skills amongst students in various stages of the school system. While these programs benefit the students who take part in them, there remains an opportunity for a broader, wide-reaching soft skills education system that involves students across all education levels.

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5.4 Theme 4: Career guidance

Career guidance is part of the Qatar National Development Strategy 2011- 2016 and is an essential component of promoting human capital development¹⁸. It is vitally important that students have access to good and accurate career information, receive guidance about the full range of career opportunities available to them and are provided with the necessary capabilities and skills that can encourage analytical thinking, innovation and entrepreneurship. Through effective career guidance initiatives, Qatar can produce graduates who are better prepared to participate in a modern, global economy that improves knowledge-based services¹⁹.

The world of work is constantly evolving and diversifying, and for this reason, many parents

would say that the working environment is very different from when they started their own careers. Students need the right support to enable and teach them to effectively manage their careers and allow them to “participate fully in economic, social, and political life and contribute to sustaining a prosperous society”²⁰. It is important to take into consideration when designing career development programs that, as careers diversify and evolve, it becomes more complex and challenging for students to make career decisions. Therefore, having access to a professional, well-coordinated, and relevant career guidance service that supports the development of skills, knowledge and experience needed for success, is an effective way to build a high-quality Qatari workforce.

¹⁸ Qatar General Secretariat for Development Planning, “Qatar National Development Strategy 2011-2016”. (2011) [http://www.mdps.gov.qa/en/knowledge/HomePagePublications/Qatar_NDS_reprint_complete_lowres_16May.pdf]

¹⁹ *Ibid*

²⁰ *Ibid*

Two sub-themes relating to career guidance emerged from the findings:



These sub-themes are investigated further below.

Sub-theme 1: Career developmental activities

Career development often involves a number of processes and activities that help a student acquire knowledge about themselves, promote career exploration skills, as well as to help increase knowledge about career options and the different career paths available. These activities include:

1	2	3	4	5
Psychometric assessments.	Labor market research and information.	Working with career counselors in developing individual career development plans.	Participating in summer jobs, volunteer work and/or internship programs.	CV writing skills and the development of interview techniques.

These activities are necessary to help students work through the various developmental stages during their lives that can support them when transitioning from high school into college or university. In addition to this, it provides exposure and the necessary skills to support the transition from university or college to the world of work.

This research suggests that a number of career developmental activities that are necessary for students to gain a broader understanding of careers have not been met. The key findings below support this hypothesis.

Key findings

- Most students/graduates (82 percent) participate in career development steps. However, given that these steps are essential for students, it is worth noting that the remaining 18 percent are still not participating in any career development activities (*Figure 26*).
- The most popular career development steps are those that involve hands-on experience, such as volunteering programs (36 percent), internships or work experience (35 percent), with a third of students and graduates having participated in career fairs (33 percent) (*Figure 26*).
- Only a minority of students and recent graduates participate in activities that are related to training and skills development, such as CV writing (19 percent), presentation skills (18 percent), interview skills (16 percent) and training by independent organizations (9 percent) (*Figure 26*).
- One in five stakeholders surveyed, suggested that there is a need for more training and development activities and workshops (*Figure 27*).

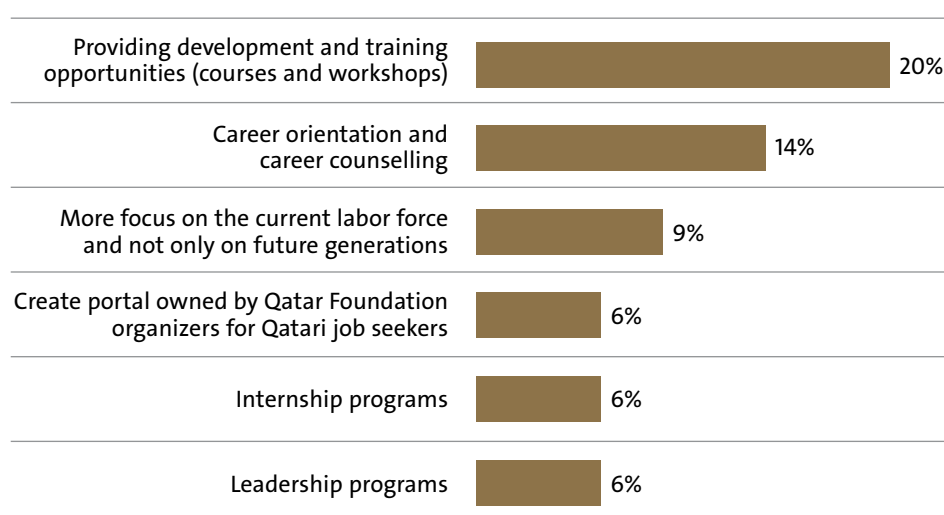


Figure 27. Suggestions for career awareness and development programs

Discussion

Several respondents during the qualitative research highlighted that there is a need for career development activities to start earlier in schools; before reaching secondary school, so that school students can be slowly introduced to the concept of work, spark interest in a specific field and explore educational preferences. Respondents have suggested that career development becomes a necessity at secondary school level when students are preparing to make decisions about their subject choices, this will in turn, impact their choices of academic majors and ultimately their future career decisions. The research indicated that career development programs

for most secondary school students is primarily focused on transitioning students from high school into college or university; with little or no emphasis placed on providing guidance on skills requirements, labor market information or additional information on the different types of careers and how to get there. However, in the international schools, such as the American School of Doha (ASD) and Doha College, career development programs are initiated with school students from the eighth grade to stimulate thinking about different kinds of careers and to encourage students to begin to see themselves starting a particular career.

In an article entitled, *The Economic Benefits of Academic and Career Preparation*, ACT²¹, it is suggested that career plans begin to form at about the sixth grade, and are further developed throughout secondary school and high school. The report suggests that career assessment activities and other career exploration activities throughout secondary school years are necessary to start enabling students' self-awareness. Respondents from the qualitative research referred to 'Job World', in South Korea, as an initiative designed to increase awareness among primary school children about career options, with the aim of generating excitement about work. A couple of stakeholders suggested Qatar should have a permanent exhibition similar to Job World that exposes students to different industries and work environments and is open 12 months of the year for students to visit.

It is reasonable to assume that school students do not have a broad understanding of the variety of careers available to them, or even know what careers they may be

interested in, without first obtaining the necessary psychometric assessments and career guidance. Students need support to help discover their interests, as well as to understand the connections between their academic performance in school and university and the achievement of future career goals. It was mentioned by a number of respondents during the interviews, that there is a need for individual, tailored, career development plans for students, that should commence during primary school years and become more focused as students' progress through to high school and university or college. Respondents further suggested that these plans should outline the necessary developmental steps that help students to achieve their goals in obtaining career-related information that lead to improved career decision making. Through constant tracking of the students' performance, career counselors can modify the developmental plans as each student's needs change and, in turn, keep students focused, motivated and engaged in the process of choosing the right career.

Sub-theme 2: Quality of career counselors and the guidance received

A career counselor is an individual trained to provide career guidance that helps students to:

1	2	3	4	5	6
Understand the role of work.	Develop a positive attitude towards work.	Learn about their own personal interests and strengths.	Help students establish goals for getting more information about universities/ colleges and careers	Help students obtain the necessary knowledge, skills and attributes required to be successful in their selected careers.	Promote creative and informed career exploration using structured career development programs or activities.

The research suggests that the quality and level of guidance received by career counselors to students and parents, is inconsistent and irregular. The key findings below support this hypothesis.

²¹ ACT. "The Economic Benefits of Academic and Career Preparation." (2008). <http://www.act.org/research/policymakers/pdf/EconomicBenefits.pdf>

Key findings

- Parents in the qualitative research considered career counselors in independent schools to be unqualified and barely visible.
- Only 56 percent of parents were aware that there is a career counselor in their children's school or university. In comparison, students are significantly more likely to be aware of the presence of a career counselor at their school or university (81 percent) (*Figure 28*).

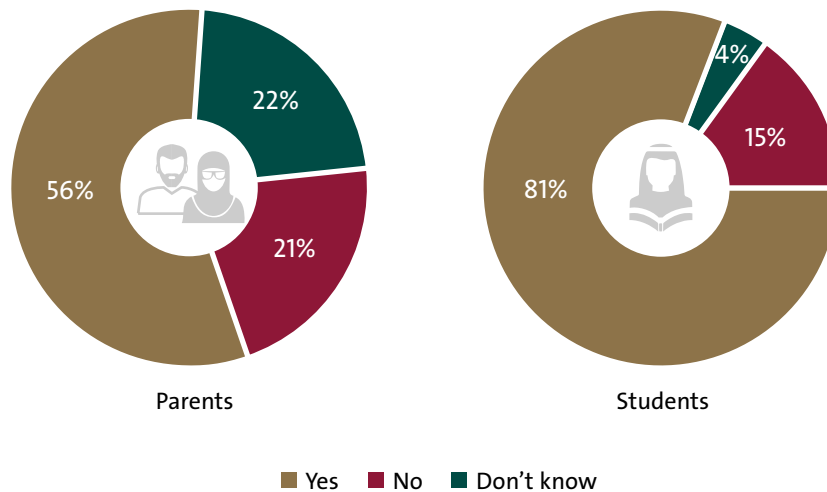


Figure 28. Presence of career counselors

- Most parents (58 percent) have not met with their children's career counselor, compared to 23 percent of students. One in five students (19 percent) have no plans to discuss their future with a career counselor (*Figure 29*).

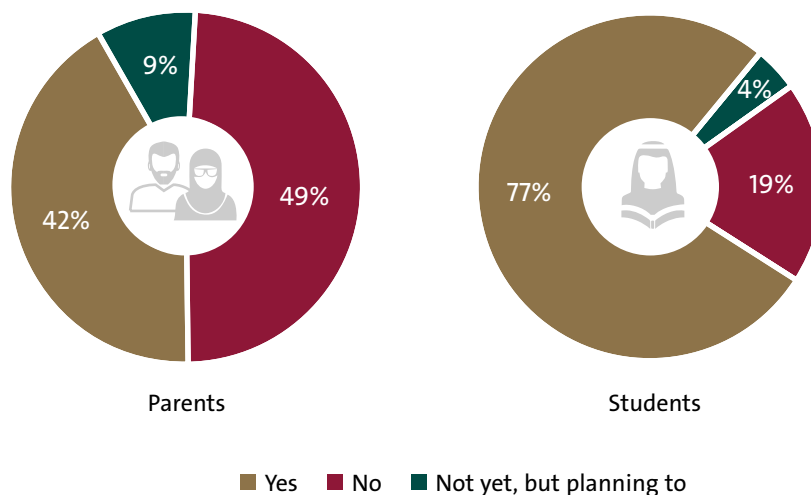


Figure 29. Career counselor sessions

- A third of parents and students who met with the career counselor said they were either 'dissatisfied' with the experience or rated their satisfaction as 'neutral' (mentioned both by 37 and by 35 percent respectively) (*Figure 30*).

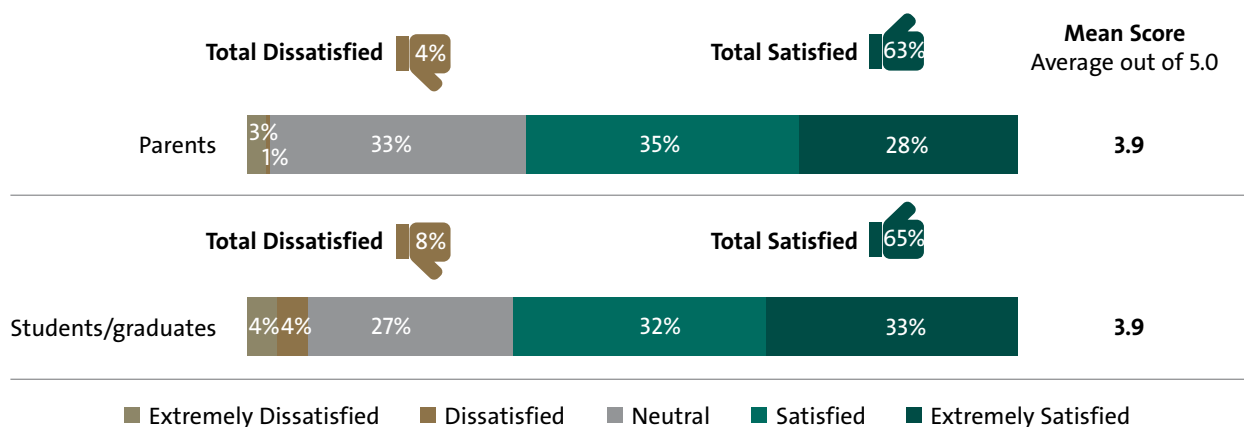


Figure 30. Satisfaction with career counselors

- University students and graduates most often seek support with choosing subjects (62 percent) and less often when selecting career paths (4 percent) (Figure 31).

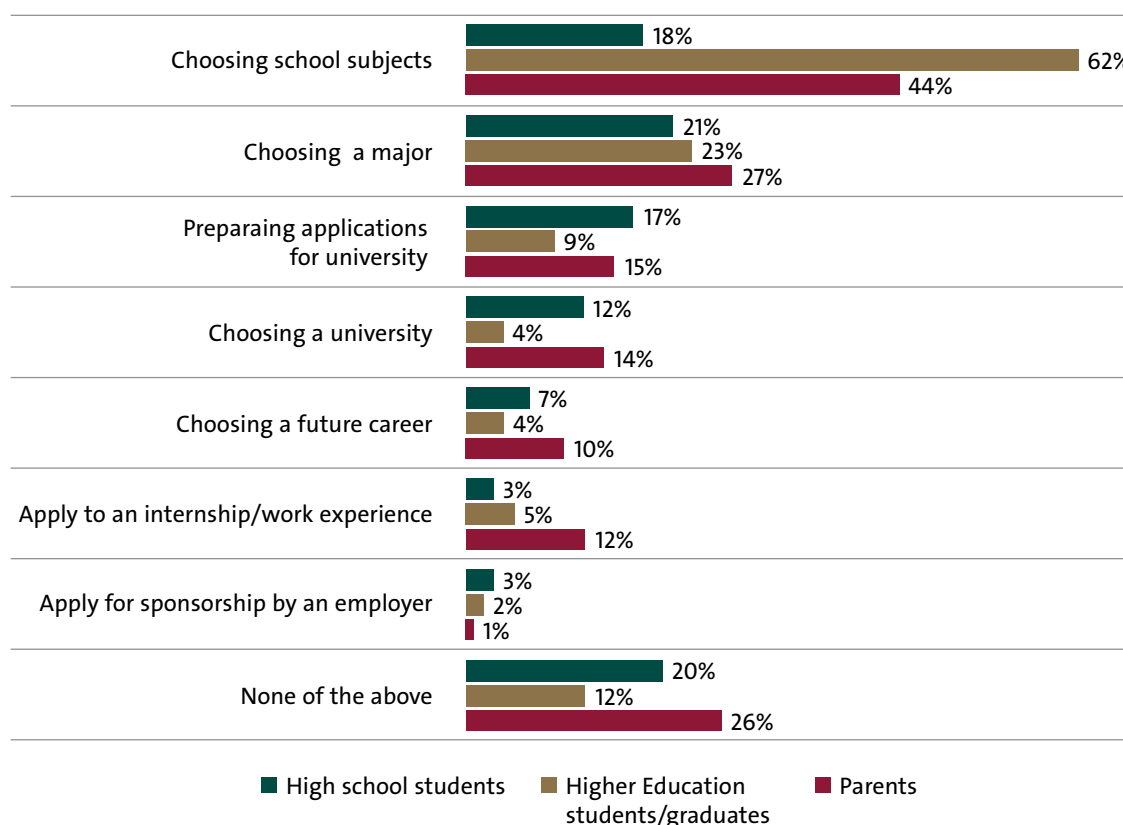


Figure 31. Support provided by career counselors

Discussion

It would appear from the qualitative research that the quality of career guidance received by students and parents from career counselors has been relatively poor and requires significant improvement. The respondents question whether Qatari students and graduates

have been receiving the appropriate skills, knowledge and awareness to make informed career decisions. Students from the qualitative research claim that the counselors at school do not actively promote, or create awareness of, different types of careers and sectors.

The research confirms that few activities have been directed at facilitating site visits, for example, to a local business, industry, health care facility, social service agency and/or meeting with industry professionals who can provide real-life information on a wider variety of career options, and the skills and knowledge required to work in an organization or industry. Students are not offered development activities that provide the necessary exposure to aid better self-awareness, clarity and understanding of their individual interests and talents.

Considering the high degree of influence Qatari parents have over their children's future, it is a surprise that none of the parent respondents from the qualitative research had met with their children's career counselor. Parents whose children are enrolled in an independent school are of the opinion that their child's school does not have a career counselor. However, parents whose children are enrolled in international schools speak highly of the school counselors and are aware of the range of activities counselors provide. Some activities cited include:

1	2	3	4	5
Campaigning for career fair awareness.	Hosting university presentations on the school campus.	Organizing volunteer and extra-curricular activities.	Supporting students with booklets and checklists to guide on the process of choosing and applying for a university.	Providing guidance to choosing subject choices.

Parents feel strongly that there is a need for more career counseling services to become available to their children; starting with the need for someone to play a stronger and more professional role in advising students on the different majors and qualifications. This includes additional guidance on the variation between courses that sound relatively similar, but can lead to highly different career paths, such as civil, mechanical, electrical, chemical and software engineering. Students were asked during the focus group discussions what additional support they would require to better equip them when choosing a career and to be professionally successful. Some of the career guidance activities students identified included:

1. Providing students with more shadowing visits to companies: Students believe these types of experiences are highly valuable in creating more awareness and consideration of a wider variety of organizations and career pathways.

- 2. Inviting more organizations to schools:** Career counselors should invite more companies to visit secondary schools. These visits should include a company profile and discussion of what the organization does, the type of roles they usually recruit for and additional information around the overall benefits of working at the company.
- 3. Improving the quality and quantity of internships:** The university students that previously participated in internship programs had cited that the most critical career development activity is to improve the quality and quantity of internships. Some students complained that poor quality internships could be a waste of time, particularly if students felt they could have interned somewhere more valuable instead.
- 4. Ideas on work experience:** Some students want to be more proactive and gain additional work experience, even before reaching university. It had been cited by

a number of students that the summer holidays provide a good opportunity to apply for the additional work experience. However, many students find themselves uncertain of where and how they can apply for such an experience and need guidance from schools on these opportunities.

5. **CV writing and job-hunting workshops:** Students need more workshops that focus on development of CVs, education on choosing fields of interest, as well as setting career aspirations and goals.

Many stakeholders from the qualitative research identified the need for certified and standardized training of career counselors that starts with the implementation of a national certified career development accreditation. It would appear from the research findings that there is a significant gap in the consistency and quality of guidance and expertise provided by career counselors between independent and international schools, universities and the labor market.

5.5 Theme 5: Qatarization

‘Qatarization’ is a government initiative to identify and develop quality, competent Qatari males and females to assume permanent positions in Qatar²². It is designed to attract, employ, develop and retain a competent Qatari workforce of males and females in the

government and private sectors and contribute to the human capital development pillar of the Qatar National Vision 2030. Qatarization has an objective to provide 50 percent or more, of Qatari citizens with meaningful permanent employment²³.

One sub-theme relating to Qatarization emerged from the findings:



Quality Qatarization

Sub-theme 1 - Quality Qatarization

A review of published data on Qatarization highlights clearly that ‘quality’ Qatarization; i.e. the right person, who has the right qualifications and who can perform at the right level, is the recipe for successful Qatarization. ‘Quality’ is a term used to encourage development of Qataris that aligns with global

markets. ‘Quality Qatarization’ therefore refers to effective nationalization programs that attract, develop, train and employ competent, educated and skilled nationals that are inclusive, diverse and sustainable to compete in a competitive global economy²⁴.

²² http://www.qatarization.com.qa/Qatarization/Qatarization.nsf/en_Index?ReadForm

²³ Qatar Foundation. [http://www.qf.org.qa/content/about/jobs/Qatarization]

²⁴ Al-Horr, Khalid. “Political Contingency and the Implementation of Qatarization. *Studies in Business and Economics*”, Vol 16:1. (2011).

Key findings

- In general, stakeholders from the qualitative research understand Qatarization to mean:
 1. Achieve a high percentage of Qatari employees in the organisation.
 2. To have succession planning so Qatari nationals can take leadership positions that were once held by expatriates.
 3. To hire Qataris into an organization whether they are relevant, needed, qualified or not.
 4. Giving local students the proper education, training and support to enable them to achieve a career they are most suited to.
 5. Replacing expatriates with Qataris.
- Parents have mentioned that they are not overly concerned about the children finding employment. Only 17 percent of parents either completely agree or agree with the statement that their 'child might not find the right job' (*Figure 15*).
- Various respondents from the initial qualitative research remarked that Qatarization programs have not been implemented successfully in some organizations.
- Respondents cited that Qataris are employed mostly in senior management roles only, stating "it helped them to secure jobs, but not to develop their careers", "we need Qataris to be employed at all levels, not just senior management positions".
- Respondents cited that many organizations apply a quantitative approach to Qatarization, as they focus on increased employee numbers rather than relevance and/or best fit of the employee.
- 20 percent of respondents prioritized 'professional development for existing employees' as the most important Qatarization activity. Qatarization activities which tend to be of lower priority are leadership programs and coaching and development programs (selected by only 5 percent and 6 percent of respondents respectively) (*Figure 32*).

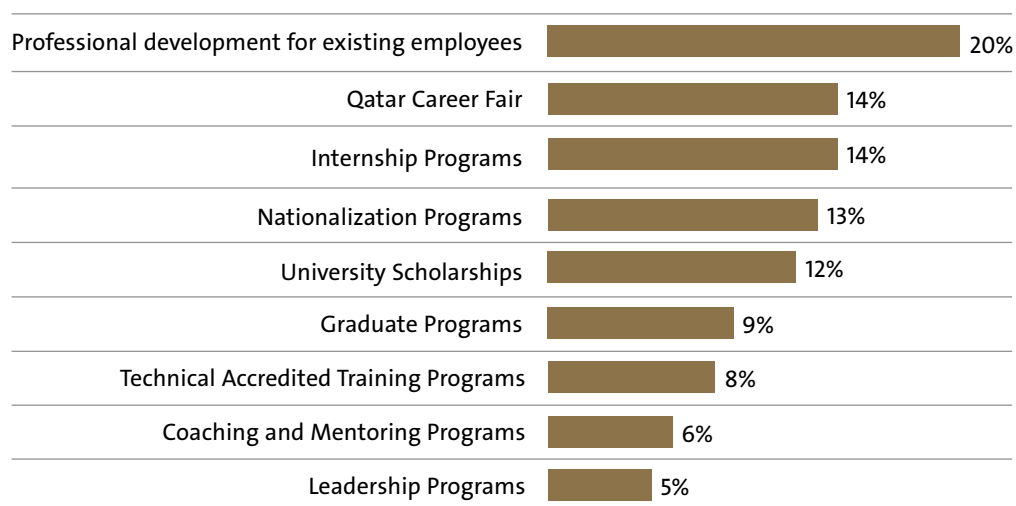


Figure 32. Prioritization of Qatarization activities



Discussion

Stakeholders have a general understanding of what Qatarization means to them. The consensus is that Qatarization has a positive impact on national career development because it encourages organizations to employ and train Qatari nationals as a priority. Most parents indicated that they were not overly concerned about their children finding employment (*Figure 15*) either when they left school or left university. This may suggest they have confidence in the national Qatarization policies but is in contrast to data that 60 percent of all Qatari graduates are currently unemployed. Not all respondent segments however, share this level of confidence. Many respondents from the private and government sectors, HR and

Qatarization managers, career fair organizers and career counselors, felt that although Qatarization initiatives are great in theory, they are often difficult to implement. Saudi Arabia has been replacing expatriate workers with Saudi nationals for over 10 years²⁵ and has found that a high degree of coordination is required between various ministries, and that a unified plan is needed to deliver the best results. So much so that a new Saudization program was unveiled in 2011 called nitaqat. This program is still running. Arguably, because Qatar is a much smaller country than Saudi Arabia, and economically less diverse, Qatarization should be much more straightforward.

²⁵ Stratfor. "Taking Another Stab at Saudization". (2016).

However, the challenge of coordination and the provision of training and development, so that Qataris are prepared for jobs that become available to them, remains.

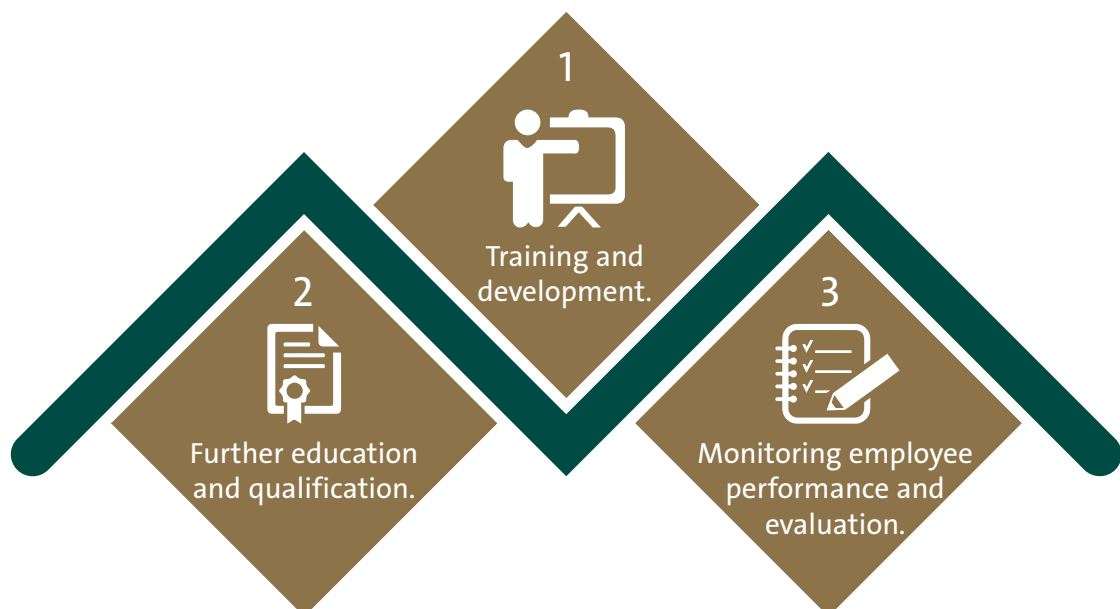
Many stakeholder respondents believe that the implementation of Qatarization policies have not been executed properly. They believe that there seems to be more focus on reaching the necessary quotas of Qataris, irrespective of the candidate being qualified for the role, rather than addressing the core challenge of upskilling and promoting human capital development that Qatarization was designed to address.

Stakeholders have suggested that Qatarization programs need to target nationals across all levels of work, not just the senior management positions and that career advancement should be based on performance and not on nationality. This can be done through the implementation of effective performance

management evaluation systems and reward and recognition programs. This could provide the right level and type of motivation for nationals to perform well in order to achieve career success, thus contributing towards human capital development.

Stakeholders have further suggested that there needs to be additional work undertaken to ensure the right person is recruited to the right role in the right company. Qatarization programs should be customized based on the size, sector and industry of the organization, allowing for an efficient, productive and diversified workforce. These programs should not be seen simply as a recruitment policy that ensures a job opportunity and job security for Qatari nationals, but a multifaceted, coordinated strategy incorporating career awareness and career development programs that develop young Qataris in-line with the country's skills needs.

According to stakeholders, a 'Quality Qatarization' program should include:



CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS





6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this research provide a comprehensive and practical approach to establishing career development frameworks that could assist Qatar in accomplishing its national development targets. The recommendations set out below are aimed at addressing the challenges identified throughout this research, whilst providing practical guidelines and priority areas needed for successful implementation. The recommendations are intended to inform policymakers and career programs on the areas of career development, education and training requirements. Additionally, these recommendations are intended to encourage all stakeholders in career development to examine their operating models, systems, practices, standards and relationships to deliver greater collaboration.

6.1 Recommendation 1 – Develop a national career service/strategy

A national career development service should be created. A foundational element of the career service should be a centralized, integrated and coordinated career development center. This center should deliver services/programs that will enable students and graduates to make effective career decisions. The role of the career development service center should be to:

1

Contribute to an improved 'career culture' in Qatar that enables future workforce development.

2

Create a national system to organize and standardize career development practices across the school systems, higher education and labor market.

3

Provide clear and more explicit guidance to educational, training and career development institutions on what constitutes a comprehensive national career guidance strategy that is aligned to the goals as set out in the National Development Strategy.

4

Create a realistic and pragmatic implementation plan that includes key performance targets to ensure the recommendations of this research are implemented successfully.

5

Provide students, graduates, parents, schools, universities and career counselors with easily accessible career development information, learning activities that extend beyond just selecting subject choices and academic majors.

6

Provide accessibility and up-to-date career information on its website on the related labor market and skills information needed in Qatar.

7

Continually update training, career development institutions and career guidance professionals on the range of career development activities and services, vocational training, soft skills training and availability of internships.

8

Support, monitor and regulate career development strategies and activities among the various educational, training and career development institutions.

9

Market its services more effectively to young students and graduates between the ages of 13–24.

10

Provide a training and accreditations services to career counselors in Qatar to ensure all career counselors are certified and meet the minimum performance standards.

11

Share good practice that promotes an efficient and sustainable career service with all stakeholders.

6.2 Recommendation 2 – Promote the private sector

A specific strategy should be developed to establish the private sector as a viable and alternative career choice. Policymakers should:

1

Obtain a deeper understanding of the existing challenges that the private sector faces and the support it needs to help ensure that private businesses are able to attract and recruit Qatari graduates. This means helping the private sector to contend with the high remuneration and benefits packages offered by the oil and gas, and government sectors.

2

Initiate public awareness campaigns to promote and convince students, graduates and their parents that working in the private sector is a viable and attractive career option to follow; one that offers unique learning opportunities that contribute to the sustainable growth of Qatar.

3

Align entry-level graduate salaries, between the government sector and private sector, to the better practice of aligning salaries to the level of performance, skills and contribution an employee is able to provide.

4

Consider implementing penalties to sectors and organizations who suspiciously over exceed their Qatarization quotas and inflate entry-level/graduate starting salaries.

6.3 Recommendation 3 – Provide labor market information

Additional research should be conducted to obtain a deeper understanding of the labor market and to identify the necessary future skills Qatar needs to be a globally competitive economy. Relevant entities and educational sectors need to work in closer collaboration with the labor market to:

1

Provide insights and projections into the evolving skill sets needed to meet future labor demands.

2

Conduct skills forecasts on a regular basis to be presented and shared with all interested stakeholders, such as employer networks, educational and training institutions and career counselors.

3

Align learning curricula and training programs to the changing skills demands needed in the future labor market.

6.4 Recommendation 4 – Provide career awareness

The depth and quality of career information needs to increase to enable students and parents to make more informed career decisions. Career awareness information should be founded on:

1

Targeting career awareness and development campaigns to school students at elementary, primary and high school level, to introduce the concept of work, what it means to work, why we work and stimulate career exploration skills to create a more positive work attitude.

2

Providing ongoing opportunities to students to learn about personal interests, values, talents, strengths and other aspects of oneself through psychometric assessments customized and localized to Qatari nationals.

3

Highlighting the connections between academic coursework and performance, university and college, to future career options.

4

Incorporating important exploratory and career navigation skills when setting development goals in individualized learning plans.

5

Providing information about new industries, future skills requirements, the various career paths and job opportunities that are available to help improve career planning and to choose academic majors that meet future labor market needs.

6.5 Recommendation 5 – Encourage female graduate workforce participation

The high rate of female graduate unemployment needs to be addressed by supporting the needs, aspirations and level of participation of female graduates in the national workforce. This can be achieved by:

1

Creating education programs addressing the cultural barriers that prevent Qatari women from following their career aspirations. Drive campaigns that positively promote social attitudes by placing more value on women's contribution to the growth of a diversified, sustainable modern economy and by opening more career opportunities for women.

2

Establishing specialist committees comprising of successful Qatari women in leadership positions who can be role models to inspire and influence female students and graduates to follow careers of their choice.

3

Responding to the desire of female students and graduates to contribute more effectively to the working world, by providing them with greater exposure and opportunities to be educated in marketable skill sets. Skills sets can include soft skills training, vocational skills, and technical skills training.

4

Encouraging private sector organizations with incentives and subsidies to create working environments that are 'female friendly' and that provide a more flexible approach to work-life balance.

6.6 Recommendation 6 – Develop the right skills

A national skills development policy should be developed, aimed at improving the quality and quantity of relevant skills needed in the labor market. This can be done by:

1

Ensuring there is greater collaboration between the government and education sector to set goals and targets to achieve the desired STEM outcomes.

2

Placing more value on vocational awareness activities and training programs that enable educators to highlight the need for a more service-led, diversified economy through their academic content.

3

Exploring the best way of delivering soft skills programs for young Qatari students at an earlier age.

4

Motivating and encouraging students and graduates to participate in career development activities such as part time work, volunteer work, summer jobs and internships within the private sector.

6.7 Recommendation 7- Create a career service governance framework

To provide governance and controls for the career development service to foster a culture of continuous improvement. This can be done by:

1

Government sponsorship of additional research in the field of career development that constantly introduces new, creative ideas to the sector, customized for Qatar.

2

Introducing career development programs to students at a young age, followed by constant refining, monitoring and tracking that focuses efforts on individual needs throughout high school and university or college.

3

Developing a career exhibition center for young school students to get exposure to the different types of work, careers and industries.

4

Regulating, inspecting and monitoring the implementation of national career development framework.

Equipping the workforce with diverse skills that can support the current and future needs of an economy is essential to the long-term sustainability of any nation.

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