There has been a serious decline over the last 15 years in the number of students studying mathematics and science at both secondary and tertiary levels of education in Qatar.

This paper explores the major factors influencing student attitudes towards science, as well as the interest and enrollment in science subjects, by addressing the following question: What are Qatari precollege students’ interest in, and attitudes toward, science in grades 3 through 12?

Answers to this research question relied on data from a comprehensive pilot study involving a 60 question Likert scale survey (April / May 2011) to nearly 400 students, across grades 3-12, from 18 randomly selected independent schools education in Qatar.

The results of this survey indicated that nearly half of students surveyed have shown an interest in pursuing science-related university programs, or, work in science-related careers; about two thirds of the students enjoyed science classes at their schools; 60% considered science subjects as the most interesting subjects and 79% considered science as important for their future careers. The survey also revealed that two thirds of the students prefer to study science in English language despite the commonly held belief of most teachers that a language factor is one among the top barriers to students’ achievement in science.

The positive impact of new educational reforms beginning with the 2003 “Education for a New Era” is noticeable in the reasonably positive attitude of students toward, and high interest in, science as shown by the above study (Spring 2011), as well as in recently improved international tests scores (PISA 2009).