

Qatar's Labor Law Changes and Workers' Welfare: Attitudes and Perceptions for a Sustainable Future

Findings from the Qatar Labor Law Survey

Executive Report

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This report presents important highlights of the study “Qatar’s Labor Law changes and workers’ welfare: Attitudes and perceptions for a sustainable future” conducted by the Social and Economic Survey Research Institute (SESRI), Qatar University.

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INTRODUCTION

The system of migrant labor, formerly known as the *kafāla*, or “sponsorship”, remains a disruptive reality within Gulf States like Qatar. The selection of Qatar to organize the FIFA 2022 World Cup games in December 2010 put the country under a microscope. In particular, Qatar's labor laws and worksite conditions were scrutinized, leading to a groundswell of criticism towards Qatar and pushed the country to re-examine its labor laws.¹ Having recognized these pressures, the government formed a committee in 2012 to study possible reforms to the sponsorship system and in 2014, the government announced that a new law would soon end the sponsorship system for foreign workers (Al-Khatib, 2014)².

By December 2016³, Qatar implemented a new policy to replace the sponsorship law of 2009. The new Labor Law, which remains the basis for recruiting and hiring the expatriate working population, has received mixed reviews from human rights organizations. Some contend the new policy is still inhumane and similar to the prior legal framework. They maintain that it does not provide enough flexibility and freedom to workers and hence is not conducive to the development of a sustainable knowledge-based economy. In response, the government of Qatar requested that the international community should not draw any conclusions about the new law prior to the evaluation of its results (The New Arab, 2016)⁴.

¹ Human Rights Watch, “Qatar: Abolish Exit Visas for Migrant Workers” (2013).

² <https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2015/3/17/qatar-to-reform-sponsorship-system-for-foreign-workers>

³ Kovessy, “Qatar Officials Propose Changes to *Kafāla* System”, Doha News, 14 May 2014.

⁴ The New Arab, <https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2016/12/13/qatar-defends-labour-reforms-despite-human-rights-group-criticism>

Even with changes being implemented, criticism and fine-tuning are important features of the landscape that policy-makers and managers of the economy must engage from an informed perspective. This is necessary so that the large foreign labor force contributes to developing a sustainable knowledge-based economy, and as such adds value to Qatar and its institutions. The objective of SESRI's project was to develop a large study to collect the information and feedback as well as new elements within the labor laws so that the views of Qatari citizens, residents (higher and lower-income expatriate workers) and businesses necessary to recalibrate the implementation protocols would be registered. This facilitates changes that will address human rights organizations' concerns in a way that is constructive rather than constricting for progress. The study results underpin a robust knowledge base enabling policy makers to improve pre-existing intervention regimes and to develop new methods for tackling important migration-related issues and to provide concomitant public services.

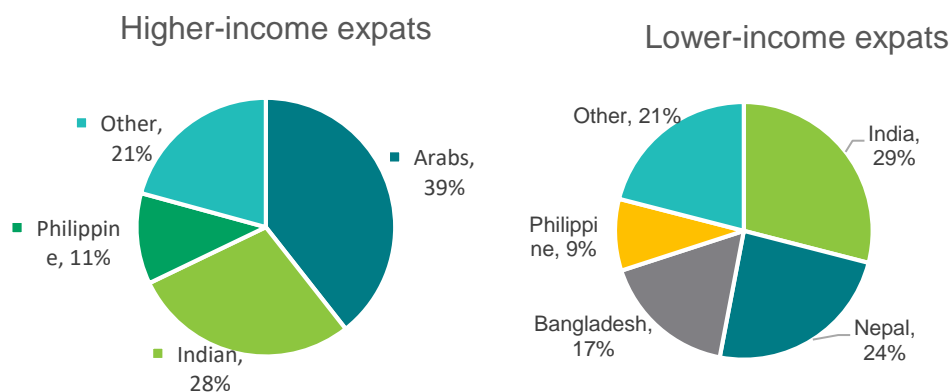
I. DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

This section provides a summary of the personal and social characteristics of respondents. The sample consisted of 2,760 respondents, of whom 857 were Qatari nationals, 1,012 higher-income expatriates and 891 lower-income expatriates⁵. In terms of gender, the distribution was almost equal among Qatari respondents, 49 percent male and 51 percent female. Among expatriates, two-thirds of higher income respondents were male (66%), while 90 percent of lower-income expatriates were male.

Nationality of respondents

Looking at the nationality of respondents, Indians accounted for the largest proportion among higher-income and lower-income expatriates (28% and 29%, respectively). Among higher-income respondents, Filipinos represented 11%, followed by some Arab respondents. Egyptian nationals represented (8%), while Sudanese and Syrian expatriates accounted for 6 percent and 5 percent, respectively. Other nationalities constituted 29 percent of the respondents and were from 59 different countries from around the world (e.g. United States, Canada, UK, France, Oman, Iraq etc.). Concerning lower-income expatriates, nationals of Nepal represented almost a quarter of the respondents (24%), followed by Bengali (17%) and Filipino expatriates (9%). Other nationalities make up 21 percent of lower-income respondents (see Figure I-1).

Figure I-1: Nationality of higher and lower-income respondents

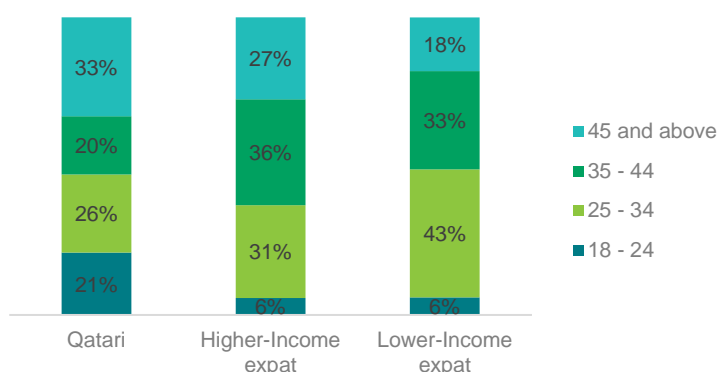


⁵ Based on prior research done by SESRI a monthly salary of 4,000 QR per month or more was the cutoff distinguishing higher-income ("white collar") from lower-income ("blue collar") expatriates ("expats"). However, this income cut-off definition was not given to Qataris. For cognitive clarity during a telephone interviewer, they were given a definition related to work function.

Age of respondents

With regard to the Qatari subsample, approximately one-third (33%) of respondents were 45 years of age or older. Respondents aged 18 to 24 years and 35 to 44 years represented 21 percent and 20 percent of Qatari respondents, respectively. Among lower-income expat respondents, more than one-third (43%) were aged 25 to 34 years, followed by those aged (35-44) years (33%). Younger respondents aged 18-24 represent the smallest group (6%). As for higher-income households, the youth (25-34) and middle-aged adults (35-44) made up slightly more than two-thirds of high-income respondents. (See Figure I-2).

Figure I-2: Age groups, by respondent type



Marital status and number of children

At the time of the survey, the majority of respondents, regardless of their nationality, were married. Nearly two-thirds (62%) of Qatari respondents were married and about one-third (31%) had never been married. With respect to higher-income and lower-income expatriates, most were married, 79% and 69%, respectively (see Figure I-3). With the exception of those who had never been married, respondents were asked whether they had children under the age of 18. The majority of respondents within the three groups reported having children. The majority of lower-income respondents (84%), higher-income respondents (79%), and Qatari nationals (51%) reported having 1 to 3 children under age 18.

Figure I-3: Marital status, by type of respondent

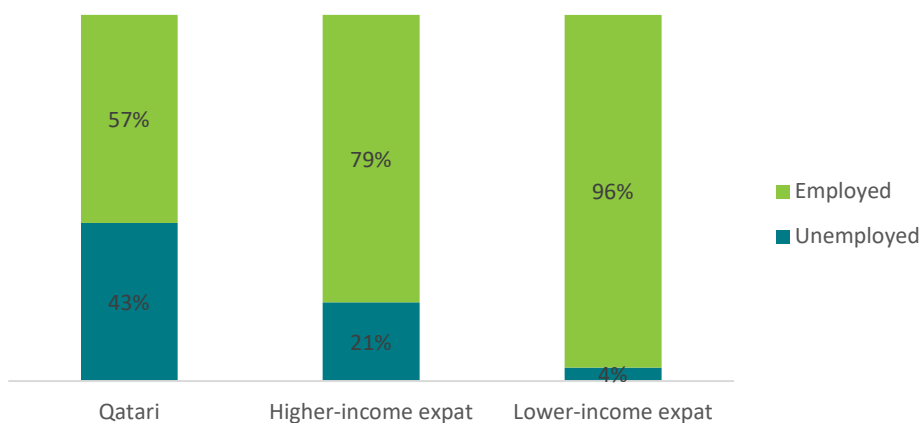
Respondents' level of education

The respondents were also asked to indicate the highest level of education they had completed, and the results reveal that nearly two-thirds of Qatari respondents (61%) had completed high school or less, compared to 89 percent of lower-income and 33 percent of higher-income expatriate respondents. Qatari respondents with an undergraduate degree or higher represented 39 percent. Two-thirds (66%) of higher-income expatriate respondents reported having an undergraduate degree or higher. This percentage is much smaller among lower-income expatriates (11%), see Figure I-4.

Figure I-4: Level of education, by respondent type

Employment status

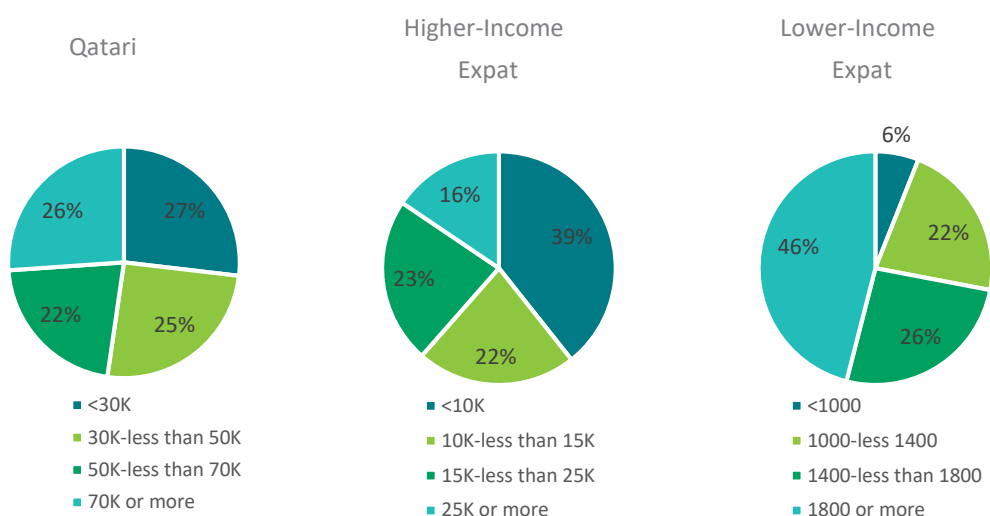
Regarding the employment status of the respondents, more than half of Qataris (57%) reported being employed, whereas 47 percent indicated they were unemployed at the time of the survey. Among expatriates, the majority of both higher-income (79%) and lower-income (96%) respondents were employed at the time of the survey. (see Figure I-5).

Figure I-5: Employment status, by respondent type

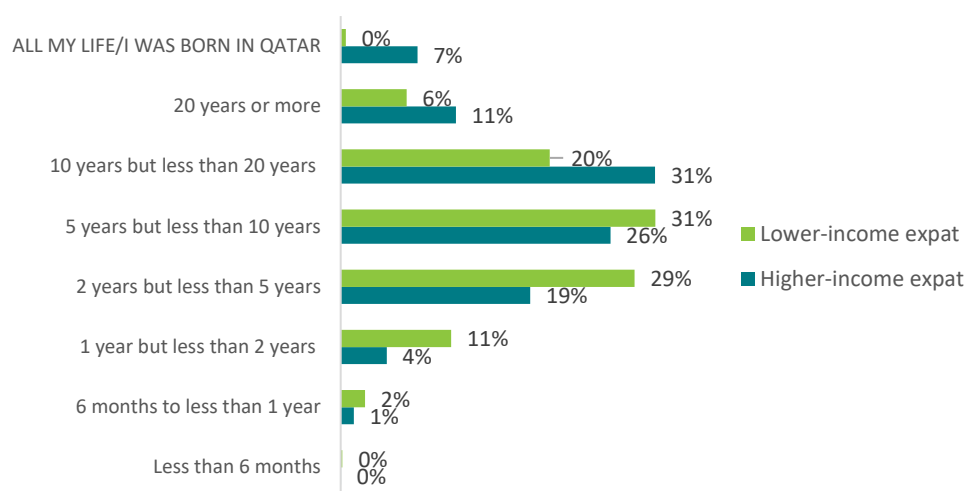
Income

With respect to household income, slightly more than one-quarter of Qatari respondents (26%) reported a monthly household income of QR 70,000 or more. Moreover, 39 percent of higher-income respondents reported that their monthly household income was less than QR 10,000 while 45 percent of them made between QR 10,000 and less than QR 25,000. Nearly half (46%) of lower-income respondents reported a monthly income of more than QR 1,800 (see Figure I-6).

Figure I-6: Income level in Qatari Riyals, by respondent type



Both higher and lower-income expatriates were also asked about their length of stay in Qatar, see Figure I-7. The majority of higher-income respondents lived in Qatar between 5 and 20 years. Almost one-third of higher-income respondents (31%) lived in Qatar for more than 10 years but less than 20 years, and slightly more than one-quarter (26%) lived in Qatar between 5 and less than 10 years. The majority of lower-income expatriate respondents reported living in Qatar between 2 and 10 years (60%), while one-fifth of the lower-income expatriate respondents (20%) lived in Qatar between 10 but less than 20 years.

Figure I-7: How long have you lived in Qatar?**Table I-1: Baseline characteristics**

Variables	Qatari (%)	High-income expatriate (%)	Low-income expatriate (%)
Age (in years)			
45 or older	33	27	18
35-44	20	36	33
25-34	26	31	43
18-24	21	6	6
Gender			
Male	49	66	90
Female	51	34	10
Marital status			
Never married	31	19	29
Currently married	62	79	69
Other (Divorced/separated/widowed)	7	2	2
Educational status			
Vocational or less	15	6	40
Secondary school	46	27	49
Undergraduate degree or higher	39	67	11
Employment status			
Employed	57	79	96
Not employed	43	21	4

II. QATARIS' ATTITUDES TOWARD FOREIGN WORKERS

The section below presents Qatari nationals' attitudes toward Foreign Workers – Questions from this section were asked of Qataris only – higher-income and lower-income expatriates were not asked these questions.

Qataris' attitudes towards foreign workers

Qataris' perceptions towards foreign workers were first examined prior to exploring their attitudes with regard to the new changes in the Qatari Labor Law. For this, the research team used a split sample technique. Qatari nationals were randomly split into two-groups. While the first group received the attitude questions with reference to white-collar expatriates, the second group received the same questions with reference to blue-collar expatriate workers⁶. White-collar expatriates were defined as those people who come from another country to live and work in Qatar and perform professional, managerial or administrative work. As for blue-collar expatriate workers, they were defined as people who come from another country to live and work in Qatar and perform manual labor, such as manufacturing, construction, mechanical work, or maintenance.

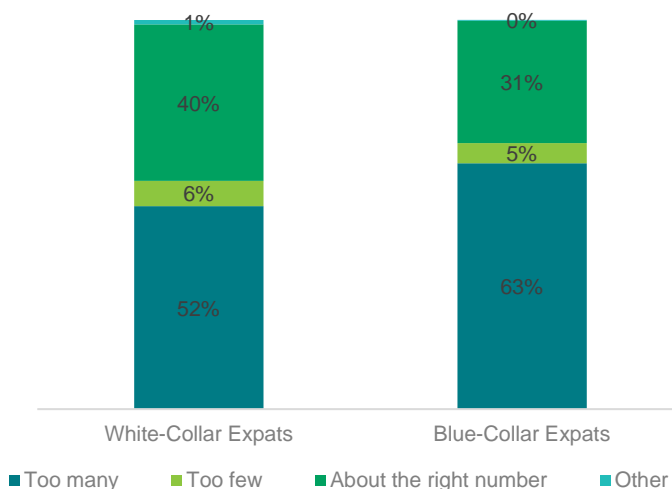
⁶ For cognitive clarity in a telephone conversation, a definition based on job function was given rather than the income cut-off of 4,000 QR or more. Higher-income or white-collar workers were defined as "People who come from another country to live and work in Qatar and perform professional, managerial or administrative work." Lower-income or blue-collar workers were defined as "People who come from another country to live and work in Qatar and perform manual labor, such as manufacturing, construction, mechanical work, or maintenance."

Qataris' Demographic Preferences

Figure II-1 Qatari Preferences: numbers of Higher and Lower-income expats



First, Qataris were asked about the number of new white-collar expatriates and blue-collar expatriates allowed in Qatar each year and whether this number should be increased a lot, increased a little, remain the same as it is, reduced a little, or reduced a lot. Overall, the majority of Qatari nationals thought that the number of expatriates workers allowed in the country should be reduced (41%) or remain the same as it is right now (35%). These proportions were similar across the two Qatari sub-groups who received the same questions, but in reference to the two separate groups (higher-income and lower-income expatriates). (See Figure II-1).

Figure II-2: Qataris Perceptions on the current number of Foreign Workers

With regard to the number of foreign workers living in Qatar, the majority (57%) of Qatari nationals indicated there were too many expatriates and slightly more than one-third (36%) said that the number was about right. The driving factor behind accepting a given numerical level of foreign workers seems to be more influenced by blue than by white-collar workers. Qataris who received the questions with respect to the blue-collar workers were more likely (63%) to say that there were “too many” foreigners living in the country than those who received the same questions with reference to white-collars (52%). Moreover, 40 percent of Qataris who received the white-collar version said that the number is about right as compared to 32% of Qataris who received the blue-collar version. (See Figure II-2).

Qataris’ Attitudes towards Expats and the Economy

A set of questions were also asked to Qataris about the contribution of expatriates to the development of the country.

Table II-1 Qataris' opinions on how foreign workers contribute to Qatar's economy

Statements	Qataris (white-collar version) %	Qataris (blue-collar version)%
"White-collar workers /Blue-collar workers" strengthen Qatar because they work hard.	79	85 ^{*7}
"White-collar workers/Blue-collar workers" strengthen Qatar because they bring talents.	63 ^{**}	53
"White-collar workers /Blue-collar workers" weaken Qatar because they take its resources.	29 [*]	23
The number of "White-collar workers /Blue-collar workers" puts a strain on Qatar's health services.	69	67
"White-collar workers /Blue-collar workers" in Qatar help to build the country's economy.	87	89
"White-collar workers /Blue-collar workers" receive more social benefits and services than they contribute to the Qatari economy.	57 ^{***}	41
"White-collar workers /Blue-collar workers" contribute more to the Qatari economy than they receive social benefits and services.	38	49 ^{**}
"White-collar workers /Blue-collar workers" mostly take jobs away from Qatari citizens.	55 ^{***}	22

Overall, Qatari nationals value the contribution of foreign workers to the development of their country because they help in building the country, work hard, and bring talents. The majority of respondents indicated that white-collar and blue-collar expatriates in Qatar help to build the economy, strengthen Qatar because they work hard and bring talents (see Table II-1). Despite this general positive view of the contribution of foreign workers, Qatari nationals agreed that the number of white-collar and blue-collar expatriates puts a strain on Qatar's health services. About the net contribution of foreign workers to the economy, Qatari nationals agreed that these foreign workers received more social benefits and services than they contributed to Qatar's economy. This percentage is significantly higher

⁷ p-values * p < 0.10, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

among Qatari nationals who received the question about the white-collar expatriates (57%) compared to those who received the same question about blue-collar expatriates (41%). Additionally, more than half of Qatari nationals (55%) agreed that white-collar expatriates mostly take jobs away from Qatari citizens; a percentage that is significantly lower among Qatari nationals who received the question about blue-collar workers (22%). This year's results present the same pattern as those from SESRI's 2012 study despite of the difference in modes of data collection. In 2012, data collection for the Qataris' Attitudes towards Foreign Workers was conducted via face-to-face interviewing. However, because of the Covid-19 related restrictions, survey interviews for this study were conducted via telephone.

Qataris and the Socio-cultural Impact of Expatriates

Qatari respondents were also asked a set of questions about the influence of foreign expatriates on the socio-cultural aspects of life in Qatar.

Table II-2: Influence of expats on socio-cultural aspects of life in Qatar

Statements	Higher-income expats %	Lower-income expats %
"White-collar workers /Blue-collar workers" make Qatar open to new cultures.	74***	60
The growing number of Arab "White-collar workers /Blue-collar workers" threatens traditional Qatari customs and values.	56**	46
The growing number of non-Arab "White-collar workers /Blue-collar workers" threatens traditional Qatari customs and values.	70**	61

Almost three-quarters of Qatari respondents (74%) agreed that white-collar expatriates make Qatar open to new cultures, compared to 60 percent for blue-collar expatriates. Qatari respondents were also asked whether the growing number of Arab expatriates threatens traditional Qatari customs and values. More than half of Qataris (56%) agreed that the growing number of white-collar expatriates threatens Qatari customs and values in comparison to 46 percent for blue-collar expatriates. A similar question about the growing number of non-Arab white-collar and blue-collar expatriates was also asked of respondents. More than two thirds (70%) of Qataris indicated that the growing number of non-Arab

white-collar expatriates threatens the traditional values and customs of Qatari society compared to 61 percent of Qataris who received the same question about non-Arab blue-collar expatriates. In both versions of the question, the percentage of Qatari nationals who agreed is significantly higher among those who received the questions about the white-collar expatriates than among those who received the questions about the blue-collar expatriates (see Table II-2).

Qataris Attitudes on the Quality of Life in Qatar

Qatari respondents were also asked about the quality of life in Qatar. Overall, more than half of Qatari respondents agreed that Qatar is made a better place to live by both white-collar (57%) and blue-collar (66%) expatriates. Qatari respondents who received the question about the blue-collar workers were more likely to agree to the statement as compared to those who received the question about white-collar expatriates (57% versus 66%). Less than one-quarter of Qatari respondents indicated that Qatar is made a worse place to live by white-collar expatriates (19%) and blue-collar expatriates (16%).

Table II-3: Qataris attitudes about life in Qatar

Statements	Higher-income expats %	Lower-income expats %
Qatar is made a worse place to live by "White-collar workers /Blue-collar workers".	19	16
Qatar is made a better place to live by "White-collar workers /Blue-collar workers".	57	66*
"White-collar workers /Blue-collar workers" increase traffic congestion in Qatar.	82	80

However, more than one-third of Qatari respondents agreed that white-collar expatriates (82%) and blue-collar expatriates (80%) increase traffic congestion in Qatar. In 2012, the vast majority of Qatari nationals agreed that white-collar expatriates (92%) and blue-collar expatriates (95%) increased traffic congestion in Qatar. Considering the difference in the size of the population (1.8 million in 2012 vs 2.8 million in 2020), these Qataris' ratings reflect perceptions about relative⁸ changes in population increase

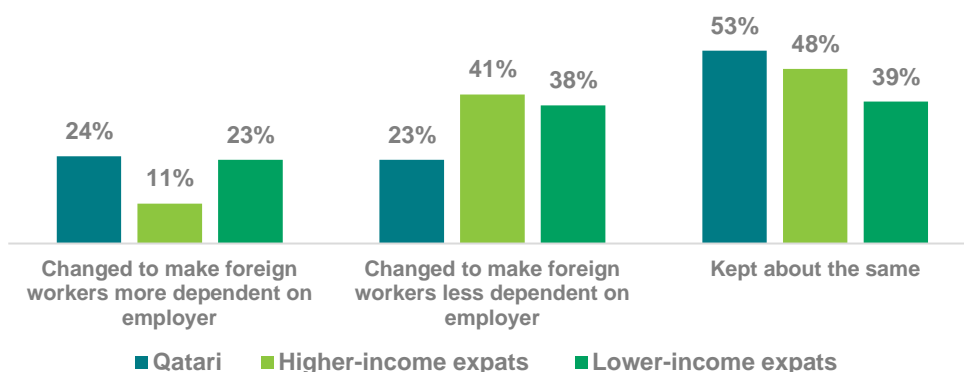
⁸ The yearly population growth rate was much higher in 2012 (12.17%) than in 2020 (1.7%) [PSA data].

and great improvement in the provision of infrastructure facilities and services.

III. ATTITUDES TOWARD THE LABOUR LAW CHANGES

Additional questions were asked of respondents for a better understanding of Qatari nationals and resident expatriates' attitudes towards the employment system in Qatar and their levels of awareness of the Labor Law changes in Qatar. First, respondents were asked whether the employment system in Qatar should be changed to make foreign workers more dependent on their employers, less dependent on their employers, or kept about the same? Overall, the results indicated that all Qatari and expatriate respondents tended to support the status-quo – keeping the current employment system as it is right now (53% for Qataris, 48% for higher-income expatriates, and 39% for lower-income expatriates). Few Qataris (23%) indicated that the system should be changed to make foreign workers less dependent on their employers as compared to higher-income (41%) and lower-income expatriates (38%) (See Figure III-1).

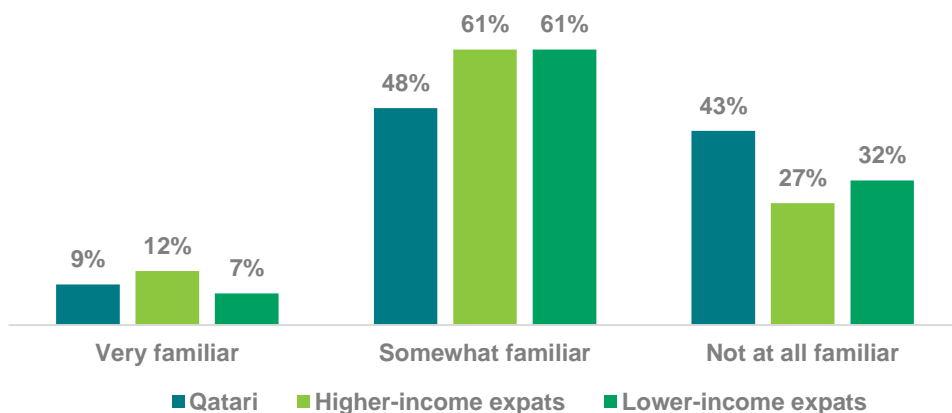
Figure III-1: Attitudes towards the employment system in Qatar



Concerning the Labor Law changes introduced since 2016, the results further revealed that Qatari nationals, higher-income expatriates, and lower-income expatriates are not very familiar with the changes. Nearly half of Qataris (47%), one-third of lower-income expatriates (32%) and slightly more than one-quarter (27%) of higher-income expatriates said that they are not at all familiar with the recent Labor Law changes. The majority of respondents from all three groups said that they were somewhat familiar with the changes. Expatriates (higher and lower-

income) were more likely to say that they are familiar with the changes (61%) as compared to Qatari nationals (48%) (see Figure III-2).

Figure III-2: Familiarity with Qatar Labor Law changes



Respondents from all sub-group populations were also asked open-ended questions about the most important changes in the new Qatar Labor Law. Responses to this question are presented in Table III-1 and

Table III-2 below. With regard to the overall responses (Table III-1), the results show that respondents believed that the main and most important change to the new Qatar Labor Law has been the removal of the Non-Objection Certificate (NOC). The negation of this law, which had required approval from a former employer before an expatriate could be recruited by a new employer, was mentioned by nearly one-third of respondents. However, a similar proportion of respondents said that they do not know about the most important changes in the new Qatar Labour Law. The next most cited change was the removal of exit permit ("Exit permit not required for travel").

Table III-2 presents these results by type of respondents. Note that the options were not read to the respondent so that the responses would reflect what came to their mind immediately without prompting. However, interviewers were permitted to probe for clarity if a respondent mentioned something close to an option but not exact to confirm their intention before coding. Moreover, anything not fitting the categories was written verbatim as "Other". Overall, Qatari nationals were more likely to say that they "don't know" about the most important changes in the Labor Law. This is not surprising as Qataris were also more likely to say that they were not at all familiar with the changes. Responses from the higher-income and lower-income expatriates follow the same pattern as the overall responses. For these expatriates, the removal of the non-objection certificate (NOC) and the exit permit are the most important changes to the Labor Law.

Table III-1: Most important changes in the new Qatar Labor Law (overall responses)

<i>Overall</i>	<i>% responses</i>	<i>% of cases</i>
Penalty and jail terms of up to three years for recruiters who allow their employees to work for other parties without prior official approval	0.1	0.2
Refusal	0.2	0.3
Closed contracts shall not exceed five years	0.7	0.9
New law makes employment of expatriates entirely contract-based	1	1
Worker with new contract to work in Qatar can come back even on the next day	1	1
Penalty for keeping passport of expatriate employee	1	1
Employees with open-ended contracts can move to another employer after five years	2	2
Two-year ban on a new work visa no longer applicable	2	3
Expat can change employer with the approval of MOI and ADLASA if employer is dead or the company no longer exists for any reason	4	5
Workers with fixed job contracts can change job at end of the contract period without any NOC but with approval from Interior and Labour ministries.	6	8
Exit permit not required for travel	14	17
No approval from former employer required if recruited by new employer	25	31
Other changes	18	22
Don't know	25	32
Total	100	126

**Note: Response options in this table were not read to respondents but selected if chosen.*

Table III-2: All respondents' perception of the most important changes in the new Qatar Labor Law

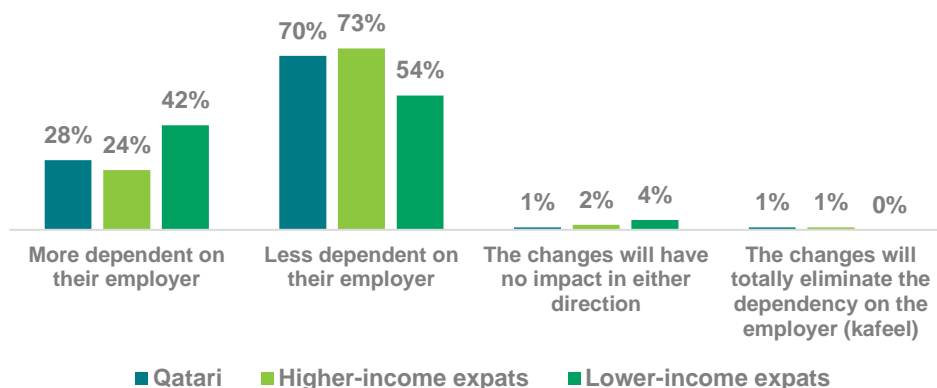
	<i>Qatari</i>		<i>Higher-income expats</i>		<i>Lower-income expats</i>	
	% of responses	% of cases	% of responses	% of cases	% of responses	% of cases
Penalty and jail terms of up to three years for recruiters who allow their employees to work for other parties without prior official	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2
Refusal	0.3	0.4	1	1	0	0
Penalty for keeping passport of expatriate employee	0.3	0.4	1	1	0.1	0.2
Expat can change employer with the approval of MOI and ADLASA if employer is dead or the company no longer exists for any reason	0.4	1	2	2	5	7
Closed contracts shall not exceed five years	1	1	1	1	1	1
Two-year ban on a new work visa no longer applicable	1	1	2	3	3	4
Worker with new contract to work in Qatar can come back even on the next day	1	1	1	2	1	1
Employees with open-ended contracts can move to another employer after five years	2	2	2	3	2	2
New law makes employment of expatriates entirely contract-based	2	2	2	2	1	1
Workers with fixed job contracts can change job at end of the contract period without any NOC but with approval from Interior and Labour ministries.	2	2	8	10	6	8
Exit permit not required for travel	12	14	14	18	14	17
No approval from former employer required if recruited by new employer	15	17	28	36	24	31
Other	22	25	17	21	18	23
Don't know	42	49	23	29	24	31
Total	100	115	100	128	100	126

**Note: Response options in this table were not read to respondents but selected if chosen.*

Concerning foreign workers' dependency on their employer, the results showed that the majority of all three sub-groups (Qataris, higher-income and lower-income expatriates), of respondents believed that the new Labor Law changes will make foreign workers less dependent on their employer (70%, 73% and 54%, respectively) (see

Figure III-3). By contrast, fewer respondents (from all sub-groups) believed that the “the changes will totally eliminate the dependency on the employer.

Figure III-3: The impact of new changes on the workers' dependency on their employer



Job mobility is very important to expatriates. All the respondents were asked to indicate what element they would change if they could change one element of the Qatar Labor Law. Though the majority of Qataris, higher-income and lower-income expatriates said they did not know or indicated other responses, 16 percent of higher-income expatriates and 17 percent of lower-income expatriates selected the removal of the non-objection certificate (NOC), thus allowing people to change jobs without employers' approval. Note that, as mentioned above, this was in fact removed as part of the new Labor Law. This percentage is significantly lower among Qatari nationals (2%) (see Table Table III-3).

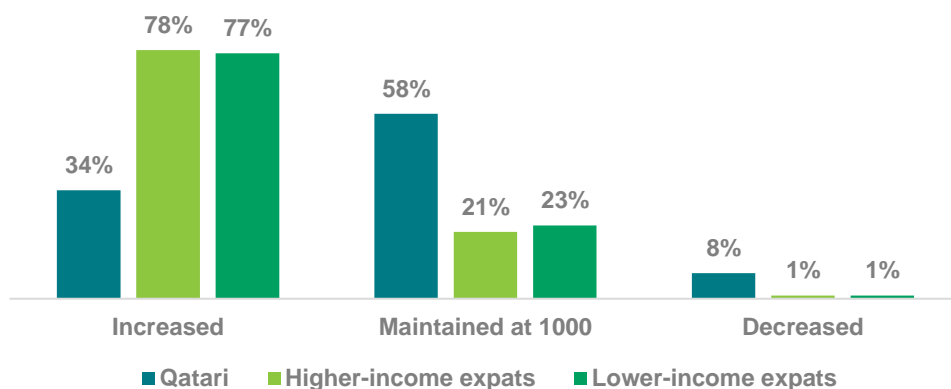
Table III-3: Opinion of respondents on changing one element of the Qatar Labor Law

	Qatari (%)	Higher-income expats (%)	Lower-income expats (%)
Eliminate the exit permit / enforce elimination	2	2	1
Bring back the exit permit system	7	1	0.0
Allow people to change jobs (remove no objection certificate)	2	16	17
Do not allow people to change jobs (keep no objection certificate)	6	0.4	0.4
Have the government as everybody's sponsor	1	1	3
Enforce the regular payment of salaries	0.4	1	7
Pay salary via bank transfer	0.2	0.1	1
Implement a minimum wage	1	5	11
Other	38	36	26
Refusal	0.2	2	1
Don't know	42	36	33

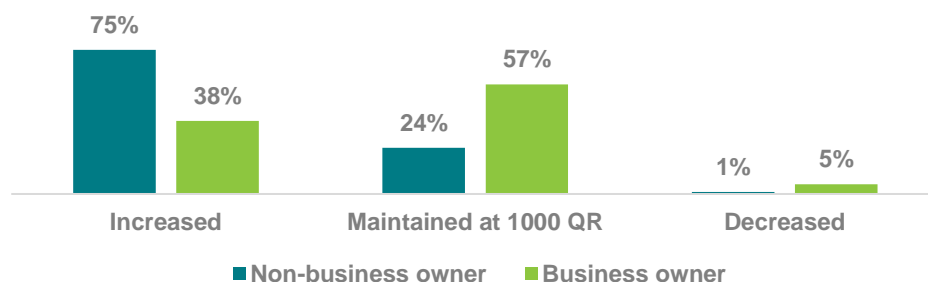
**Note: Response options in this table were not read to respondents but selected if chosen*

About the minimum wage⁹, the results present significant differences between Qatari nationals and expatriates. All respondents were asked whether the new minimum wage should be increased, reduced, or kept at QAR 1000. Overall, nearly three-quarters (74%) of the whole sample indicated that it should be increased. However, taking into account the type of respondents, the results clearly indicate that expatriate respondents mainly propelled this overall response. As shown in (Figure III-4), slightly more than three-quarters of higher-income (78%) and lower-income (77%) respondents supported increasing the current monthly minimum wage, while more than half of Qatari respondents prefer to keep it the same (58%). Finally, 8 percent of Qatari nationals reported that the minimum wage should be decreased.

⁹ According to Law No. 17 of 2020 on Setting the Minimum Wage for Workers and Domestic Workers, the minimum wage is set for all private sector workers, including domestic workers, at QAR 1,000 per month as a basic wage, as well as QAR 500 per month allocated by the employer for accommodation expenses and QAR 300 per month for food, unless the employer already provides adequate food or accommodation for the employee or domestic worker.

Figure III-4: All respondents' perceptions of the minimum wage in Qatar

Of the Qatari and higher-income subsamples, respondents who own businesses or partner with others in business ownership were also asked about the minimum wage. Results from these business owners also follow the same pattern as that of the general population. While the majority of the non-business owners (75%) said that the minimum wage should be increased, more than half of the business owners (57%) preferred to maintain the minimum wage at 1,000 QR (see Figure III-5).

Figure III-5: Business owners and non-business owners' perceptions of the minimum wage in Qatar

Finally, all respondents were asked an open-ended question about what minimum wage would represent an acceptable salary in their opinion. As is shown in Table III-4, the overall mean from all respondents is QAR 1,

788 per month which is (79%) higher than the actual minimum wage (without accommodation and food allowances). Higher-income expatriates (QAR 2,243/per month) and lower-income expatriates (QAR 1,639) were more likely to provide a higher mean minimum wage as compared to Qatari nationals (QAR 1,527) (see Table III-4 .

Table III-4: The acceptable minimum wage (all respondents' type mean)

<i>Respondent type</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean (QAR)</i>
Qataris	774	1527
Higher-income expat	891	2243
Lower-income expat	829	1639
Overall	2494	1788

IV. IMPACT OF THE LABOR LAW CHANGES

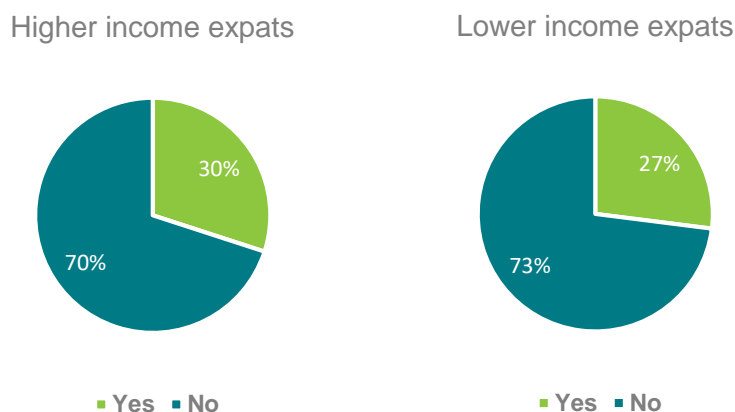
Qatari nationals' attitudes towards the new labor laws, which favor keeping the status-quo, increasing the restrictions, or maintaining the minimum wage at its current level, put them out of step with policies aimed at appeasing critics. Critics have charged that the new labour law is similar to the prior legal framework and contend that it does not provide enough flexibility and freedom to workers to change jobs and travel freely. This section presents results describing the impact of the Labor Law changes with regard to the exit permit, job mobility, Qatar's economy, workers' rights and their quality of life.

As seen in Figure IV-1, less than one-third of both higher and lower-income expatriate respondents reported having changed their employer since coming to Qatar (30% and 27%, respectively). When asked whether their employer has ever prevented them from changing jobs, the majority of both higher-income (93%) and lower-income expatriates (89%) responded negatively, indicating that they have not been prevented from changing jobs. Those who did report being denied changing jobs were asked a follow-up question to gauge the reasons behind their employers' decision.

Respondents' most frequently mentioned reasons behind employers' decision for preventing job changing included "contractual obligation" and "employer attitude" (see Table IV-1). Again, these were unread options that the respondent would mention without prompting.

Table IV-1 Reasons your employer preventing from changing jobs

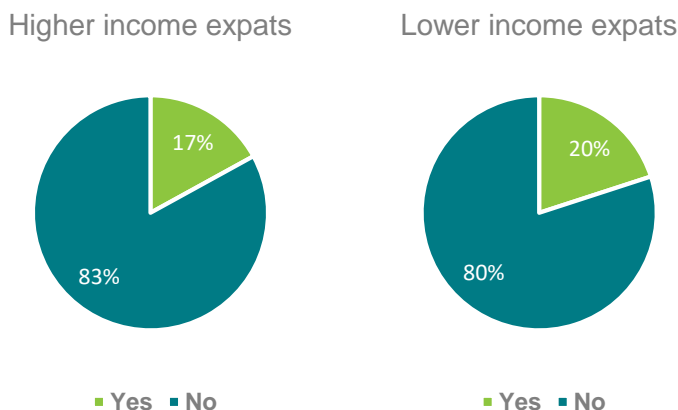
	<i>Freq.</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Contractual obligation	69	41
Employer attitude	58	36
Workload was high	13	9
Other, specify	22	10
Don't know	7	3
Total	169	100

Figure IV-1: Have you changed your employer since coming to Qatar?

While the current law indicates that the exit permit is no longer required for expatriate workers¹⁰, anecdotal evidence shows that some workers are still unaware of this rule and that their employers continue to require workers to apply for such permissions prior to leaving the country. To examine the extent of expatriates' awareness on this issue, expatriate respondents were asked whether they currently need an exit permit to leave the country or not.

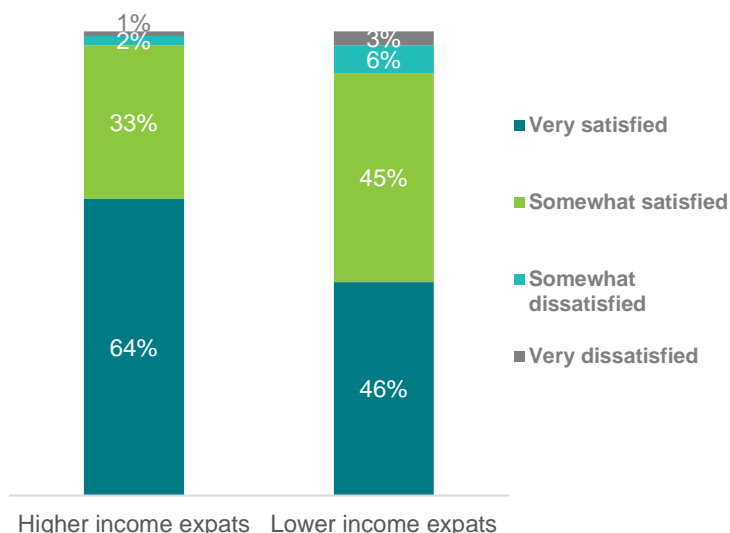
As seen in Figure IV-2, about 8 in 10 expatriates from both the higher and lower-income brackets stated that they do not need an exit permit, while the remaining proportion of respondents reported that they still need one. Expatriates were also asked whether they have ever been denied an exit permit in the past. The vast majority of both higher-income and lower-income expatriates (98% from each group) responded negatively, indicating that they have not been denied an exit permit.

¹⁰ Both Law No. 13 of 2018 and the Ministerial Decision no. 95 of 2019 still maintain exit visa requirements for some employees. Employers can apply to the authorities to designate up to 5% of their foreign national staff to be required to seek prior consent due to the nature of their work.

Figure IV-2: Do you currently need an exit permit to leave Qatar?

Expatriate respondents were also asked to report their overall satisfaction with the way their rights are respected in Qatar. As seen in Figure IV-3, the majority of both higher-income and lower-income expatriates were either very or somewhat satisfied (97% and 91%, respectively). The results displayed significant differences in the proportion of those who reported being “very satisfied” in that a larger proportion of higher-income expatriates indicated so compared to the lower income expatriate respondents (64% versus 46%, respectively). On the other hand, a larger proportion of lower-income expatriates reported being either very or somewhat dissatisfied compared to higher-income expatriate respondents (9% and 3%, respectively).

Figure IV-3: Overall, how satisfied are you with the way your rights are respected here in Qatar?



Impact of Labor Law changes on quality of life

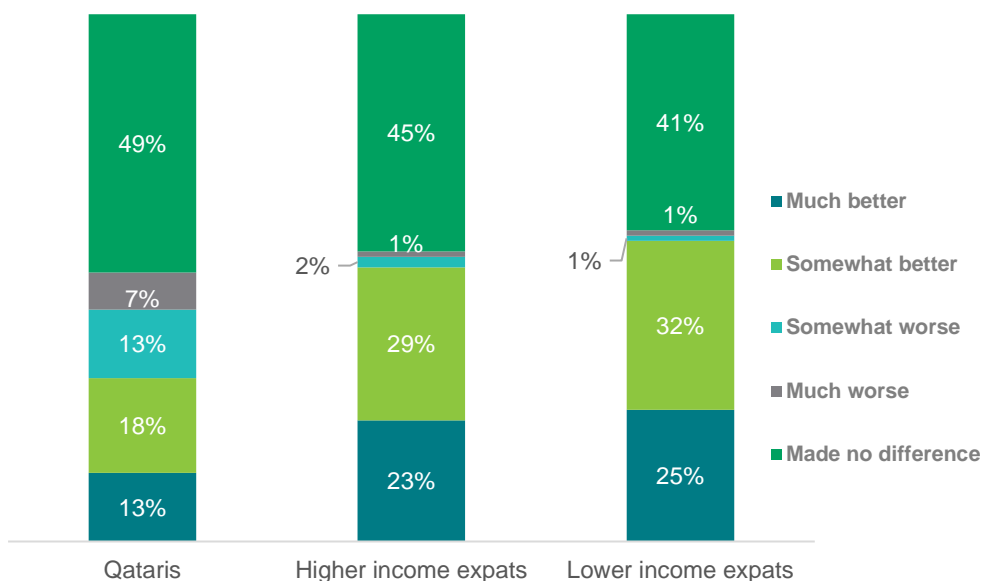
Over the course of the next few years, recently introduced changes to the Labor Law are expected to raise the overall quality of life and economic outlook for both citizens and resident expatriates in Qatar. In that light, respondents were asked a series of questions gauging the impact the legislative changes may have on their personal lives, working conditions, as well as the country's overall economic and business conditions.

When asked to report the extent to which the new Labor Law changes have impacted their life, most respondents from each of the three subgroups reported that they “made no difference” (49% of Qataris, 45% for higher-income expatriates and 41% of lower-income expatriates) (see Figure IV-4). Considering that the changes were introduced relatively recently, their full effects may not yet be felt and this may explain this finding.

Qatari respondents were most likely to report that the new Labor Law changes have made their lives “much worse” or “somewhat worse” (20%) compared to both expatriate subgroups (3% of higher-income and 1% of lower-income expatriates). This could presumably be due to the fact that Qatari citizens are also more likely to be business owners and employers of both professional and domestic workers and hence project a concern

that the legislative changes will primarily serve to bring more uncertainty and higher costs. On the other hand, lower-income expatriate respondents were most likely to report that the changes have made their lives either “much” or “somewhat better” (57% compared to 52% of higher-income-expatriates and 31% for Qataris).

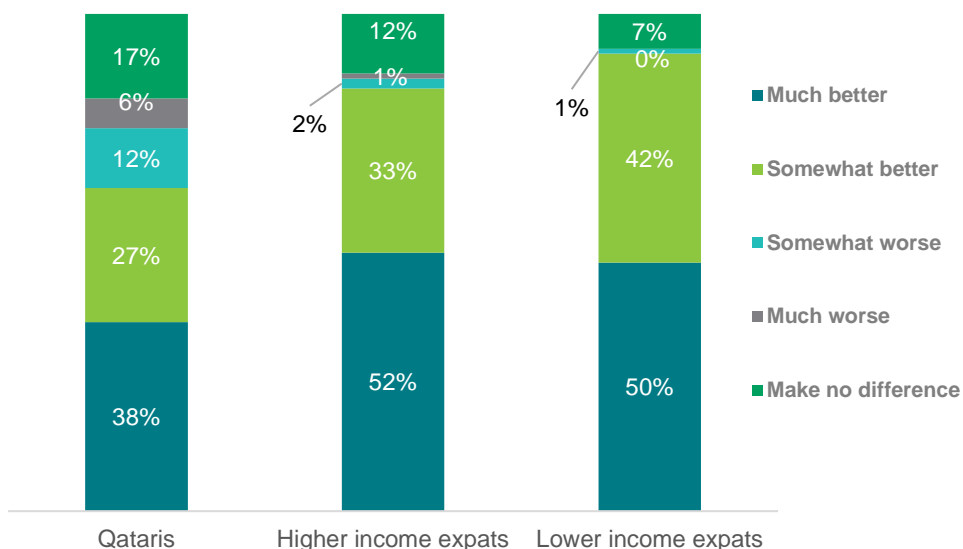
Figure IV-4: Overall, have these new Labor Law changes made your life...



Considering that some of the recent changes were yet to take full effect at the time of the survey, respondents were also asked to think about the extent to which the changes will impact their lives in the future. As seen in

Figure IV-5, the proportion of those who expected the law changes to “make no difference” is significantly lower for future projections in all three population subgroups compared to the previously reported impact in Figure IV-4. The majority of all respondents thought that new legislative changes will make their lives either “much” or “somewhat better” in the future, with lower-income expatriates being the most optimistic overall (92% compared to 85% for higher-income expatriates and 65% for Qataris).

Figure IV-5: In the future, do you think these new Labor Law changes will make your life ...?



The recent Labor Law changes are expected to particularly affect the overall quality of life and to better protect foreign workers' rights in Qatar. To measure these expectations, respondents from all three subgroups were asked to report their level of agreement using a 5-point scale (Strongly Agree, Somewhat Agree, Somewhat Disagree, Strongly Disagree and Neutral¹¹). As seen in

¹¹ "Neutral" was offered as a silent response options, i.e. it was not read aloud to the respondents, and was instead used by the interviewer to record a neutral position when voluntarily offered by the respondent.

Table IV-2, at least 9 out of 10 respondents from each subgroup thought that the legislative changes will improve the living conditions of foreign workers in Qatar, and also improve the protection of their rights. On the other hand, one-third of Qatari respondents (33%) thought that the changes will have a negative impact on the living conditions of foreign workers, while expatriate respondents were less likely to report this (22% for higher-income expatriates and 17% of lower-income expatriates).

Table IV-2: Impact of Labor Law changes on living conditions of foreign workers and Impact on workers' rights¹²

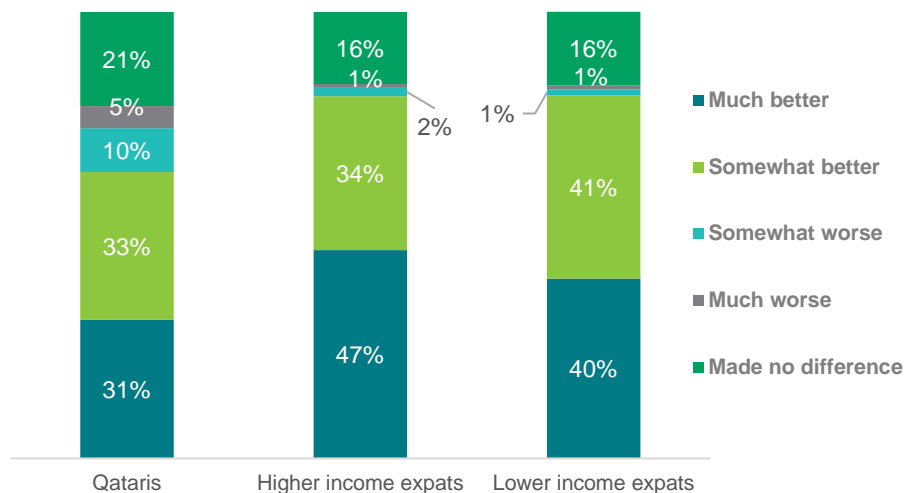
	<i>Qataris</i>	<i>Higher income expats</i>	<i>Lower income expats</i>
Improve the living conditions of foreign workers in Qatar	91%	93%	94%
Have a negative impact on the living conditions of foreign workers in Qatar	33%	22%	17%
Improve the protection of workers' rights in Qatar	91%	96%	93%

Impact of Labor Law changes on Qatar's economy

When asked to reflect on the extent to which the recent Labor Law changes have affected Qatar's economy, most respondents thought that they made it "much" or "somewhat" better. However, the results revealed that expatriates are more optimistic overall compared to Qatari respondents as 81 percent of both higher-income and lower-income expatriates stated that the changes made Qatar's economy either "much" or "somewhat" better compared to less than two-thirds (64%) of Qatari respondents. Qatari respondents were most likely out of the three respondent subgroups to state that the Labor Law changes have made Qatar's economy "somewhat" or "much" worse (see Figure IV-6).

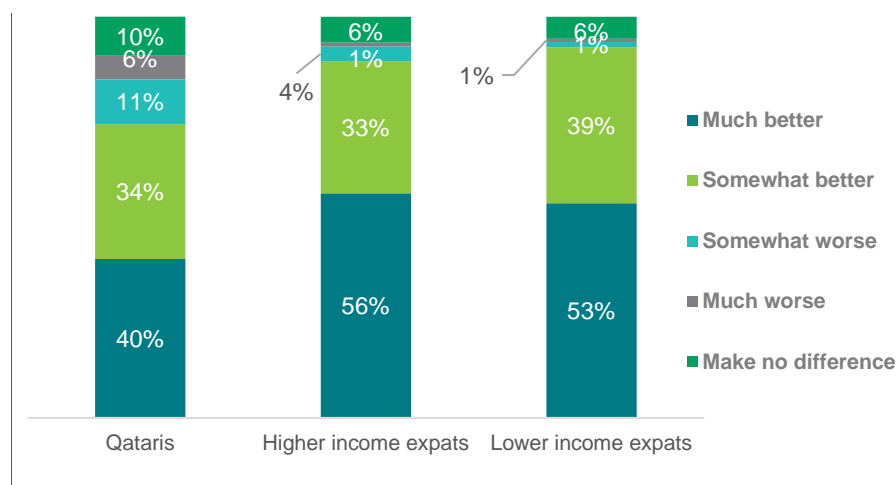
¹² Table IV-1 shows the combined proportion of respondents who either "strongly" or "somewhat" agreed with each of the statements.

Figure IV-6: Overall, have these new Labor Law changes made Qatar's economy...



Expatriate respondents were also more optimistic when it comes to the effect of Labor Law changes on future business conditions in the country. While the overall majority of all respondents thought that the changes will make business conditions “much” or “somewhat” better, lower-income expatriates were the most likely subgroup to report so (92% compared to 89% for higher-income expatriates and 74% of Qataris). As seen in Figure IV-7 below, Qatari respondents were, once again, most likely to express reservations about the Labor Law changes, with 17 percent stating that they would make business conditions in the future either “somewhat” or “much” worse (compared to 5% of higher-income and 2% of lower-income expatriates).

Figure IV-7: In the future, do you think these new Labor Law changes will make business conditions...?



Implementing the recent Labor Law changes is expected to affect future employment opportunities and overall business conditions in the country. Accordingly, respondents from all three subgroups were presented with a series of statements and asked to report their level of agreement on each using a 5-point scale (Strongly Agree, Somewhat Agree, Somewhat Disagree, Strongly Disagree and Neutral¹³) (see Table IV-3 below).

Overall, the majority of all respondents agreed that the legislative changes would provide more employment opportunities for foreign workers and Qatari citizens as well. Results from the subgroup analysis revealed that Qatari respondents were more conservative in terms of their overall level of agreement with statements on the positive impact of the legislative changes, compared to both higher-income and lower-income expatriates.

The majority of all respondents also agreed that the Labor Law changes would improve both working conditions for foreign workers and work productivity in Qatar. Lower-income expat respondents expressed slightly higher overall levels of agreement with such statements compared to Qatari and higher-income expatriates. Compared to both expatriate subgroups, Qatari respondents were more likely to agree that the legislative changes would have a negative impact on Qatar's economy (32% compared to 15% for higher-income and 14% for lower-income

¹³ "Neutral" was offered as a silent response options, i.e. it was not read aloud to the respondents, and was instead used by the interviewer to record a neutral position when voluntarily offered by the respondent.

expatriates). Similarly, Qatari respondents (34%) were more likely to agree that the changes would have a negative impact on working conditions of foreign workers compared to higher-income and lower-income expatriate respondents (19% and 17%, respectively). Improving the provision of public services and infrastructure in Qatar was another positive impact of Labor Law changes reported by the majority of all respondents, with various levels of overall agreement (85% of Qataris, 94% for higher-income and 96% of lower-income expatriates).

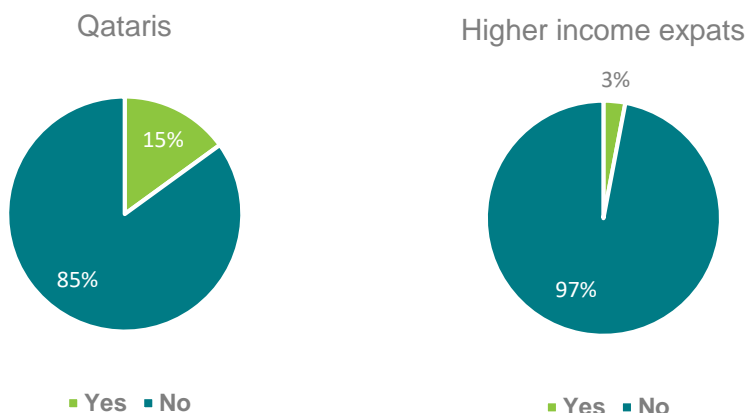
Table IV-3: Impact of Labor Law changes on employment and business conditions

	<i>Qataris</i>	<i>Higher income expats</i>	<i>Lower income expats</i>
<i>Have a negative impact on Qatar's economy</i>	32%	15%	14%
<i>Provide more employment opportunities to foreign workers</i>	81%	91%	93%
<i>Provide more employment opportunities to Qatari citizens</i>	75%	84%	87%
<i>Improve the working conditions of foreign workers in Qatar</i>	89%	94%	96%
<i>Have a negative impact on the working conditions of foreign workers in Qatar</i>	34%	19%	17%
<i>Improve the provision of public services and infrastructure in Qatar</i>	85%	94%	96%
<i>Improve work productivity in Qatar</i>	84%	94%	95%

Impact of Labor Law changes on business owners

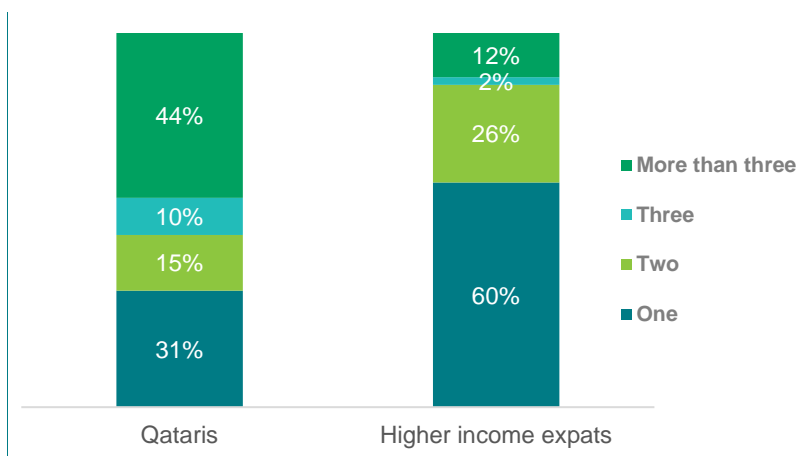
In addition to feedback from the general public, the research team was able to screen business owners and partners from the sample and gauge the extent to which Labor Law changes have impacted them. Qatari and higher-income expatriate respondents were asked whether they own any trading establishment or company in Qatar. Overall, 15 percent of Qataris and 3 percent of higher-income expatriates responded affirmatively (Figure IV-8).

Figure IV-8: Are you an owner of any trading establishment or company here in Qatar?



In addition to business ownership, 7 percent of Qatari and 3 percent of higher-income expatriate respondents also reported that they partner with other individuals, trading establishments or companies in Qatar. Respondents who stated that they are either owners or partners were asked to report the number of their businesses (Figure IV-9). Slightly less than one-third of Qataris (31%) and the majority of higher-income expatriates (60%) stated that they own or partner in a single business. Qatari respondents were most likely to state that they own or partner in more than three businesses (44%) as compared to higher income expatriates (12%).

Figure IV-9: How many businesses do you own or partner in?



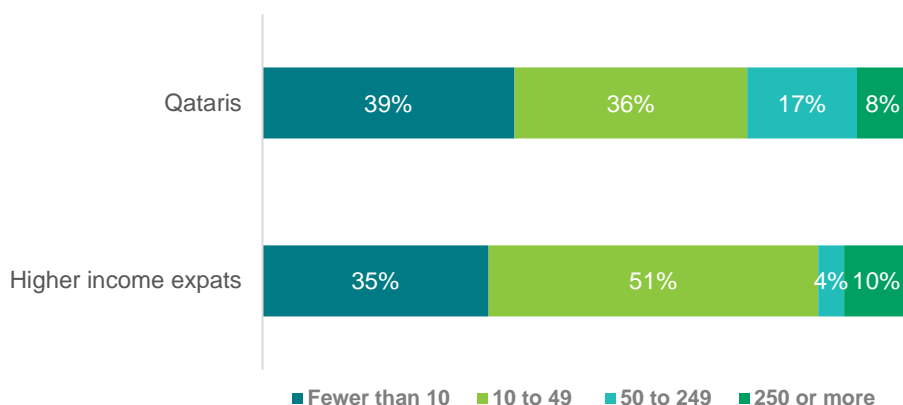
Most of these businesses operate in construction, food and real estate. Other businesses mentioned also included hospitality and tourism. The rest of the businesses are in various sectors, including technology and education (see Table IV-4).

Table IV-4 What sector does your business operate in? [MULTISELECT]

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>% of responses</i>	<i>% of cases</i>
Construction	39	20	23
Food	20	10	11
Real estate	21	10	12
Retail	9	5	5
Entertainment	3	2	2
Sports/fitness	7	3	4
Hospitality and tourism	18	9	10
Financial services	3	2	2
Technology	16	8	9
Education	1	0	1
Health care	9	4	5
Media	1	1	1
Trading	22	11	13
Transportation	7	3	4
Industry	7	3	4
Security	0	0	0
Other	18	9	10
Total	201	100	115

The majority of businesses have been in operation for several years, with only 8% of Qatari and 5% of higher-income expatriate business owners or partners reporting that their businesses have been in operation for less than one year. Slightly more than one-third (34%) of higher-income expatriates and 2 out of 5 Qataris (40%) reported that their businesses have been in operation for over 10 years.

In terms of the size of their workforce, more than one-third of Qataris (39%) and higher-income expatriates (35%) stated that their businesses employ fewer than 10 people full-time. About half of higher-income expatriates (51%) and slightly more than one-third (36%) of Qataris reported having between 10 and 49 full-time employees, while 8 percent of Qataris and 10 percent of higher-income expatriate business owners or partners reported larger enterprises with 250 or more employees (Figure IV-10).

Figure IV-10: Overall, how many people does your business employ full time?¹⁴

Business owners and partners were also asked about the total number of high and low-skilled workers they employ. The average number of high-skilled employees mentioned by Qatari business owners or partners was 13, while higher-income expatriates reported having an average of 62 high-skilled employees. The opposite was the case for low-skilled employees with Qatari business owners or partners reporting they employed an average of 64 while higher-income expatriate business owners or partners employed an average of only 14 low-skilled workers (see Table IV-5 for more details).

Table IV-5: Number of high skilled and low skilled employees

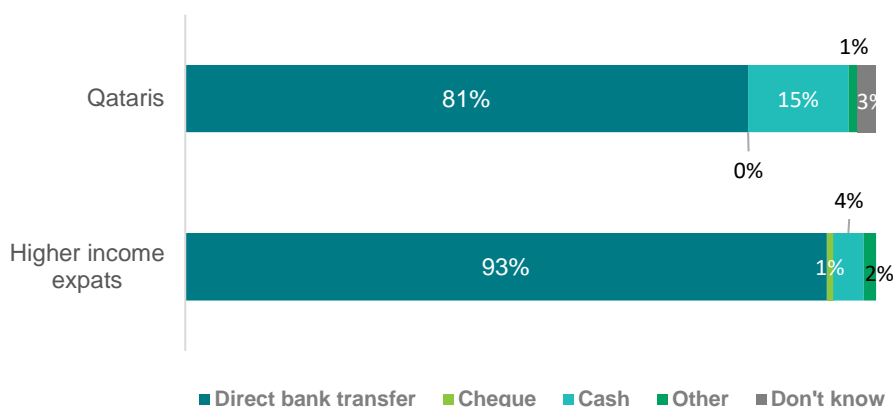
		<i>Qataris</i>	<i>Higher income expats</i>
Number of high skilled employees	Mean	13	62
	Median	4	5
	Min and max	0-400	0-1000
Number of low skilled employees	Mean	64	14
	Median	5	2
	Min and max	0-2000	0-200

¹⁴ Business owners and partners were asked to mention the exact number of employees that they employ full-time; this was later recoded into groups for reporting purposes. The breakdown follows the OECD's business size classification: microenterprises (fewer than 10 employees), small enterprises (10 to 49), medium-sized enterprises (50-249), and large enterprises (250 or more): <https://doi.org/10.1787/15abedae-en>

In order to protect the workers' right to a timely and regular salary payment, Law no. 1 of 2015 introduced the Wage Protection System (WPS), requiring all private companies to transfer their employees' wages through Qatari banks within seven days of their due date. The WPS has led to more timely payment of wages and reduced a range of wage abuses.

In this regard, business owners and partners were asked to report the method through which their employees receive their salary. As seen in Figure IV-11, the majority reported that their employees receive their salary via direct bank transfer, though on this issue there were some significant differences between Qatari and higher income expatriate subgroups (81% and 93%, respectively). The second most frequently used method of payment was cash (though comparatively low) which was mentioned by 15 percent of Qatari and 4 percent of higher-income expatriate business owners or partners. A small proportion of Qatari respondents (3%) stated that they do not know how the employees in the businesses that they own or partner in receive their salaries.

Figure IV-11: How do your employees receive their salary?



The Ministry of Administrative Development, Labor and Social Affairs (ADLSA) regularly sends inspectors to businesses to verify the implementation of workers' contracts, including issues such as working hours, salary payment, and annual leave. When asked whether their business or place of work have ever been subject to a labor inspection, more than half of both Qatari and higher-income expatriate business owners or partners responded affirmatively (63% and 62%, respectively).

Qatari and expatriate business owners were asked about their three main concerns (first, second, and third) regarding the new Labor Law changes. Although the majority of these business owners stated that they have no concerns about the changes, they did mention that retaining appropriate workforces and the cost of doing business in Qatar were areas of concern (see Table IV-6).

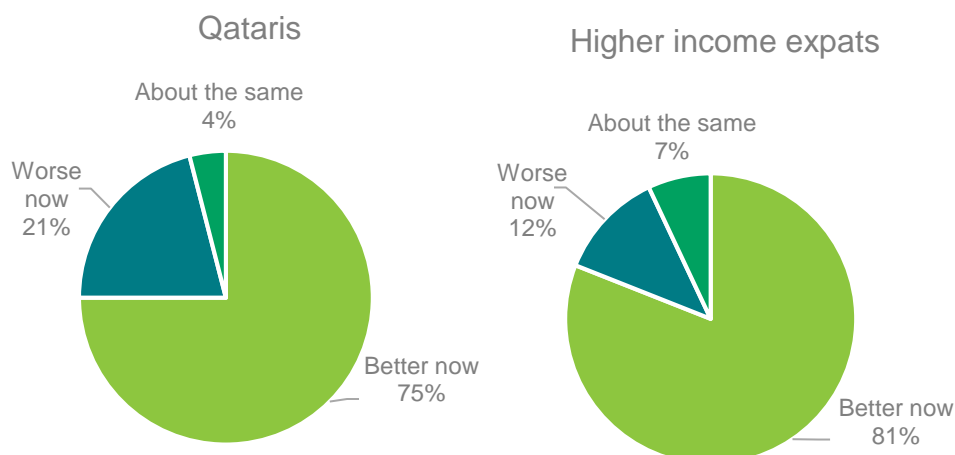
Table IV-6: The most important concern for your business in the coming 5 years? (first, second and third)

	<i>First</i>		<i>Second</i>		<i>Third</i>	
	% of Qatari	% of Higher income expats	% of Qataris	% of Higher income expats	% of Qataris	% of Higher income expats
Cost of doing business in Qatar	12	14	11	11	13	10
Recruiting appropriate workforce	7	7	5	16	4	4
Retaining appropriate workforce	18	8	15	4	5	11
Finding suitable workspace or retail space	1	0	1	3	3	15
Obtaining finance	0	0	0	1	2	9
Managing finance	2	3	1	0	1	0
Integrating or adapting to new technologies	0	5	0	0	0	0
Developing an online presence / e-commerce	0	4	0	0	4	9
Acquiring new customers and/or expanding to new markets	2	7	5	3	0	0
Economic situation	10	14	8	0	10	0
Coronavirus disease (COVID19)	9	11	3	0	5	0
New Labor Law	11	0	9	15	4	0
Political situation	0	0	3	3	5	0
No concerns	22	18	35	40	39	43
Other	7	10	4	3	6	0

Impact on businesses

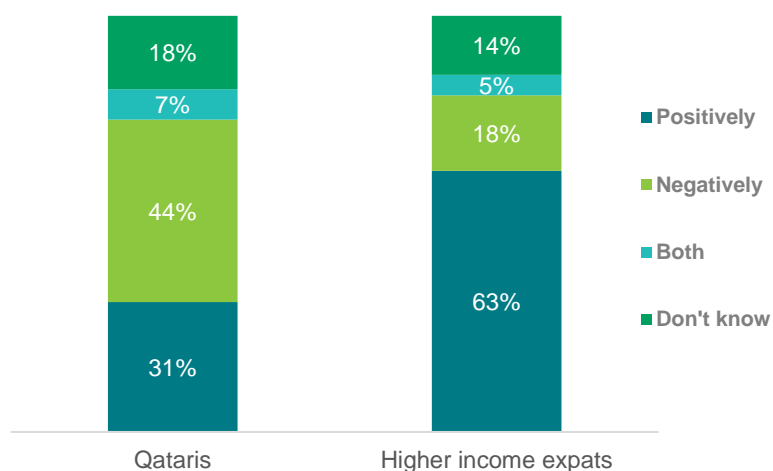
Overall, business owners and partners were optimistic about the impact of the recent Labor Law changes on business conditions in Qatar. As seen in Figure IV-12, the majority of both Qatari and higher-income expatriate business owners and partners thought that the conditions were better now than they were before the changes (75% and 81%, respectively). On the other hand, Qatari business owners and partners were more likely to state that the conditions are worse now than they were before (21%) compared to higher income expatriates (12%).

Figure IV-12: Do you think with the recent Labor Law changes, business conditions in Qatar are better now or worse than they were before the changes?



When asked to reflect whether the recent changes in the Labor Law have positively or negatively affected their own businesses, the majority of higher-income expatriates (63%) and slightly less than one-third of Qataris (31%) stated that the impact has been positive. Qatari business owners, however, were most likely to report that their business has been negatively affected (44%). A similar proportion of both Qataris and higher-income expatriates reported that they did not know the direction of impact that the Labor Law changes have had on their businesses (18% and 14%, respectively) (see Figure IV-13).

Figure IV-13: Has your business been positively or negatively affected by the recent changes in the Qatar Labor Law?



Analysis of the multiple-select responses from those respondents who stated that their businesses have been positively affected by the recent changes in the Labor Law indicated that the most frequently mentioned impacts are easier recruitment (37%) and attracting higher quality employees (23%) (see Table IV-7 below for more details). These response options were not read to the respondent.

Table IV-7: How has your business been positively affected by the recent changes in the Qatar Labor Law?

<i>Positive impacts</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>% of responses</i>	<i>% of cases</i>
<i>Easier recruitment</i>	25	35	37
<i>Higher quality employees</i>	16	21	23
<i>Increased revenue</i>	7	10	11
<i>Increased productivity</i>	8	10	11
<i>Protect worker and company rights</i>	11	15	16
<i>Other</i>	7	9	10
<i>Total</i>	73	100	107
<i>Valid cases</i>	68		

Most frequently mentioned negative impacts of the recent legislative changes include having less control over employees (50%) and higher turnover (45%). Other noteworthy negative impacts include an increase in recruitment costs (17%) and decrease in profits (10%) (see Table IV-8 below for more details).

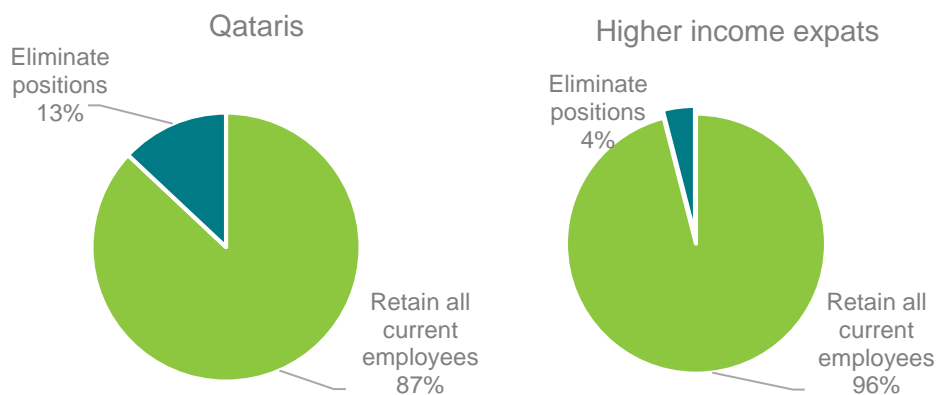
Table IV-8: How has your business been negatively affected by the recent changes in the Qatar Labor Law?

<i>Negative impacts</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>% of responses</i>	<i>% of cases</i>
<i>Increase in recruitment costs</i>	13	9	17
<i>Increase in production costs</i>	7	5	9
<i>Decrease in profits</i>	8	6	10
<i>Increase in employee salaries</i>	11	8	14
<i>Less control over employees</i>	38	28	50
<i>Higher turnover</i>	35	25	45
<i>Other</i>	26	19	35
<i>Total</i>	137	100	180
<i>Valid cases</i>	76		

Since the recent introduction of the legislation on a mandatory minimum wage, all employees must receive a minimum monthly wage of 1,000 Qatari riyals, as well as a minimum allowance of 300 riyals for food and 500 riyals for housing, unless their employer provides both (Law No. 17 of 2020).

Keeping this change in mind, business owners and partners were asked whether they would retain all their current employees or eliminate positions to meet the new minimum wage requirements (Figure IV-14). The majority stated that they would retain all their current employees, with Qatari business owners and partners somewhat more likely to eliminate positions (13%) as compared to higher-income expatriates (4%).

Figure IV-14: Now that the minimum wage has increased to 1000 QAR, do you think you will retain all your current employees or eliminate positions?

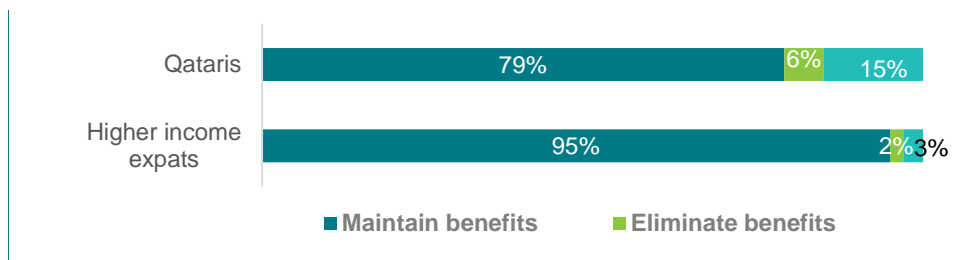


When it comes to employee benefits, the overall majority of business owners and partners stated that they would maintain them, with significant differences between Qataris and higher income expatriates (79% and 95%, respectively). On the other hand, Qatari business owners and partners were more likely to state that they would be eliminating or reducing benefits (21%) compared to higher income expatriate business owners and partners) (5%) (see

Figure IV-15).

Similarly, when asked whether they would maintain or reduce working hours, the majority of all business owners and partners stated that they would maintain them (83% of Qataris and 91% of higher-income expatriates). Qatari business owners and partners were once again more likely to take restrictive measures, stating that they would reduce the hours to meet new wage requirements (17% compared to 9% for higher-income expatriates).

Figure IV-15: And, do you think you will maintain, reduce or eliminate benefits?



V. METHODOLOGY

Sample design

The survey was conducted by telephone from September 2020 to January 2021. The target population for the survey included adults (who are 18 years or older) living in Qatar during the survey reference period. To reach this population, SESRI worked with local cell phone providers to develop a cell phone sample using the listed dialing technique. Since the proportion of adult Qataris with a cellular phone is about 98 percent, a sample drawn from this type of frame is expected to have excellent coverage and representation of the target population¹⁵.

Since Qataris account for a small portion of the population (compared to lower and higher-income expatriates), a proportionate sampling would have yielded a relatively small number of Qataris in the sample, resulting in low precision for studies using the Qatari group alone. Besides, the Qatari group is more heterogeneous than the other two groups (higher and lower-income expatriates) in terms of individual and household characteristics (e.g., age, household size and income), so the sample requirement for the Qatari group should be larger than that of the other groups to achieve the same level of precision. For these reasons, the Qatari group was over-sampled (relatively to other population groups).

During the interviewing or data collection phase, the phone numbers in the sample were released in batches to ensure that the complete call procedures (protocols) were followed for all numbers. The use of batches also improves the representativeness of the survey by balancing the distribution of phone numbers across respondent characteristics. For every phone number in the sample, there were at least seven attempts to complete the interview. The phone calls were made over different times during the day and different days of the week to maximize the chances of making contact with respondents. Phone numbers with break-off and soft refusal were assigned to dedicated interviewers to convert them to completed interviews. The following table shows the disposition of all dialed phone numbers during this survey.

¹⁵ This number is based on a face-to-face survey conducted by SESRI in 2017.

Table V-1: Calling dispositions

Disposition	Frequency
Completed	2,760
Not completed	9,740
Eligible	2,197
Ineligible	4,787
Unknown eligibility	2,756
Raw response rate (RR2)	35.7%
Adjusted response rate (RR4)	43.4%

On the basis of table I-1, response rates are calculated. We report two response rates in the last two rows of table V-1. First, the raw response rate is the ratio between the number of completes (including partial cases with substantial data) and total sample sizes after excluding ineligible: $RR1 = \frac{C}{C+E+UE}$ where C is the number of completes or partials, E is the number of eligible responses, and UE is the number of unknown eligibility. For RR2 all unknown eligibility cases are assumed to have been theoretically eligible giving the lowest boundary for the response rate. Second, the adjusted response rate is $RR4 = \frac{C}{C+E+eUE}$ where e is the estimated proportion of eligible cases for the Unknown Eligibility status cases which is given by this expression $e = \frac{C+E}{C+E+IE}$ where IE is the number of ineligible¹⁶.

With the numbers of completes and partials presented in table V-1, the maximum sampling error for a percentage is +/- 2.5 percentage points for the whole sample. For subgroup analyses of Qataris, higher-income expatriates, and lower-income expatriates, the corresponding sampling errors for these subgroups are 3.4%, 3.38%, and 3.61% respectively. The calculation of this sampling error takes into account the design effects (i.e., the combined effects from weighting and stratification). One possible interpretation of sampling errors is that if the survey is conducted 100

¹⁶ These Response rate calculations are drawn from Standard AAPOR definitions found on page 61 of the 2016 Standard Definitions: Final Dispositions of Case Codes and Outcome Rates for Surveys. https://www.aapor.org/AAPOR_Main/media/publications/Standard-Definitions20169theditionfinal.pdf

times using the exact same procedure, the sampling errors would include the "true value" in 95 out of the 100 surveys. Note that the sampling errors can be calculated in this survey since the sample is based on a sampling scheme with known probabilities.

Weighting

The final weights in the data were constructed from three components: the base weights reflecting the sample selection probability; the adjustment factors to account for the non-response; and the calibration to make the survey results in line with the population numbers. Additionally, weight trimming was used since highly variable weights can introduce undesirable variability in statistical estimates¹⁷.

Base weights

These weights are the inverse of the selection probability of the unit in the sample. Because of the listed dialing, each phone number in each population group is self-weighted and is given by this formula:

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

where W_{base} is the base weight for the respondent, and p is the probability of selection.

Adjustment factors for non-response

If the responding and non-responding units were essentially similar with respect to the key subjects of the investigation, the base weights could be adjusted to account for the non-response by this formula:

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

where α is called the adjustment factor for non-response which is based on the propensity that a sampled unit is likely to respond to the survey¹⁸.

¹⁷ Weight trimming can reduce variance but increase bias in the statistical estimates. Therefore, weight trimming should only be applied to cases with very large values of weights. The goal is to reduce the overall mean squared errors. Further details can be seen in this paper: Potter, F. (1990). A Study of Procedures to Identify and Trim Extreme Sampling Weights. Proceedings of the Section on Survey Research Methods, American Statistical Association, 1990, 225-230.

¹⁸ This weighting process is usually called propensity weighting. A good discussion of this process can be found in Varedian M. and G. Forsman (2003), "Comparing propensity score weighting with other weighting

Weight calibration

The weights were also calibrated to adjust results in line with the population estimates. This calibration can help reduce the effect from non-response and under-coverage of the sampling frame. SESRI uses a “raking” method in the calibration to adjust the weights of the cases in the sample so that the proportions of the adjusted weights on certain characteristics agree with the corresponding proportions for the population.

Questionnaire development

The questionnaire was designed to collect all necessary information related to perceptions of the general public about the recent changes in the labor laws. The questions were initially designed in English and then translated into Arabic by professional translators. After the translation, the translated versions were carefully checked by researchers who are fluent in both English and Arabic. Next, the questionnaire was tested internally inside SESRI. This allowed the project team to learn whether respondents were able to understand and answer the questions, and to identify important concerns that could affect responses to the questions.

The survey was then further translated into 7 more languages (Bengali, Hindi, Malayalam, Nepali, Tagalog, Tamil and Urdu). SESRI first sends its questionnaires out to translation services and then adjusts the returned translation to the spoken language at a level understood by migrant workers. This latter stage employs a “modified committee approach”¹⁹ process that includes back translation and team translation and discussion among translators and with the interviewers to ensure that there is cognitive equivalence between these translations and the English as well as with the Arabic.

After making necessary changes to the questionnaire based on the internal pre-test, the survey was programmed into CAPI (Computer Assisted Personal Interview) system using the software BLAISE. After debugging the program, a face-to-face pre-test on a small number of

methods: A case study on Web data” In Proceedings of the Section on Survey Statistics, American Statistical Association; 2003, CD-ROM.

¹⁹ Schoua-Glusberg, A. 1992, Report on the Translation of the Questionnaire for the National Treatment Improvement Evaluation Study, Chicago: National Opinion Research Center.

housing units was conducted. This pretest provided valuable information to refine question wording, response categories, introductions, transitions, interviewer instructions, and interview length. Based on this information, the final version of the questionnaire was created and then programmed into CAPI for the fieldwork.

Following the Coronavirus Covid-19 Pandemic and subsequent lockdowns, face to face (CAPI) survey operations were suspended at SESRI. The call center was also closed for a time until it re-emerged as a distributed network remote call center in which interviewers received tablets like those used for CAPI interviewing but combined with a soft phone and VPN with monitoring system. Supervisors and interviewers were able to work safely from home with quality control methods in place, including dashboards and monitoring. The survey instrument (questionnaire) was modified for the telephone and approved by the Qatar University Institutional Review Board (IRB). A second pretest was implemented with a distributed network CATI system and further adjustments were made to make the survey ready for data collection.

Survey Administration

The survey was administered in CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interview) mode. SESRI is strongly committed to the idea that knowledge of interviewing techniques and field procedures should be supplemented with the basics of survey research to reinforce the necessity for quality data collection. This is achieved through on-going interviewer training; the provision of a strong interviewer support during the field production; adherence to a strict quality monitoring protocol; and the use of technology that allow supervisors to monitor as well as evaluate all interviewing activities during the survey production phase. All interviewers selected for the data collection participated in SESRI's training sessions where fundamentals of interviewing with CATI, standard protocols for administering survey instruments, and practice with phone interviews were among the topics covered. During the period of data collection, the operational management of the call center at SESRI followed a rigorous quality monitoring protocol to ensure that questions were asked appropriately and responses were accurately recorded by interviewers.

Data Management

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