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Students' Perception of International Business Curriculum: An Explorative Study—Case of Lebanon

Victor Bahhouth, PhD and John E. Spillan, PhD

University of North Carolina at Pembroke, Pembroke, North Carolina, USA

Jocelyne Bahhouth, PhD

Bladen Community College, Dublin, North Carolina, USA

Roy Khoueiri, PhD

Notre Dame University, Zouk Mosbeh, Lebanon

Economic development depends on business education for a thriving and secure society. A skilled workforce that can create, innovate, and increase business opportunities fosters an environment of prosperity that provides jobs and enhances the quality of life among its citizens. This article examines the environment, content, and delivery of business education in Lebanon. It analyzes curriculum content and the students' perceptions of the value and applicability of the curriculum. It also explores the shift in emphasis toward an international perspective in curricula and its importance for the academicians as well as practitioners to understand the methods, techniques, and activities that are being used to prepare the future business workforce. This study presents ideas and perspectives about how business and international curricula in Lebanon are perceived. Data for this article were collected in Lebanon and reflects the students' perspective on its international business curriculum.

Keywords: Lebanon, Economic development, Business education, International business curriculum, Economic and social benefits, Developing nation

1. INTRODUCTION

There is a direct relationship between economic growth potential and education. This relationship is both obvious and contentious because one can argue that it is difficult to determine which one comes first. Without getting into a prolonged philosophical debate, we will accept Storm and Feiock's (1999) work as a foundation for our discussion in this article. The connection between successful economic development and people having a university education is clear. The benefits of a highly educated citizenry include improving a country's economy while simultaneously

Correspondence should be addressed to Victor Bahhouth, PhD, Associate Professor, School of Business, University of North Carolina at Pembroke, P.O. Box 1510, Pembroke, NC 28372, USA. E-mail: victor.bahhouth@uncp.edu; john.spillan@uncp.edu; jbahhouth@bladenc.edu; khoueiri@ndu.edu.lb

meeting future workforce needs. This eventually creates an environment, which improves the country's quality of life. Higher education is frequently valued as a benefit for the individual; however, it can be strongly argued that an educated citizenry significantly benefits the entire country. That is the underlying principle of higher education and economic development (Bell, 2011).

Thanki's (1999) research indicates that changes in the global economy have increased the contributions of higher education institutions as vehicles for the creation of knowledge that will initiate, promote, and sustain economic development. Storm and Feiock's (1999) research indicates that higher education has a twofold impact on the general economic performance of a society. In the first place, higher education definitely influences the productive capacity of the workforce with human capital investment. Second, higher education enhances the country or locality's competitiveness in national and international markets. As such, this circumstance creates an environment attractive to high-quality employers and high-skilled workers. With a highly skilled workforce, enterprises develop within a nation. This business development activity creates more economic development with a better standard of living for the country's population.

Globalization has created a dynamic business environment. As technology has been rapidly introduced, business has had to adopt new methods of business operation and adapt to a new business environment. The speed of communication has caused changes that now require workers to acquire many more sophisticated skills than before. Workers are flexible, agile, and capable of changing directions at a moment's notice. While the technology has increased the intensity of competition, it has also leveled the playing field for many companies and developing countries. Emerging markets can now communicate as rapidly with sophisticated developed countries as they can with any other country in the world. This situation creates business opportunities that never existed before. When a country has an educated, alert, and trained workforce produced from its higher education system it can compete, profit, and expand its economic development activities.

Understanding the impact of globalization, one can easily see the importance of having managers that are well-trained and ready to address the many complex challenges of international trade. This is especially true from a marketing and general management perspective. Providing students with the proper international business credentials is a very important for higher education to be relevant. Pursuing this goal is even more complicated and challenging in developing countries. Since many developing countries lack resources and expertise in academia, it is essential that they fashion curricula that are efficient, effective, and focused on the economic development of their country. At a time when European and American markets are suffering from a financial crisis, the Lebanese economy has been growing significantly between 2009 and 2011. This good economic activity is making Lebanon one of the region's top performers in terms of economic growth. The increased wealth in the region has opened a new era of opportunities to investments in Lebanon and particularly to green-field investments. Lebanon successfully attracted 7.5% of the total share of foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows to the region in 2010 due to a series of comparative advantages (Investment Development Authority of Lebanon: Presidency of the Council of Ministers, 2011). As such, competent business management skills are an asset in great demand.

Lebanon has always been known as a cultural and religious melting pot and has been at the crossroads of three continents. Having the reputation of the land of refuge, hospitality, and relative freedom—exceptional in the area for the numerous persecuted communities of the Middle East seeking sanctuary—Lebanon experiences a constantly growing influx of different peoples and cultures. The society's Arabic identity is very peculiar, notably due to its high level of

“westernization” and liberalism added to a very typical national cachet. Although no official census has been conducted since 1932, Lebanon’s estimate of 3.8 million inhabitants places it among nations with the highest population density in the world (Central Intelligence Agency, 2012). Lebanon’s inhabitants include numerous foreign nationals, immigrants, and long-term residents (Al Khalil, 1996). Approximately one-third of the population is under the age of 20 (Embassy of Lebanon). The current population growth rate of 1.2% is the lowest in the region. A unique characteristic is that Lebanese emigrants are scattered throughout the globe and number more than four times the residents (Al Khalil, 1996). The literacy rate of 90% is one of the highest in the Arab world. It is even higher among the youth, more than half of who are educated privately (Oxford Business Group, 2005). All of these characteristics set the stage for economic growth and a continuing need for educated business professionals.

To properly capitalize on the opportunities presented by the globalization process, firms will increasingly be required to have well-trained managers who are ready to deal with the complexities inherent to an increasingly international business environment. The formation of business students capable of succeeding on the global business stage emerges as a challenge for higher education. This situation is particularly evident in the case of developing countries where the lack of both resources and academic expertise and the persistence of asymmetric and archaic business practices can hinder the business educational process.

The purpose of this article is to study students’ perception of the methods and techniques that are being used to teach future business leaders in Lebanon. The article seeks to highlight the subjects considered the most important for international business/marketing majors and their preferred learning methods in these areas. We begin by presenting an overview of discussing the internationalization of business curricula. Next, we use responses from students in Lebanon to understand their perspective on international marketing and business curricula at their universities. Finally, we present our findings and discuss their implications for further improvement and development of international business curricula in developing countries.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Learning is a perpetual process that requires continuous updating; much of the existing literature captures this need. Looney and Klenowski (2008) expressed the need for the curriculum to be designed in order to allow the young people to adapt to “an unpredictable future dominated by risk” (p. 177). The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2005, p. 19) report *Towards Knowledge Societies* highlights the need to apply critical thinking in order to sort the humongous amounts of information into the useful and the useless. Jackson Nickerson, professor of organization and strategy at Olin Business School at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, shows how the school requires that all course syllabi include a critical thinking component (Bisoux, 2011). The Commission of the European Communities has noted, “Ways of accessing information and services have changed, as well as the very structure and makeup of society itself” (UNESCO, 2005, p. 3). From this realization stems the need to teach learning skills (Hargreaves, 2002; Broadfoot & Black, 2004). Claxton (2005) explains how the curriculum gears the development of the “learning power.” Stenhouse (1975) distinguishes between curriculum as intention and as reality. The curriculum now constitutes part of the assessment process rather than the product (Looney & Klenowski 2008).

There is a large segment of literature, which discusses the need to internationalize business curricula along with the general failure to create these programs. Turley and Shannon (1999) indicate that only 2.9% of a national sample of marketing majors thought that their university curriculum prepared them for the international business world. Keating and Byles' (1991) research discovered that U.S. business schools offered hardly any support for internationalizing their curricula. Their studies indicated that the most of the focus on international issues was essentially the responsibility of the individual instructors. Additionally, university administration provided limited if any support or follow-through on structure. Moreover, they are many times reluctant to provide evaluation of fledging programs or incentives for making the effort to develop viable internationalized curricula.

The compelling rationale for creating a cohesive internationalized curriculum emanates from various sources. One source is universities themselves recognizing the need to change. Another source is individual departments, within the universities, which have determined that the best education needs to include international components. Finally, and probably the most forceful, is from the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) and from businesses themselves (Albers-Miller, Sigerstad, & Straughan, 2000). Studies on the internationalization of business curricula are not new. Several scholars have investigated its content and its appropriateness for inclusion in business curriculum (Kwok & Arpan, 1994; Cunningham, 1995; Bailey, 1995; Finegold, 1994). Additionally, research on the work of the individual institutions to integrate the curriculum has been completed by various scholars (Cowles, 1993; Delaney, 1995; Donohue et al., 1992; Jarvis, 1993; Schertzer et al., 1994). In this effort to understand the integrated/ internationalized curriculum, various have been completed that compare the internationalization processes and practice in U.S. business schools to those abroad (Coulson-Thomas, 1989; Cova, Kassis, & Lanoux, 1993; Kwok & Arpan, 1994; Leith, Kovacheff, & Price, 1994). The most recent research indicates that different scholars have identified that specialization should be the emphasis within the international business area. This focus would include concentration in international marketing (Cunningham, 1995; Lundstrom, White, & Schuster, 1996), international accounting (Radebaugh, 1992), global human resources (Ondrack, 1992), global business communication (Green & Scott, 1996; Krivonos, 1993; Sondak & Sondak, 1992), and international economics (Handley, 1994; Stiglitz, 1993).

When one investigates the literature on the internationalization of business curricula in developing nations, it is clearly evident that there is very little information about the efforts that universities, scholars, or businesses are engaged in to promote or develop internationalized curricula. One study by Kaynak and Kucukemiroglu (1997) reviewed Turkish business schools. In this study, the authors found that knowledge and skill development in all functional areas of international business are needed. The authors recommended that systematic methods should be established to determine the appropriate skills sets needed by graduates of the business school. Studies that evaluate the internationalization of the business curriculum in Lebanon are limited even though the region is an important trading partner with various Middle Eastern and European nations.

Frequently, research has compared the internationalization process in U.S. business schools to those in other foreign countries (Coulson-Thomas, 1989; Cova et al., 1993; Kwok & Arpan, 1994; Leith et al., 1994). Research confirms that the emphasis needs to point toward specialization within the international business area. By that we mean offering courses that focus on specialization in international marketing (Cunningham, 1995; Lundstrom et al., 1996), international

accounting (Radebaugh 1992), global human resources (Ondrack 1992), global business communication (Green & Scott, 1996; Krivonos, 1993; Sondak & Sondak, 1992), and international economics (Handley, 1994; Stiglitz, 1993). Therefore, while the literature about this topic is scant, it is growing and is shedding more light on the types of international business curricula that exist, the content of the curricula, and the perceptions the students have about the value and usefulness of the curriculum in addressing business issues in the fast-paced global economy. To understand the business management talent, a brief overview of the Lebanese economy is needed.

2.1. Lebanon

At present, Lebanon is regaining its position as a regional and international hub for trade, finance, services, culture, and tourism. This is due to its free-market economy based on a long tradition of government-supported liberalism, a sophisticated banking system, a developed legal framework, a skilled workforce, and an exceptional lifestyle.

In other words, Lebanon is open to the world in different ways. Geographically, it is positioned at the crossroads of Africa, Asia, and Europe. It has created a large regional market with major Arab countries and reaching into Iran, Eastern Europe, part of North Africa, and the southwestern former Soviet Union republics. It has also recently signed a number of international agreements such as the Lebanese-Syrian Trade Agreement, the Arab Free Trade Zone Agreement, and is currently negotiating several others—namely, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, and the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Economically, it has a long tradition of liberal investment policies. Moreover, its economy depends on free enterprise and private initiative. It has a free foreign exchange market, full currency convertibility policies, banking secrecy, and no restrictions on the inward or outward movement of capital. An advantage in the Middle East region is that the private sector in Lebanon contributes to the majority of aggregate demand and covers the totality of economic activities in the nation. A recent war followed by domestic political instability have impacted economic growth and led to a slowdown in investments. Once general environment factors are alleviated in Lebanon, its private sector is once again expected to serve as a major pillar for growth and recovery of the nation.

The same applies to the legal, financial, and workforce factors. Legally, its well-developed legal framework protects private property and grants Lebanese and non-Lebanese equal rights. Financially, with maximum tax rates of 15% for companies and 20% for individuals, Lebanon's fiscal charges are among the most moderate worldwide. Linguistically, although Arabic is the official language, English and French are widely used. Furthermore, its workforce is well-educated and multi-talented, and skilled labor is widely available at moderate fees. Finally, 86.6% of the Lebanese live in urban areas (Embassy of Lebanon, 2009; U.S. Commercial Service, 2009). The nation enjoys a highly skilled labor that is comparable to most European nations. The urban population is noted for entrepreneurial and commercial activities. While staunchly attached to their independence for which they have fought and still struggle to preserve, the Lebanese remain actively engaged in global cultural and intellectual interchanges, most notably with the surrounding Near East, Arabic, French, and Anglo-American cultures (Fauvel, 1975).

As a result, companies competing in this region are responding not only to new trends in technology, but also to the influence of fundamental changes that keep the region a dynamic

business environment (Bengoa & Sanchez-Robles, 2003). The globalization of markets offers great challenges and opportunities for domestic and international marketers. One of the important trends is that specific customers in international markets are selecting a wider range of foreign branded products than ever before. This situation has caused marketers to show a growing interest in understanding the factors related to consumers' evaluation and selection of imported products. The variety of imported goods available for sale in developing countries is quite large.

According to the Lebanese Customs statistics, the United States ranks as Lebanon's largest source of imports. According to the U.S. Department of Commerce statistics, U.S. exports to Lebanon increased by 106.5% in the first nine months of 2006. Major U.S. exports to Lebanon include automotive goods, machinery and appliances, tobacco, and cereals. It is expected that U.S. companies will gain even more market share due to the strength of the Euro compared to the weakening value of the U.S. dollar. Further business opportunities include projects by the Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR), a governmental body responsible for most development projects and the clearinghouse for most international aid funds. CDR has the potential of \$2 billion for projects to be executed in the next 3 years and has promises for an additional \$1 billion for post-war reconstruction. It has draft for the next 12 years, with a 5-year investment plan for sectors that include: water supply, wastewater, solid waste, health, transportation, education, power, and telecom (U.S. Commercial Service, 2009). For all of this economic growth and development to continue, Lebanon must supply the companies and government with professional business talent capable of making appropriate business decisions.

2.2. Educational Situation in Lebanon

The higher education system in Lebanon is approximately 150 years old. At present there are 40 higher education institutions operating in Lebanon. During the latter part of the 1990s, the private sector institutions began to grow rapidly. The overall governance of the higher education in Lebanon resides with the Ministry of Education, commonly labeled (MEHE). Generally speaking, Lebanon has two major types of higher education institutions: (a) one that specializes in human and physical sciences delivery, a continuum of degrees from bachelors through a doctorate; and (b) the university or institute of technology, which delivers the basic bachelors degree only (Lebanon Higher Education, 2010). Of the 40 universities operating in Lebanon, 28 are comprehensive universities, 8 are university institutes, and 4 are religious (Lebanon Higher Education, 2010). The Lebanese University is the largest university in Lebanon, having 17 specialized departments and 50 satellite campuses spread throughout the country. It provides students with the opportunity to enter 105 programs granting degrees from bachelor's to a doctorate. While there is no major accrediting entity in place similar to that which exists in Western universities, Lebanon does have a licensing procedure that focuses on the quality assurance among the country's universities and institutes (Lebanon Higher Education, 2010; Meguerditchian, 2011).

The respondents for this study were recruited from a large private comprehensive university, which has a large business program offering degrees in three major departments: (a) Economics, Accounting, and Finance; (b) Management and Marketing; and (c) Hotel Management. In addition, the university offers an MBA program. With this in mind, the authors believe that this academic venue offered a major opportunity to investigate the perceptions of students regarding the state of their international business education in our contemporary global environment.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section highlights the data collection and research model used in the study. The data are a primary type collected by distributing a survey to 175 university students in Lebanon; the survey highlights students' perception of international business in the following three areas: (a) international business profession (26 questions), (b) international business curriculum (14 questions), (c) learning methodology (7 questions); in addition, the survey includes a section about demographic information of students.

The questions are set in a Likert scale format: 1 stands for strongly disagree; 2 stands for disagree; 3 stands for neutral/no opinion; 4 stands for agree; and 5 stands for strongly agree. In order to capture students' strong arguments, three was subtracted from all values to mitigate the effect of neutral responses. The research model consists of two tools: *t* tests and confidence intervals. A level of significance of 0.1% is used.

3.1. Data Analysis

The study is made of three parts. In the first part, students' perception about the international business profession is tested. Twelve questions showed extremely significant results (i.e., 0.1% level of significance) of which 4 were strongly disagreeing and 8 were strongly agree. Table 1 reflects the test statistics and confidence level results of the strongly disagree statements. These statements show that students have a clear idea about international business, as they disagreed with those statements that are not true; these statements are: "the concept of market segmentation does not apply in foreign markets"; "Normally, products proven successful in Lebanese market can be marketed in foreign countries without any modification"; "A firm located in an affluent market like Lebanon can easily survive without any modifications"; and "One does not need the knowledge of principles of marketing to learn international marketing". Additional analysis, Table 2, regarding the perceptions of male and female students indicated that there was insignificant difference between the genders on this topic as one statement out of four was rejected. Preferences are almost the same according to this data.

On the other hand, Table 3 reflects strongly agree statements results. These results are explained as students' perception on three different dimensions: first, the importance of culture

TABLE 1
International Business Profession—Strongly Disagree

<i>Alpha = 0.1%, Test Value = 3</i>						
	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	<i>Mean Difference</i>	<i>99.9% Confidence Interval of the Difference</i>	
					<i>Lower</i>	<i>Upper</i>
p101	5.498	164	.000	.59394	.2320	.9559
p107	3.809	164	.000	.39394	.0474	.7405
p109	3.699	86	.000	.54023	.0426	1.0379
p121	5.266	162	.000	.55215	.2007	.9036

TABLE 2
International Business Profession—Strongly Agree

<i>Gender—Alpha = 10 % CI = 90%</i>				
	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig. (2 tailed)</i>	<i>Independent Samples Test Decision</i>
p101	−1.775	164	.076	Reject the Null Hypothesis
p107	−.970	164	.332	Reject the Null Hypothesis
p109	.493	86	.622	Reject the Null Hypothesis
p121	−1.600	162	.110	Reject the Null Hypothesis

Note. “Retain the Null Hypothesis” means there is no difference in responses between males versus females. “Reject the Null Hypothesis” means there is a difference in responses between males versus females—i.e., gender is a factor.

TABLE 3
International Business Profession—Strongly Agree

<i>Alpha = 0.1%, Test Value = 3</i>						
	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	<i>Mean Difference</i>	<i>99.9% Confidence Interval of the Difference</i>	
					<i>Lower</i>	<i>Upper</i>
p108	−6.634	164	.000	−.61818	−.9304	−.3060
p112	−7.000	165	.000	−.69880	−1.0333	−.3643
p113	−7.018	165	.000	−.73494	−1.0858	−.3841
p114	−5.111	165	.000	−.51807	−.8577	−.1784
p117	−6.912	164	.000	−.67273	−.9989	−.3466
p122	−4.639	163	.000	−.46341	−.7982	−.1286
p124	−3.451	162	.001	−.25767	−.5079	−.0074
p125	−3.754	163	.000	−.34756	−.6579	−.0373

and socioeconomic variables in shaping the international business field, as they strongly agreed with the following two related statements: “Most Lebanese businesses will be affected directly or indirectly by socioeconomic, cultural and political developments in the international market scene. As a result, most managers will need an ability to understand and anticipate those effects”; and “Strong social science background is needed for a proper training in international marketing.” The second dimension is the importance and the need to have an international business curriculum, as students strongly agreed with the following statements: “Based on my interest in international topics, I’d like to learn more about international marketing subjects”; “Lebanon being a trading nation, every business student should know something about international marketing”; “Given the opportunity, I would be interested in pursuing a career in international marketing”; and “International marketing should be taught in the undergraduate level.” The third dimension is the importance and the practicality of the field to Lebanese companies as they strongly agreed with the following statements: “The use of indigenous cases which deal with local company situations will be an ideal method”; and “Lebanese companies, with their

superior technological marketing, tend to dominate markets particularly in the Middle East.” Further analysis, Table 4, indicates that male and female students have almost the same positions and perceptions on this topic. One statement out of eight showed a significant difference in their perceptions of international marketing or business.

In the second part of the study, students were asked about the international business curriculum and its related subjects. Table 5 reflects the data output. Fourteen statements

TABLE 4
International Business Profession—Strongly Disagree

<i>Gender—Alpha = 10%, CI = 90%</i>				
	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	<i>Independent Sample Test Decision</i>
p108	2.311	164	.021	Reject the Null Hypothesis
p112	.548	165	.583	Reject the Null Hypothesis
p113	.111	165	.912	Reject the Null Hypothesis
p114	.436	165	.663	Reject the Null Hypothesis
p117	1.556	164	.120	Reject the Null Hypothesis
p122	.341	163	.733	Reject the Null Hypothesis
p124	1.308	162	.191	Reject the Null Hypothesis
p125	.961	163	.337	Reject the Null Hypothesis

Note. “Retain the Null Hypothesis” means there is no difference in responses between males versus females. “Reject the Null Hypothesis” means there is a difference in responses between males versus females—i.e., gender is a factor.

TABLE 5
International Business Curriculum—Strongly Agree

<i>Alpha = 0.1%, Test Value = 3</i>						
	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	<i>Mean Difference</i>	<i>99.9% Confidence Interval of the Difference</i>	
					<i>Lower</i>	<i>Upper</i>
p201	-10.331	151	.000	-.97368	-1.2900	-.6574
p202	-7.257	150	.000	-.69536	-1.0170	-.3737
p203	-6.377	150	.000	-.57616	-.8794	-.2729
p204	-4.919	150	.000	-.45695	-.7688	-.1451
p205	-4.506	150	.000	-.43709	-.7627	-.1115
p206	-6.210	148	.000	-.63758	-.9823	-.2929
p207	-6.436	148	.000	-.63758	-.9702	-.3050
p208	-6.474	149	.000	-.60000	-.9111	-.2889
p209	-4.956	149	.000	-.50000	-.8387	-.1613
p210	-5.675	149	.000	-.56667	-.9019	-.2315
p211	-5.488	149	.000	-.50000	-.8058	-.1942
p212	-5.275	149	.000	-.49333	-.8073	-.1794
p213	-5.096	149	.000	-.49333	-.8183	-.1683
p214	-6.400	147	.000	-.63514	-.9684	-.3019

showed extremely significant results. Students strongly highlighted the importance of the international business field of studies and that it should be included in the curriculum of the following subjects. They strongly agreed that international business should be incorporated in the following subjects: (a) Consumer/Buyer Behavior, (b) Market/Marketing Research, (c) Advertising/Marketing Communication, (d) Marketing Models and Quantitative Methods, (e) Industrial Marketing, (f) Marketing Planning, (g) Pricing, (h) Marketing Organization, (i) Physical Distribution/Logistics/and Channels, (j) Sales Management, (k) Retailing, (l) Comparative Marketing, (m) Social/ Legal Aspects of Marketing, and (n) Marketing Decision Making. Further analysis, Table 6, reveals that there is no significant difference between male or female students with regard to their perception of the curriculum as they agreed on almost all statements (13 out of 14). Both appeared to have the same understanding of the goals and content of the international business curriculum.

In the third part of the study, students were asked about the ideal tools for learning international business. Table 7 reflects the data output. It showed that students strongly agreed upon a variety of learning tools and methods: (a) regular lectures, (b) guest lectures, (c) audiovisual presentations, (d) role-playing exercises, (e) fieldwork on a topic of interest, and (f) group discussions. Additional analysis regarding the teaching tools, presented in Table 8, indicated that there was no significant difference between the male and female students regarding their perception of the teaching tools' applicability and relation to the achievement of the international business program goals.

TABLE 6
International Business Curriculum—Strongly Disagree

<i>Gender—Alpha = 10%, CI = 90%</i>				
	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	<i>Independent Samples Test Decision</i>
p201	1.593	151	.111	Retain the Null Hypothesis
p202	.545	150	.586	Retain the Null Hypothesis
p203	1.675	150	.094	Retain the Null Hypothesis
p204	1.432	150	.152	Retain the Null Hypothesis
p205	1.612	150	.107	Retain the Null Hypothesis
p206	1.508	148	.131	Retain the Null Hypothesis
p207	.020	148	.984	Retain the Null Hypothesis
p208	-.750	149	.454	Retain the Null Hypothesis
p209	.786	149	.432	Retain the Null Hypothesis
p210	.357	149	.721	Retain the Null Hypothesis
p211	-.800	149	.424	Retain the Null Hypothesis
p212	.938	149	.348	Retain the Null Hypothesis
p213	.907	149	.364	Retain the Null Hypothesis
p214	.968	147	.333	Retain the Null Hypothesis

Note. "Retain the Null Hypothesis" means there is no difference in responses between males versus females. "Reject the Null Hypothesis" means there is a difference in responses between males versus females—i.e., gender is a factor.

TABLE 7
Teaching Tools—Strongly Agree

<i>Alpha = 0.1%, Test Value = 3</i>						
	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	<i>Mean Difference</i>	<i>99.9% Confidence Interval of the Difference</i>	
					<i>Lower</i>	<i>Upper</i>
p301	−5.061	149	.000	−.44000	−.7319	−.1481
p303	−6.849	149	.000	−.62667	−.9338	−.3195
p304	−5.379	149	.000	−.54000	−.8770	−.2030
p305	−6.688	149	.000	−.66000	−.9913	−.3287
p306	−7.685	149	.000	−.77333	−1.1111	−.4355
p307	−7.344	149	.000	−.76000	−1.1074	−.4126

TABLE 8
Teaching Tools—Strongly Disagree

<i>Gender—Alpha = 10%, CI = 90%</i>				
	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	<i>Independent Samples Test Decision</i>
p301	−.794	149	.427	Retain the Null Hypothesis
p303	1.134	149	.257	Retain the Null Hypothesis
p304	1.546	149	.122	Retain the Null Hypothesis
p305	.813	149	.416	Retain the Null Hypothesis
p306	1.355	149	.176	Retain the Null Hypothesis
p307	1.051	149	.293	Retain the Null Hypothesis

Note. “Retain the Null Hypothesis” means there is no difference in responses between males versus females. “Reject the Null Hypothesis” means there is a difference in responses between males versus females—i.e., gender is a factor.

4. CONCLUSIONS

We can conclude that the Lebanese respondents had opinions across all three broad survey categories. The results of the analysis indicate that the students have a clear idea about international business and its implications among global markets. This is good news and important for company recruiters to know in their effort of obtain competent business professionals. Most of the respondents indicated an awareness of the fact that Lebanese businesses will be directly or indirectly affected by socioeconomic, cultural, and political developments in international markets. As such, managers will have to have knowledge and training in order to understand and anticipate the consequences of their decisions. Based on the data analysis, we believe that the respondents are interested in studying this area and are well-aware of the career opportunities that await those familiar with international business and trade.

With regard to an ideal international marketing and management curriculum, the responses indicated an interest in learning a wide variety of subjects that are related to international business.

Special interest was also shown in marketing decision making as a useful subject when developing curriculum. This is also good news for the business community. As globalization continues to expand, students at the university will be available to contribute talent to the growth and development of their country and their region of the world.

The findings also indicate that with regard to the business professions and variables that affect the shape and content of international business activity, male and female students have the same points of view. This is important as it shows that gender didn't play a major role when education is controlled—i.e., both groups have the same level of education. Having common opinions or positions on international business topics is a strength that academic institutions and faculty should harness and develop in order to reduce the gaps among different groups.

Lastly, respondents showed an interest in learning international business through the use of indigenous case analysis with local companies as learning techniques. Additionally, understanding of technological marketing is an important dimension in the curriculum development. Respondents from Lebanon showed a stronger preference for learning through group discussion and case methods (which had the highest scores), as opposed to traditional lectures (which had the lowest score). Interest in learning more through role-play exercises and field trips further strengthen the case for non-traditional learning methods.

5. IMPLICATIONS

This study has provided an opportunity to see that the development of international business and curriculum deserves attention and is of much interest to the students in Lebanon. Since Lebanon is a developed but politically unstable country that is increasingly embracing globalization, much talent is needed by way of new graduates who are familiar with international business and related areas. This presents both a challenge and an opportunity for universities to develop courses and programs that equip graduates with these vital skills.

The students' views are clear in the study. They are very interested in learning more about international business in their curriculum. They are well-aware of the trends in these areas and how it affects the relationship of their own nation with other developed countries. They are also aware of how important this subject matter is to their job prospects and future growth. In addition, the study provides input about the subjects that should be included through the different levels of learning process that are shown in various areas. Furthermore, the students have also indicated their preference to learn these subjects by way of non-traditional methods.

This collective wisdom makes the job easier and clearer for university faculty and key decision makers. It is also useful from a more macro perspective as other colleges and in fact the higher education system as a whole can benefit from the results of this study. It would be worthwhile to rethink and perhaps pay more attention to international business from an earlier stage in the education cycle of students in these countries. At the very least, it offers an insight at the changes that need to be made at the college level with regard to curriculum development in these areas.

5.1. Limitations of Study

There are three practical problems associated with this study:

1. Data are a primary type, taken from a survey—i.e., it is subject to sample collection and related errors.
2. Cost and time were the primary factors for using a sample of only 175.
3. The external validity needs to be tested by using the model in other countries.

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

Victor Bahhouth is an Associate Professor of Finance at the Department of Economics, Finance, and Decision Sciences – The University of North Carolina – Pembroke. He received his Doctorate of Business Administration in Finance from Newcastle Business School, University of Newcastle Upon Tyne – United Kingdom. His research interests are in the areas of contemporary issues related to international businesses, technology, and stockmarkets. He authored and co-authored research papers that have been published in refereed journals and in the proceedings of national and international academic conferences. Dr. Bahhouth is a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) and Certified Management Accountant (CMA).

John E. Spillan, MBA, PhD, in Business and Management and serves as Professor of Business Administration at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke. His articles have appeared in the *International Journal of Marketing and Marketing Research*, *Journal of Business in Developing Nations*, *Journal of East West Business*, *European Management Journal*, *Journal of Teaching in International Business*, *Journal of Small Business Strategy*, *International Small Business Journal*, *Journal of Crisis and Contingency Management*, *Journal of Small Business Management*, *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, *Journal of Asia-Pacific*, *Journal of Global Marketing and Journal of World Business*, *Latin American Business Review*, *International Journal of Sustainable Strategic Management*, *Journal of International Business Systems Research*, *Journal for Advancement of Marketing Education*, and *European Management Journal*, among others.

Jocelyne Bahhouth is currently the department chair for humanities and social sciences at Bladen Community College, North Carolina and is an adjunct associate professor at the University of Maryland University College. Although her doctorate is in English as a Second Language, she has worked on redesigning the Lebanese national curriculum and published related textbooks. In addition, she published a book to teach Lebanese dialect that was translated to different languages. Dr. Bahhouth's research interest is in curriculum design and teaching online methodologies; she presented many papers at national and international conferences and her publications appeared in refereed journals.

Roy Khoueiri is an Associate Professor of Economics and the Assistant Dean of the Faculty of Business Administration and Economics at Notre Dame University, Louaize. Dr. Khoueiri served in key administrative positions at NDU and Haigazian University. He received his PhD in Economics from Paris 13, France, and his MA in Economics from Syracuse University, New York. He has published articles in refereed academic journals and has received several research awards; his research is mainly oriented to policy-making and teaching methodologies.

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