The Social and Economic Survey Research Institute Virtual Research Symposium 2021: The Role of Survey Research in Promoting Qatari National Development Qatar amid the Covid-19 Pandemic"

Background and Motivation

Evidence-based policymaking is a pillar of social and economic development across the world and in Qatar. Decisionmakers in industry and the public sector have access to an enormous amount of information, and detailed statistics on economics and current events are updated on an almost daily basis. Both types of information are beneficial for effective policy-making. However, current and trustworthy information about the views, attitudes, and behaviors of ordinary people are often less readily available. While leaders may be able to sense the state of public opinion or tendencies in mass behavior with regard to specific questions or policies, unless they have reliable, objective data on these phenomena along with a valid basis for temporal or cross-societal comparison, they can be forced to rely on intuition in judging the policy-relevance of these perceived attitudes and trends.

Since its establishment in 2009, the Social and Economic Survey Research Institute (SESRI) at Qatar University has helped inform social and economic development in Qatar through the design and implemented of dozens of studies based on state of the art survey research techniques. Backed by rigorous social science and intimate knowledge of the local context, SESRI has produced and disseminated impartial, empirically-based research results offering previously-unavailable insights for use by governmental organizations, policymakers, companies, media, the public, and the international community. This virtual research symposium will showcase SESRI's latest projects and findings and their implications for national development in Qatar against the backdrop of the lingering Covid-19 pandemic.

Objectives

1. To emphasize the role of scientific research in improving reality and enhancing development policies.
2. To increase awareness of SESRI's contribution to Qatar national development and its avid response to emerging events and emergencies through its survey-based research.
3. To connect SESRI researchers with stakeholders, beneficiaries, and interested parties in the private and public sector.
4. To showcase recent findings as well as innovations in survey research capacity since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Welcoming Speech	**Prof Mariam Ali Al-Maadeed - The Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies**		9:00 - 9:10
Opening Speech	**Prof. Kaltham Al-Ghanim** - Director of the Social & Economic Survey Research Institute		9:10 - 9:20
Presentation title	**Researcher(s)**	**Topic(s)**	**Time**
Theme 1: Social and economic development			9:20 - 9:50
This session will focus on social and economic development in Qatar, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. What have been the social and economic impacts of the pandemic – including on financial wellbeing, family life, and social behavior? How have these effects varied across different groups in Qatar's society?			
Social Behavior surrounding Covid-19 in Qatar: Findings from a large-scale survey	Dr. Justin Gengler	Covid-19, Social development	
Qatari Nationals, Higher-income, and Lower-income Expats: Differential impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic in Qatar	Dr. Abdoulaye Diop	Covid-19, Economic security	
Theme 2: Environment and sustainable development			10:00 - 10:30
This session examines recent SESRI studies in the area of the environment and sustainable development. Food security and environmental pollution, both indoor and outdoor, are critical challenges for Qatar and other GCC states, and in order to address these challenges systematic data are required that give insight into the nature of the problem and potential solutions.			
The 2021 Qatar Agricultural Census: Towards sustainable food security	Dr. Elmogiera Elawad	Food security, Environment	
Indoor Air Pollution during Covid-19: How Arabian Gulf norms and traditions matter	Dr. Sana Abusin, Noor El-Emadi & Noor Al-Thani	Covid-19, Environment	
Theme 3: Mental health after Covid-19			10:40 - 11:10
Among the foremost effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have been in the domain of mental health. This pair of presentations present findings from recent surveys of mental health in Qatar. How has the pandemic generated psychological distress, anxiety, and depression? Which groups in Qatar have been most vulnerable? How does today's mental health picture differ from that prior to the pandemic?			
Understanding the Causes of Psychological Distress during the Covid-19 Pandemic in Qatar	Dr. Noora Lari, Rima Charbaji & Buthaina Al-Khelaifi	Covid-19, Mental health	
Prevalence and associated factors of symptoms of depression and anxiety after the first Covid-19 wave in Qatar: A representative national survey of Qatar's population with comparison to pre-pandemic data	Dr. Salma Mawfek Khaled, Iman Amro & Veena Davies	Covid-19, Mental health	

Theme 4: Research capacity and data-driven governance amid Covid-19			11:15 - 12:00
This session focuses on the role of social scientific research in supporting evidenced-based and data-driven policymaking in Qatar. It examines some recent advances in survey methodology spurred on by the pandemic, as well as the role of e-government in promoting public services.			
Survey Data Collection in Qatar during the Covid-19 Pandemic: Can phone surveys be an alternative to face-to-face surveys?	Dr. Kien T. Le	Covid-19, Survey research	
The Design and Implementation of Survey Quality Control System for Qatar's First National Mental Health Survey during Covid-19	Catalina Petcu, Ikram Boukhelif, Marwa Al Assi, Hamdeh Shamsi & Dr. Salma Mawfek Khaled	Covid-19, Survey research	
The Role of E-Government and the Level of Its Adoption in the State of Qatar	Dr. Ali Al-Kubaisi, Rima Charbaji, Noof Al-Rakeb, Maitha AL-Naimi, & Aisha Al-Hamadi	E-government	

Logistics

1. Format: Online via WebEx (with translation)
2. Date: November 11, 2021 (confirmed with VPRGS office)
3. Timing: 12-15 minutes per presentation
4. Duration: 2.5 hours total
5. Language: Presentations are in English with instant Arabic translation available