



HBKU Press highlights factors for students' success in post-secondary endeavours

Doha, Qatar: A recent study in the *Near and Middle Eastern Journal of Research in Education*, published by HBKU Press's online, open access platform, QScience.com, highlights academic advising in pre-university and in early university years as one of the biggest factors in determining the success of university students in Qatar.

The journal is one of many peer-reviewed, open access journals published by HBKU Press and hosted on QScience.com on various subjects that help inform and stimulate scholarly discussion about local and international issues.

"QScience.com is HBKU Press's platform for disseminating information and research that is generated both locally and internationally," explains Dr. Alwaleed Alkhaja, Senior Editor at Hamad Bin Khalifa University Press. "Our journals highlight a variety of information from a wide range of topics such as healthcare, education, the law, and cultural and social issues that can be discovered on our open access platform."

The study, titled, **"A qualitative study of student attitudes, perceptions, beliefs, outlook and context in Qatar: Persistence in higher education"** aimed to understand the perceptions, beliefs, outlook, decisions, and experiences of Qatari university students. Led by psychologist Batoul Khalifa from Qatar University in conjunction with other researchers from Dhofar University (Oman) and the Regional Research Institute (USA), the researchers conducted in-depth interviews with 35 students from various post-secondary institutions in Qatar.

One of the most commonly shared opinions of the Qatari students interviewed was that there is a need to bridge that gap in preparedness and expectations between primary and secondary education and post-secondary education. Some interviewees noted that, even where the students considered themselves capable and proficient in English, the demanding level of English proficiency in post-secondary institutions sometimes held them back from reaching their full potential.

Additionally, this gap stems from the fact that most post-secondary institutions in Qatar are based on Western liberal arts values where students are expected to participate in multidirectional dialogues, discussions, and debates thereby questioning conventional wisdom; a far cry from the single-direction, instructional-styled teaching that occurs in most



public schools where teachers provide information to be unquestioningly accepted by students. This can hinder Qatari students from being prepared for and succeeding in post-secondary studies, particularly when coming from a non-Western styled secondary school environment and enrolling in institutions that follow an American-styled curriculum.

Quality academic advising and support were recommended as starting points to help mitigate impediments to success such as the language and value barriers that were previously mentioned. The purpose of academic advising and support is to familiarize students with what is expected of them and additionally, to make them feel connected with university life through co-curricular/ extra-curricular activities and interaction with different faculty in their programs.

The research suggests that increased contact between students and faculty promotes higher level of student satisfaction with the college experience because the faculty is in a position of authority and are able to provide support, direction and guidance to students. Students need to interact with faculty to support and increase their own personal achievements, persistence, and academic skills. The greater the potential among students to connect with university life, the greater they will engage in it, promote it, and have some affinity to it; at which point, even language barriers or differences in learning methods can be overcome and success can be achieved.

Previous research has provided a wealth of existing theory relevant to the university/college student's success, but virtually none of this existing literature focused on Qatari students and their educational experiences and outcomes. The study is a starting point for future research on ways to support Qatari students' post-secondary success, both locally in Qatar and abroad.

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