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POST-EDUCATION FOR NEW ERA: THE CURRENT REFORM INITIATIVES AND SUCCESSES IN QATAR'S EDUCATIONAL K-12 SYSTEM

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ABSTRACT

This paper looks at how education reform has changed in Qatar since the end of the Education for a New Era (ENE). The post-ENE reform is based on Qatar National Vision 2030. The reform, main goals were to improve human capital, make schools accountable, update the curriculum, and use technology more effectively through a national e-learning strategy. Strong evaluation systems, competency-based curricula, and professional licensing frameworks were at the heart of these efforts to improve the quality of teaching and the performance of students. Strategic international partnerships helped with curriculum innovation such as in STEM education. Qatar made progress in national and international tests, but there are still problems, such as cultural preferences affecting school choice, a lack of local teachers, and a mismatch between educational pathways and job market needs. The paper ends by underlining the newest reform initiative: "Igniting the Flame of Learning", and how it could improve quality, fairness, and readiness for the future in Qatar's education system.

1. INTRODUCTION

Two decades ago, the education reform known by Education for New Era (ENE) effectively started in 2001 and ended at the culmination of the concept of independent schools (the Independent School follow the charter schools' model that are government funded and operate independently from the Education authority). The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MOEHE) assumed full control of school management, taking over from the independent schools that were previously managed by private entities. The ENE began with the development of new curricula; training of teachers and school leaders aligned with the restructuring of the schooling system.

The ENE was imputed by a set of reports produced by RAND Corporation; authored by Brewer et al. (2007); Zellman, Constant & Goldman (2011); and Zellman et al., (2009), which materialized into policies and groundbreaking restructuring and reorganization of the educational system. The ENE was ended through Law No. 9 of 2017, reorganizing the Supreme Education Council (an independent governmental authority the overseeing Qatar's K-12 education system and oversight of ENE reform) into the new structure and organization within the MOEHE. At the end of ENE challenges became more pronounced as student outcomes, benchmarked internationally didn't do a satisfactory job of getting Qatari students (K-12) ready for college or the needs of the workforce (Nolan, 2012). Criticism of ENE was overbearing, the evaluation of the outcomes deemed largely ineffective, evidenced by student performance data with no significant improvement in standardized test scores and the country's continued poor standing among developed educational systems (MacLeod & Abou-El-Kheir, 2017). Data from schools showed that students did not meet even 10% of the required standards in core subjects (Al-Banai & Nasser, 2015). Later reports found that only 8% to 20% of students were able to master the learning outcomes in math, science, English, and Arabic (Mustafawi & Shaaban, 2019).

2. POST-ENE REFORM

The start of the post-ENE reform was around 2017 imputed by the Qatar National Vision (QNV) 2030 and used as a conceptual framework stressing on values, customs, and principles that are part of Qatari culture. The post-ENE aimed to align the curriculum with job market needs, promote lifelong learning, support research with global cultural and scientific impact, ensure institutional accountability, independence, and reinforce national values and

civic responsibility (Al-Thani, 2021).

The reforms over the past three decades have aimed to position Qatar within global rankings and enhance its international standing by benchmarking its outcomes globally (Romanowski & Amatullah, 2014). the post-ENE goals were to keep transforming the educational system in Qatar, centering and positioning itself in the league of global and advanced economies. Since the conclusion of the ENE initiative, Qatar has continued to prioritize human capacity development, recognizing its critical role in achieving the country's economic, political, and social objectives (MOEHE, 2019). Post-ENE reforms clearly defined student dispositions and attributes, emphasizing moral, social, and personal development grounded in Islamic and cultural values. This was demonstrated through different student outcomes; being able to communicate well, respecting their own and other people's cultures and beliefs, using creative, thinking, and critical thinking skills. Consequently, important global initiatives as in sustainable development were also integrated where teachers demonstrate professional skills and problem-solving skills with the ability to conserve, maintain and continuously sustain these initiatives (MOEHE, 2019, pp. 51, 53–55).

3. BACKDROP OF THE POST-ENE REFORM

The post-ENE was supported by the leadership and public policy mechanisms truncating from top to bottom approach, seeking reciprocation from bottom to top. The reform framework took an Elite mode (Elite Theory) of operation, where public policies are formulated and shaped by a powerful few. Drawing on the Elite theory which emphasizes on the dominant role of a small group of political, economic or cultural elites to take in shaping societal decisions. This theoretical perspective provides a valuable framework for understanding the trajectory of the post-ENE. Leaders in Qatar had a significant role in the country's education policies. These decisions were based on broader national goals including economic growth, building human capital, and improving the country's image around the world with the intent of advancing society and achieving development goals on the economic, political, and social levels (United Nations, 2015). Evidence of this policy is actuated Qatar's investment in education as a priority investing substantially of the total GDP (13.4%) into education.

The leadership vision and to endeavor and sustain the human capacity development. Qatar's economy is robust; for human development underlined in Qatar's National Vision 2030 plans and strategies

aimed at developing basic and general education (basic education include primary education: Grades 1–6 and preparatory education: Grades 7–9 and general education secondary school (Grades 10–12)). In the general education system students choose one of the tracks: Scientific track, Literary track and technical or specialized streams (in some schools). While Qatar's leadership encouraged its pupil of the general education to enroll in STEM related subject, it did so by laying the tools student needs. The premise that education is one of the fundamental pillars for achieving comprehensive and sustainable development is also at the core of positioning Qatar in the regional and international standing particularly in technical and science fields (Amin, & Cochrane, 2024).

During the ENE and the years that followed 2013–2024, Qatar's public policy has played a major role in establishing international collaborations to improve education. These initiatives range from agreements with internationally renowned entities, knowledge production organizations and higher education providers. Partnerships focused on efforts creating literacy and community education programs; whether for teachers, students, older persons, women, expatriate workers, and other groups to pursue education, through variegated training programs.

Effective use of partnerships has been a goal of leadership to guarantee the nation's educational progress. The intention of recreating Qatar into a knowledge-based society, to solidify Qatar's standing as a regional and global center for education. The thinking suggested that elites used international educational partnerships as a strategic tool to improve the quality of education and literacy programs during post-ENE frame but also position Qatar as a soft power propagating Qatar outward (Al-Thani, 2023).

A strategy was put in place and focused on making a long-term educational plan using international standards that encourage accountability and excellence to measure performance. This was in line with the goals of the Qatar National Vision 2030. The strategy stressed the importance for stakeholders, including teachers and administrative staff role to improve their technical and professional skills through professional development. The MOEHE also wanted to get qualified Qatari professionals to work in academia by providing financial support and forming international partnerships which allowed them study at top universities and transfer the knowledge the advanced knowledge and skills into Qatar and

use their skills in national institutions. The plan is also aimed at getting more students to sign up for STEM-related programs and teacher training programs at local universities by making it easier to get in, offering relevant training programs, and creating academic specializations that match what employers are looking for. Lastly, community education and literacy programs were pushed through lifelong learning programs that offered incentives and support to get vulnerable groups, especially students with disabilities, to take part. These goals were put into action through several strategic pillars, such as making sure that curricula meet the needs of the job market, upgrading school facilities, raising student performance and skills in critical thinking and innovation, and raising teacher productivity. The Education and Training Strategy of Qatar (2018–2022) also stressed the importance of strengthening Qatari values and national identity in schools in line with the human development pillar of Qatar National Vision 2030 (MOEHE, 2018).

The MOEHE developed detailed national education plans based on these strategies, which were translated into a set of strategic pillars aligned with labor market requirements. These pillars included (a) making sure that the curriculum met the needs of the job market; (b) modernizing the infrastructure and school buildings; (c) improving student performance, enhancing skills such as critical thinking and innovation, (d) increasing teacher effectiveness and productivity; and (e) building partnerships with the community and stakeholders. Within each of the five pillars stress was made on the the importance of strengthening Qatari values and national identity in schools (MOEHE, 2018). In line with the human development part of the QNV 2030, MOEHE took upon itself to use of these pillars as the guiding map of the post-ENE efforts. The aim of this paper is to show light on those pillars as initiatives to draw on successes, challenges, and provide conclusive discussions.

4. EVALUATION SYSTEM AND LICENSING SYSTEM IN QATAR

The first thing the MOEHE did was to implement a strong evaluation system to “pillow” the operational strategy for the five pillars and a tool for evaluating schools' performance. The intent was to scrutinize both public and private organizations and make them accountable and open to inquiry to the MOEHE (MOEHE, 2022). The evaluation system targeted the quality of educational outcomes based on the national standards. The system embarked on identifying strengths and weaknesses in school

performance, through collection, measurement and analysis of accurate data for decision-makers and officials to develop educational policies. The evaluation system ensured that the quality of education aligns with the goals of the QNV 2030, especially the human development pillar, and provide to improve the post-ENE educational system (MOEHE, 2022, p. 5).

During the ENE years up to 2017, a series of procedures and efforts emerged that demonstrated the impact of the national education policy on the quality of basic and general education in Qatar. The Amiri Decision No. (35) of 2022 outlined the organizational structure of the MOEHE. With Article (21) referring to developing and implementing an evaluation system to measure school capacities, skills, and performance. The article also stipulated setting specific procedures for tests (Official Gazette, 2022), unifying local tests for the government curricula, conducting international tests, analyzing and monitoring results, and preparing necessary reports on student outcomes. The development of the legislative and regulatory framework for the education sector, particularly the evaluation system, significantly impacted the quality of basic and general education. For example, the development contributed to improving the assessment system of student educational outcomes. The MOEHE worked on developing the legislative and regulatory framework in schools to improve quality. It issued a series of educational legislation and policies aimed at elevating the quality of general education by developing standards for each school leaders during and post-ENE and improving the standards based on practices and experience of stakeholders. The MOEHE adopted a dual evaluation framework to measure improvements in students' skills and institutional performance. The academic performance included both internal and external (MOEHE, 2024a, p. 33). Internal to schools was the continuous assessment mechanism, including classroom-based formative and summative assessments, performance tasks, student portfolios, and teacher evaluations monitoring student learning progress and skill acquisition. At the external level, the MOEHE applied national assessment and school evaluation systems, supported by key performance indicators and benchmarking tools, as well as participation in international large-scale assessments such as PISA, TIMSS, and PIRLS, to ensure accountability, track system-wide improvement, focus on evaluating schools (school leadership, educational practices, academic outcomes, school environment) to ensure achieving quality in

education and align educational outcomes with QNV 2030.

The ministry's practices and evaluation efforts evaluating the performance through continuous assessment, raised the level of students' understanding of basic concepts in various subjects. The follow-up system of student performance increased accountability in the educational process, making it easier to measure the level of education quality. This approach contributed to motivating school staff and teachers to improve their performance levels where the evaluative system tracked student knowledge acquisition and skills that align with labor market requirements. The improvement in the evaluation system coupled with the adoption of professional licenses actionably where teacher evidence-based practices are documented particularly when innovative educational methods are implemented (MOEHE, 2024a, p. 24).

These changes made the education system more accountable through oversight of teachers' performance, professional licensing system for teachers and the creation of the "School Quality Assurance Framework." Consequently, the evaluation and quality assurance mechanisms redirected the MOEHE's focus from solely evaluating student performance to ensuring the effective implementation of strategic educational objectives within schools.

5. CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION: E-LEARNING

The post-ENE reform education policy contributed to improving the quality of curricula and instruction. The State of Qatar was keen to enhance curricula to be more comprehensive and integrated, keeping pace with 21st-century century achievements, especially in the fields of science, mathematics, and languages. Additionally, MOEHE introduced modern teaching strategies based on active learning and critical thinking integrating technology and digital platforms. The pace of the transition to digital learning in Qatar accelerated significantly, as in the rest of the world, due to the outbreak of the pandemic COVID-19. The pandemic revealed weaknesses in virtual and distance learning related to student development, teacher development, accessibility, and availability of support. In the early stages, it was found that teachers at all levels and educational stages were not sufficiently prepared and lacked the necessary skills to implement the distance learning system (Moyo & Maifala, 2022, p. 372). For instance, more than 1,500

secondary school students and 600 teachers in Qatar lacked digital skills and faced numerous difficulties in managing lessons online. It was also found that there was a lack of administrative and ministerial support for distance learning among teachers (Kayan-Fadlelmula, et al., 2022). In light of this, the MOEHE with the support of Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, worked to better align curricula with market needs (Hub, 2022). Academic institutions radically rethought curriculum development and how the assessment and evaluation process is instrumental in school learning (Newsome & Al-Ali, 2025, p. 86).

The MOEHE revitalized the national curriculum for grades K-12 by setting up a committee to review and improve post ENE curricula. Mohammed & Bassam (2023) stated the new curriculum standards and subject frameworks, were put into place in stages, and aligned with the QNV 2030 needs of the job market. Post ENE reform also added new subjects to the curriculum, such as financial literacy for older students, and improved Arabic, Islamic education, and integrated STEM subjects (MOEHE, 2019). The curriculum also changed from a standard-based approaches, that lists the knowledge and skills that students need to know, to a competency-based approach, with focus on critical thinking, hands-on skills, and learning through student interaction (MOEHE, 2019; Mohammed & Bassam, 2023). Public policy also placed special importance on achieving alignment between general education outcomes and economic development needs. For example, curricula related to entrepreneurship and programming were introduced in schools, alongside programs for early vocational guidance. Secondary school students in public school participated in a program titled "My Profession - My Future." The program contributed to the deep understanding of the requirements for employability and adaptability and the nature of professions (MOEHE, 2024a).

The MOEHE in line with national development goals especially the alignment of skills to the job market were made through the national curriculum, competency-based standards, and programs that encourage entrepreneurship and early vocational awareness (MOEHE, 2019; Mohammed & Bassam, 2023). This initiative was planned to shift from traditional, content-focused models to a skill- and application-based framework designed to improve student outcomes, positioning to compete among global competitors in a fast-changing knowledge economy.

In short, Qatar has improved its education system by building a robust infrastructure and creating a

national e-learning strategy for the years 2022 to 2027. This was done in response to impending crisis that came up during COVID-19 transition to online learning. The MOEHE developed digital technology, trained more than 13,500 people, and made access easier by giving more than 210,000 students accounts. Along with the growth of public and private schools and more students enrolling, in both the private and public sector.

6. MODERNIZING THE INFRASTRUCTURE: ELEARNING

During ENE, most schools in Qatar got new or renovated campuses with the latest technology integration. Along with this, there was an e-learning strategy after ENE that aimed to improve the education system by giving students and parents access to digital technology for learning. The MOEHE uses a national Learning Management System (LMS) platform called "Qatar Education". Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, students had to switch to online learning and use the LMS. When it came to reporting, managing electronic educational content, following up with parents, the absence of a dedicated smartphone apps, limited teacher skills and technical problems with browsing and operation. These problems showed that there was an urgent need for a full electronic system to manage and support the educational process in a way that worked in smooth, effective and user-friendly manner. As a result, the MOEHE sought to develop a specific strategy for e-learning, which was launched in 2022 and planned to continue until 2027. The e-strategy is based on best global practices, with focus on increasing educational outcomes and coordinating between different entities and institutions in the educational systems. In the hope that such systems improve student experience in the educational process, at the same time enhancing the skills of stakeholders (students, teachers, parents, leaders, and supervisors). The system integrated performance indicators to track progress across different levels of education. Based on the results, it was observed that basic and secondary education made significant progress in understanding e-learning methodologies and modern educational technologies. The educational outcomes in the Qatari educational system improved, and the level of digital skills among stakeholders was raised. The data showed approximately 13,500 stakeholders received training on e-learning tools. About 210,000 student accounts were added to the MOEHE e-learning system during the 2022-2023 academic year, indicating Qatar's strong commitment to promoting

digital education and getting students ready for the digital age.

Public policy dictated several strategies increased the number of public and private schools, leading to an increase in the number of students enrolled in schools, especially private schools reaching 120% growth (Smith, 2016). For instance, the establishment of the Spanish, Finnish and Turkish school supported by the MOEHE. Also, the increase of Qatari males increased about 103% between around 2010/2011 and 2019/2020. This increase was also accompanied by a rise in the number of teachers and the adoption of global developments in the teaching profession. The State of Qatar also set new standards for curricula and focused on initiatives to improve teacher professional development (Mohammed & Bassam, 2023, p. 19).

7. IMPROVING STUDENT PERFORMANCE

Post-ENE reform supported human development objectives which ENEbles a healthy, educated, and productive population able to sustain a knowledge-based economy and a high quality of life by strengthening the quality of learning and equipping students with the knowledge and skills with the ideas that contribute to a competitive, knowledge-based society. Achieving the quality of basic and secondary education with the intent of improving student performance was significantly impacted by the practices and efforts connected to the ministry's legislative and regulatory framework in the education sector, particularly regarding the evaluation system. The new evaluation process served as a strong incentive for schools and teachers to enhance their instructional practices and deliver more effective curricula, thereby improving the quality of teaching and learning. Continuous assessments contributed to higher student achievement improved learning outcomes, while ensuring that the educational process remained aligned with the required academic-quality levels (see Wolf, 2007; Wiliam, et al., 2004). It also led to increased transparency and accountability in the educational process, making it easier to follow up on results and measure the level of education quality. The continuous assessment contributed to motivating schools and teachers to improve student results. These developmental procedures were integrated in the national education policy also ENEbled the direction of the educational process towards the required academic standards. Teachers were encouraged to further their professional practice by ENecting professional licensure (MOEHE, 2024a, p. 24).

The MOEHE coordinated between different stakeholders' students, teachers, parents, leaders, and supervisors academically and digitally, to ensure providing inclusive education for all parties. The State of Qatar provided an integrated electronic system providing data on performance indicators and progress at all levels. Based on the results, it was observed that basic and general education outcomes in the Qatari educational system improved, and the level of digital skills among student and stakeholders. The data showed approximately 13,500 stakeholders received training on e-learning tools within the framework of achieving the strategy's goals in 2022. About 210,000 student user accounts were linked to the MOEHE's e-learning system during the 2022–2023 school year. It is a commitment to improve education by using digital learning with relevant authorities to work together and invest more money to create coherent, flexible, and long-lasting national educational frameworks. These efforts have directly improved student learning through the development of teacher practice especially in the use of technology in the classroom. This has led to better e-learning practices, which has raised the overall quality of general education (Newsome & Al-Ali, 2025, pp. 86–88).

The evaluation system closely monitored how well students were doing. Student performance improved in ways that could be measured, shown by better student performance on international tests. For example, the TIMSS test showed that eighth-grade students' average math scores went up from the period 2007 to 2015, going from 306 points to 437 points. This result was substantial especially since a score above 400 points is required as a minimum. Students also recorded a noticeable improvement in science tests during the same period, rising from 294 to 436 points. The performance results of Qatari students also improved tangibly in the PISA test results. In 2012, students scored 376 points in mathematics, while the scores rose to 402 in 2015. These results indicate that the achievement along various competencies level improved and exceeded higher with 400 points being the cutoff score. In addition, recently, students in Qatar achieved a higher performance level compared to previous averages in the PISA mathematics test, reaching 414 points in 2022. The evaluation system provided schools with the challenges students faced and the MOEHE used the results against international benchmarks and working strategically to support school systems weaknesses and addressed through remediation efforts (OECD, 2019).

The impact of the national education policy on the

quality of education was not limited to the public schools; the MOEHE sought to improve the level of Qatari students in international tests in international schools. Private school improvement in student level was pronounced in Doha College a private international school achieved 589 points in mathematics, 594 points in science, and 588 points in reading in 2022, thus recording higher than the national and international average (MOEHE, 2022, pp. 12-15). In more recent national achievement reflecting Qatar's advanced position in international educational forums, the State of Qatar was awarded the Outstanding Country Award in the results of British system examinations, ranking first worldwide in these exams (MOEHE, 2026).

Recently, the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA, n.d.) reporting on PISA; announced that student performance in Qatar has witnessed noticeable progress in international tests for 2023 compared to previous cycles. Qatar ranked second in the Arab world for the fourth grade, and eighth grades in mathematics and science. The use of international assessment tools as part of Qatar's educational strategy shows that the country is committed to improving education in line with its national goals for human development, knowledge production, and innovation. Qatar has been working to improve student learning outcomes and strengthen its position as a top educational center in the region and around the world. Qatar is also working on new education plans and strategies to keep the quality and competitiveness of its schools (MOEHE, 2024a).

The curriculum standards and foundations adopted to develop the basic and general education system levels contributed directly to improving student learning outcomes. During this phase, the State of Qatar implemented a range of practices and methodologies aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of general education, leading to measurable improvements in student performance and academic staff.

8. IMPROVING TEACHING PRACTICE

The MOEHE launched several professional programs to develop the skills and proficiency of teaching and administrative staff. During the post-ENE era, authorities in the MOEHE launched programs to grant professional licenses to teachers and school leaders. Both groups were required to demonstrate professional practices and competency standards at an advanced level (MOEHE, 2025). This was imputed by the cooperation between the "Educational Training and Development Center"

affiliated with the MOEHE, and schools to develop teaching staff and leaders, especially supporting new teachers. MOEHE's current flagship program includes *Tamkeen*, which trains Qatari graduates – including those without formal teaching qualifications to go through induction within the Educational Training and Development Center to develop their practice. Professional development is also a requirement for all teachers for their advancement and licensing whether in technology integration, integrative and practice-based approaches subject-related standards, teaching the main competencies, assessments, special needs education, and modern teaching methods (Romanowski, et al., 2020). The MOEHE data showed teachers who received specialized training achieved better results in national and international tests (MOEHE, 2024a, p. 32). Concurrently, other non-governmental agencies started their own programs as *Teach for Qatar*, where recruits are trained and placed into public schools. Its initial training has teachers in public schools and school leaders are given the opportunities for career advancement that motivate and retain teachers with and provide an educational environment with high efficiency (Teach for Qatar, 2025).

The Professional Licensing System was initiated The *Professional Licensing System* was initiated during ENE and continued post-ENE. The Professional Licensing System is based on national standards and requires ongoing professional development of the practitioners. The standards are known as the National Professional Standards for School Leaders and Teachers are used to set standards and evaluate the work of teachers and school leaders. The standards are used to judge teachers, coordinators, and school leaders against national standards, based on their professional practice and to make sure they meet national educational goals (Romanowski, 2013; Romanowski & Amatullah, 2014). The license assesses teacher competencies plan their teaching, student engagement, feedback, teacher and leadership assessment, and continuous professional development to ensure high quality professional practice in Qatari schools. The MOEHE granted about 1,404 professional licenses until the year 2025, including 997 teachers, 302 subject coordinators, 60 school principals, assistant principals and deputies. The license system which started during ENE and continues through post-ENE, its intent was used as a prerogative for professional growth and reward teachers career advancement, in the process, motivate and retain competent school staff (teachers and administrators). Also, MOEHE's intent was to

provide support for schools to improve their quality and performance levels and motivate competencies in the school environment (MOEHE, 2025).

In addition, the MOEHE launched numerous initiatives that support teachers and leaders' professional growth of educational leaders necessary to make sure that general education standards are implemented in schools. For example, the "*Khibarat*" program was set up as a professional development program for school leaders- vice principals and principals, and school administrators to be exposed to global realities and practices. The MOEHE also started the "*Tamkeen*" program and the "*Successful Beginning*" project to train and qualify female teachers. A total of 150 female teachers has graduated from these programs, and the MOEHE continues to attract more candidates to meet the growing demand for educational personnel amid the increasing number of schools in the country (Qatar Foundation, 2023; Roberts, 2024).

In addition the Qatar Career Development Center (Qatar Foundation, 2023, p. 10) program placed teachers and school leaders in immersive programs in the Republic of Finland to benefit from the Finnish experience and acquire best practices with modern educational models to combine global standards with local cultural practices and professional practice (MOEHE, 2024a) bringing different educational partners and systems in Qatar as including Spanish, Turkish and Finish educational systems (MOEHE, 2018; 2024).

The post-ENE reform made substantial changes in the direction of quality of education by professionalizing teacher practices and helping them to improve their practice. Further, the *Tamkeen* and *Khibarat* initiatives within the MOEHE intent was to improve teaching and leadership skills among school professionals. The programs outlook was to raise the standard of education and create a world-class learning environment. The two programs showed that the country is dedicated to giving teachers more power, making professional development easier, and creating school environments that encourage creativity and excellence. while following international best practices. Working with schools like the Finish and Spanish and learning from other countries' education systems, to improve the educational system in Qatar.

9. BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDERS

Various forms of cooperation with both global universities and specialized international organizations were imputed to support schools in

Qatar. The leadership vision that they integrate best educational practices into the Qatari educational system which they raise the level of education quality, in line with international best practices. The partnerships were imputed through between the Qatari education sector and international organizations, aiming to develop the Qatari educational system.

A series of strategic international partnerships were established with several international schools, and branches of foreign schools in cooperation with governments and educational institutions internationally, such as the agreement with the Turkish Government which materialized in opening of the Turkish Qatari School in 2016, aiming to enhancing the cultural and educational exchange between the two countries (Smith, 2016). The State of Qatar also concluded a partnership with the Finnish Ministry of Education in 2019, aiming to apply innovation-based education (MOEHE, 2024a). This has materialized in the contracting EduCluster (EduCluster Finland is an international school development organization and part of the University of Jyväskylä Group in Finland). The effort began with the desire to bring Finland's highly regarded education model to Qatar. Finnish teachers and other professionals helping to set up the school, one of the first outside of Finland to use the Finnish curriculum and teaching methods in Qatar.

Furthermore, a strategic international partnerships programs supporting educational program including Hamad Medical Corporation and Qatar Airways, aiming to ENEble students to determine their academic and professional paths, bridging the gap between educational outcomes practices. The workplace initiative titled "*The Little Employee*" was launched with the participation of 21 entities from various governmental and private sectors in Qatar, most notably the MOEHE, the State Audit Bureau, Qatar Rail Company, and other national public institutions. This initiative aimed to ENEble students from the primary to the preparatory stage to acquire useful experiences by accompanying one of their parents or relatives to the workplace and helping them perform on the job and onsite tasks. The initiative contributed to shaping the career path of students and refining their skills, reflecting the state's shift towards competency-based education and the skills necessary for the future (Qatar Foundation, 2023, pp. 4-5).

International partnerships emerged between Qatari institutions and regional and international institutions. Higher education took a major role in this initiative as the case of The National Center for

Educational Development at Qatar university which trained teachers through coaching model approach. Post-ENE Texas A&M University in Qatar with Qatar University and Maersk Oil Qatar. They advanced teacher development across schools in STEM subjects. More than 140 teachers and administrators from schools across the country participated in the initiative through professional development workshops, the initiative focused on improving teachers' skills in mathematics, science, and engineering (Brown, 2016). Teachers were introduced to new tools and techniques to incorporate hands-on problem-solving exercises and STEM-based activities into their classrooms. Furthermore, a partnership was established between "ExxonMobil - Qatar" and the "Future Scientists Academy" in Jordan, aiming to prepare Qatari school students and ENEble them to pursue professions related to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), ENEbling students to acquire inquiry skills, critical and logical thinking, problem-solving, and 21st-century learner skills (ExxonMobil, 2018). The training included diverse scientific activities at the applied and integrative level, to ensure the preparation of long- and medium-term success of students in their university and professional lives (Qatar University, 2025). Also, an international partnership was established between Qatar University, Joetsu University in Japan, and the Marubeni Group. Through the partnership, an international project for mathematics teachers was launched to use the "lesson analysis" method, for mathematics teachers working in primary and preparatory schools (Qatar University, n.d.). Overall, the initiatives demonstrate genuine national investment in building the technical and educational capacity of Qatar's future workforce (Roberts, 2024). Likewise, the *Makerspace* initiative brought together Qatar Petrochemical Company and Texas A&M initiative emphasized modern science and technology, and the *Ibtekar* (Innovation) initiative trained students in the use of technology for creativity and learning.

Further, the Qatar National Commission a unit within the MOEHE played a pivotal role liaison office educational partnership internationally with organizations such as UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, ALECSO: Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization and ISESCO (now ICESCO): Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (formerly Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization). The collaboration leveraged international educational

expertise, organized various seminars, conferences, and workshops, training teachers on international standards and emersed students and teachers to participate in training programs available in international organizations, especially UNESCO, ALECSO, and ISESCO (MOEHE,2024b). While maintaining cultural and social principles, in turn, the international standards were integrated into local educational programs through international memberships and collaborations. They strengthened Arabic and Islamic culture by engaging world organizations and forums in bridging the understanding (MOEHE,2024b).

Efforts did not stop there; the Qatari leadership sought to participate in conferences and executive boards of those international organizations. This contributed to the State of Qatar having to borrow international educational policy, that is in line with Qatar's requirements. International participation contributed to transforming Qatar into an effective partner in shaping educational directions internationally, leading to the consolidation of Qatar's position as a regional position in shaping public policy in the field of education. The National Commission became the link between the regional offices of international organizations and educational, cultural, and pedagogical institutions in Qatar (MOEHE, 2024b).

10. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The education system in the State of Qatar has witnessed a series of tangible transformations within the framework of an ambitious national education policy aimed at improving the quality of general education in a comprehensive and sustainable manner. This policy has focused on elevating educational standards, enhancing the learning environment, and aligning educational outcomes with labor market needs. Central to these efforts has been the role of national leadership in advancing basic and secondary education through the development of human capital training among students and teachers. These initiatives were further reinforced during the post-ENE phase through a set of public policy reforms guided by Qatar National Vision 2030, which emphasized investment in human capital, economic diversification, and global engagement.

Building on this foundation, post-ENE reforms made a significant contribution to Qatar's human development goals between 2013 and 2024. National leaders played a pivotal role in shaping education policy by introducing updated curricula, continuous assessment systems, and professional standards for

teachers that directly supported student progress. The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MOEHE) further strengthened the system through the expansion of digital learning infrastructure, targeted professional development, and increased accountability and transparency. The QNV served as a general guiding framework for the national education policy. As a result, Qatari public policy effectively contributed to enhancing and developing education during the period (2013-2024). A clear general framework for the educational curriculum in Qatar was accomplished, and various projects, initiatives, and programs contributing to developing student competence in reading, writing, mathematics, and science from the basic and general education stages. New teaching methods, adopting e-learning alongside developing testing and evaluation systems, contributed to an overall improvement strategy. Public policy focused on educational staff and leadership policies with strong initiatives to strengthen partnership with international and local organizations led to measurable improvements in student performance on both national and international tests, such as TIMSS and PISA, where Qatari students made large gains. The robust results in both public and private schools come from constantly aligning curricular standards, making good use of assessment data, and getting more people in the education system to work together.

The post-ENE programs were built around a few clear pillars that guided how they were put into action in the classroom. These pillars turned policy goals into measurable results. The pillars established a blueprint and put the national education strategy into action, as called for by the QNV 2030. The evaluation methods provided a thorough summary of the activities. The five pillars drove the post-ENE initiatives from 2013 to 2024. After the Education for a New Era (ENE) reform was over, leadership had an important role in making and running the post-ENE reform program. Seen from an Elite Theory suggest the public policies are made and changed in modern political systems. The thesis posits that genuine power is held by a limited cadre of political, economic, or cultural elites who shape public policy agendas via both formal and informal mechanisms. The political elites hence, played an important pivotal role in developing and improving educational systems, and this was evident through leadership in directing to establish a flexible educational policy based on diverse programs and strategies that contribute to developing general education within Qatar, achieving quality and

sustainability in its outcomes, by involving various parties with the strategic vision and building a knowledge-based society. Educational policies were therefore shaped to align with strategic national objectives, including economic diversification, human capital development, and the enhancement of Qatar's global standing.

It was found that there is tangible development in the level of quality of basic and secondary education, educational legislation and regulations, and that there are notable achievements at the level of curricula, the evaluation process, positive student outcome, professionalization of teacher and leadership practices and the link between school and the labor market. It became clear that the State of Qatar still needs to make more efforts to continue the series of developments and reforms, and the ability to face challenges and enhance professionalism with the intent of building a knowledge-based society and reach higher quality and efficiency in the basic and secondary education system.

With robust initiative and large investment in infrastructure and human resource capacity, organization and communities; improvement of student outcomes and student and teacher performance was tracked evaluated regularly. Despite progress, challenges remain, including disparities in teacher quality, distinctions between public and private educational institutions, and limited enrollment in technical and scientific fields (MOEHE, 2019; Al-Kuwari, 2022). The latter also found that in contrast to the wide range of partnerships formed in academic and scientific research programs, international collaborations pertaining to literacy and community education initiatives continue to be scarce. Furthermore, there are still a few problems that need to be fixed, such as retaining teachers, making sure that all schools have the same level of quality, finding best fit of global methods in a way that works with local cultures, and making sure that technology is used effectively in teaching and learning.

In addition, there are underlying challenges that are less visible and not easily measurable, such as cultural impediments, and female and male differences impacting the extent to which educational reforms are consistently implemented across schools. These hidden challenges can influence learning outcomes and the overall effectiveness of the post -ENE, despite not being fully captured through formal metrics. These are discussed below.

10.1. Cultural Challenges

Cultural challenges have a major effect on parents' decisions about whether to send their children to public schools in Qatar. Parents in Qatar must choose between public, private, and international schools. The Arabic language, Islamic education, and social values are all very important in public schools and part of the curriculum. The government made sure that public schools adhere to cultural practices where students follow Islamic practices about how to dress, speak, and act. On the other hand, international and independent schools put a lot of value on academic achievement, exposure to different cultures, being able to speak more than one language, and seeing things from a global perspective.

Even though international schools adopt international standards, some parents are hesitant to enroll their children because they are worried about how they might affect cultural and societal values. Because of this, many families choose public schools. Qatari nationals have the choice and option to enroll in private school. While private schools have exuberant fees many Qataris may choose public schools because of this reason. The current K-12 in Qatar has 214 government schools and 181 private schools. Many expatriates may choose private schools because the intricates public schools are generally run by Qatari staff have fewer advanced curriculum options, elective courses, and new ways of teaching than private schools (MOEHE, 2021). There is data that has shown that performance of school graduates on international exams as the British GCSEs (General Certificate of Secondary Education) compared to public school graduates.

These cultural factors have a direct effect on education for sustainable development, which makes it harder for the private schools to accommodate for cultural needs of students. Parents are reluctant to enroll their children in international schools because they worry about the level of Arabic language instruction and not enough focus on Islamic education. To tackle this challenge, awareness campaigns should emphasize the ways in which international education can enhance national identity and local values (Abdulrahman, 2018).

10.2. Social Challenges

Social factors play an important role in Qatar's education system. One major problem is that there are not many Qatari teachers, especially Qatari men. Many men consider as career option mostly because of the large opportunities available for men in the job-market. Only 1.9% of teachers in Qatar are men, which has led to a serious lack of local teachers. In

addition, many men feel that education is a women's job as a continuation from her nurturing of her children at home. This among other factors has led to fewer people signing up for career in education. For example, only 11 male teachers signed up for K-12 s in the 2016–2017 school year. This meant that fewer students graduated and more teachers from other countries were needed.

The difference between public and private schools is another social issue. A 2012 study found that 50% of Qatari public-school children were often bored, while only 30% of private school kids were. This indicates that, notwithstanding curricular innovations and advanced policy initiatives, particular public school environments face challenges in effectively engaging students in learning and socially (Teach for Qatar, 2025). These socioeconomic problems support the idea that a lack of local male teachers and low enrollment in higher education less effective to promote long-term growth. Compounded by the lack of the professional status of the teaching profession

10.3. Economic Challenges

Economic limitations hinder initiatives to advance sustainable education. A significant issue is the gap between what students learn in school and what employers expect from them, especially for men. Recent data shows the significant likelihood of early school dropout, who may leave school to pursue employment in the army and public service (Ridge et al., 2018). The disparity between educational attainment and employment opportunities threatens the sustainability of educational advancement. A better career counseling service that connects academic paths with long-term job opportunities as a much-needed initiative in the MOEHE and K-12 education.

When taken as a whole, the cultural, social, and economic difficulties mentioned highlight systemic conflicts in Qatar's educational system. Economic pressures, particularly the misalignment between education and labor market demands, run the risk of undermining long-term human capital development; social factors, such as the lack of local teachers and waning interest in the teaching profession, weakened institutional sustainability; and cultural concerns influence parental school choices and may restrict global integration. All these issues point to the necessity of a thorough reform framework that may incorporate employability, quality, identity, and inclusiveness.

10.4. Igniting The Flame of Learning Reform

More recently, Qatar has launched a new reform initiative under the slogan "Igniting the Flame of Learning" (ITFOL), introduced in 2024 and set to continue through the end of the Qatar National Vision 2030 cycle. The strategic plan expressed the Qatar's vision ambitiously build an educational system characterized by comprehensiveness and integration seeking creativity and achieves leadership for future generations. The ITFOL's strategy focus on five basic pillars: a) improving the level of early education, b) developing the level of basic and secondary education, c) supporting vocational education, d) achieving governance in education, and e) increasing educational opportunities (MOEHE, 2024a, p. 3). In addition, the plan is sought to emphasize the need to develop school leadership and qualify the teaching staff in line with national professional standards, to ensure and sustain the quality of the educational process (Ghamrawi, 2023). The MOEHE continuing with the post-ENE reform, prepared a road map for the educational curriculum in cooperation with various partners, encompassing all decisions and procedures related to curriculum development and supporting the teaching and learning process. A general framework emphasized the necessity of encouraging schools to strengthen their links with the community and stakeholders related to education, as employers and parents to contribute effectively to developing

education by sharing their expertise and providing more opportunities for learning accordingly. Partnerships contribute to enhancing activities and work-based learning. Supported by empirical evidence that education becomes more effective when parents are involved in the learning process (Higgins & Katsipataki, 2015). The education strategy also focused on the "social constructivist" learning model for students, aiming to involve students in the teaching and learning process, identify their ideas for developing the educational process, and utilizing classroom experience in developing teaching guides and practical strategies (MOEHE, 2019, p. 50). The outcomes of the new reform ITFOL are yet to be seen how Qatar edge forward creating an educational system that is in line with the best in the world practices, giving access to curricula and training programs that meet the needs of the job market, providing better educational and training opportunities, and offering lifelong learning programs for all. Also, finding educational frameworks and ways to make the Qatar's national education strategy work better. This may needs of both individuals and Qatari society, while also stressing the importance of values, traditions, heritage preservation, creativity, a sense of belonging, and capacity development (MOEHE, 2019, p. 7).

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