

From Student to Global Citizen: The Role of Liberal Education in a Developing Country Context

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Abstract: The 21st century witnessed the development of the knowledge-based-economy due to globalization and the advancement of technology. Creation of wealth in this type of economy is through knowledge that equips the future graduate with the necessary skills to compete globally. The increasing importance of knowledge emphasized the role of the education programs applied by universities in educating the future graduates to become global citizens. Previous research described the merits of liberal education in forming the global citizen. This study investigates the role of the existing liberal education curriculum and its content in developing the global citizen from the point of view of the students and graduates of the Lebanese American University (LAU). A survey and interviews with students and graduates of LAU were used to gather the data needed. While the majority of the responses approved that LAU's liberal education program provides the characteristics and skills needed to form a global citizen, the researchers suggest that for a liberal education program to be applied and accepted in a developing country, it has to be adapted to the cultural, financial, and economical needs of that country.

Keywords: Global citizen; knowledge; liberal education. Quantitative analysis – t-test of hypothesis; descriptive statistics; Qualitative analysis – interviews.

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1. Introduction

The importance of education was emphasized by the introduction of new industries at the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century. Higher education institutions are required to apply academic programs that provide students with the education and skills needed to compete in a global economy. Western education has a long tradition of emphasizing liberal education in the curricula of higher education institutions in developed countries. Liberal education develops a global citizen, who is a critical thinker and communicator, understands other cultures, possesses knowledge about different cultures and values, and masters the new technology, to be able to collaborate with others across cultures.

Lebanese American University (LAU) follows the American educational model, which emphasizes liberal education in its curriculum. The mission of the university stresses

academic excellence, student centeredness, embracing liberal arts in all curricula, and the education of the whole person. The curriculum at LAU is divided into a liberal arts university requirement and the required courses for each major. The liberal arts curriculum at LAU includes courses in Arts, Natural Sciences, Basic Health, Physical Education, Social Sciences, Mathematics, History, and Culture. LAU students, as part of the university's mission, enjoy extracurricular activities that compliment the academic curriculum in developing the whole student.

The aim of this paper is to investigate the role of LAU's existing liberal education curriculum in developing the global citizen from the point of view of the students and graduates of LAU. In addition, the researchers investigate the content of the existing education and overall experience provided to students at LAU also from the point of view of the students and graduates of LAU. The researchers used a survey that measured the type of graduates that LAU's liberal education builds with a 19-items scale describing characteristics and knowledge requirements of the global citizen. The survey also provides a list of 17 statements describing the methods of delivering knowledge and experience to students at LAU to measure what LAU students perceived as methods and experiences provided to students at LAU that would develop them into global citizens. In addition, interviews with LAU graduate and undergraduate students were conducted to support the results of the survey.

The results of this study show that the majority of the sample of LAU students and graduates agree with the statements that describe the methods used by LAU to deliver the education and experience that equip them with better characteristics and knowledge towards global citizenship. Nevertheless, some students did not want to forsake their own culture to that of the West, and others were neutral towards global environment, poverty, fair trade, and their role as world citizens.

2. Literature Review

The end of the 20th century witnessed an increased interest in higher education as knowledge was believed to be a basic tool in the growth of national economies in both developed and developing countries (George, 2006). Toffler (1990) and Olaniran and Agnello (2008) noted the effects of globalization in the international employment trends and anticipated that the expansion of knowledge would contribute to economic growth which shifts the power of creating wealth from the muscle to the mind. By this, Toffler (1990) was describing the concept of knowledge-based-economy, a concept that prevailed in later years (Stilwell, 2003) and which resulted in an important role played by universities (Svenson and Wood, 2007; Olaniran and Agnello, 2008). Hence, developed industrial countries invested heavily in knowledge and its adaptation to production (George, 2006; Svenson and Wood, 2007). With this increasing importance of knowledge, education became an important service to be provided by higher education institutions (George, 2006; Svenson and Wood, 2007).

The World Bank (2002), in its policy framework for higher education, stated that these institutions train a qualified labor force, generate new knowledge, are able to access global stored knowledge, and are able to put this knowledge into local use. The policy framework adds that higher education institutions develop the social capital of an economy through the type of ethics, knowledge, and values they teach to their students (World Bank 2002). Hence, higher education institutions should include in their curriculum multidisciplinary studies and different approaches to teaching that would equip students for employment in a global economy that demands skills and products that are competitive in the international market (Riddell, 1996).

Chen (2002) questions the policies and practices in Australia towards international students. Chen (2002) adds that Australian universities experienced a decline in enrollment because of higher tuitions, which resulted in recruiting well to do students from developed and developing countries who can afford to pay the tuition which Chen (2002) describes as commercialization of education. Chen (2002) argues that the international students are not given the same rights as the national students although they are paying all their taxes and fees, which hinders the concept of the global citizen. Knowing that these students can choose their education, career, and country of residence, favorable policies and equitable treatment by universities and governments would attract these skilled international students to be new migrants who would add value to the economy and society of the country (Chen, 2002).

Western education has a long tradition of emphasizing liberal education in higher education institutions' curricula in developed countries (Bloom and Rosovsky, 2003). Liberal education aims at developing the critical and systematic thinker and communicator, with a broad knowledge and understanding of other cultures, and who is able to make decisions in the global and ethical context (Bloom and Rosovsky, 2003; Olson, 2003; Lomas 1997) in other words, developing the global citizen. Similarly, Suarez-Orozco and Sattin (2007) suggest that education of the global citizen should build critical thinking, communication, language, collaboration skills, and technology skills. Hence students should be able to: use analytical tools that are needed to understand and manage complicated data; communicate with people from different cultures by acquiring knowledge about the different religions and values; communicate in different languages; work in teams from different cultures and environments; and master the new technology that will enable them to collaborate with each other and across cultures (Suarez-Orozco and Sattin, 2007; Shih, 2007). Shiel (2007) adds that the global citizen is one who understands the world and his role in it, contributes to the local and global community, and works for global equity and justice. In addition, Axelson et al. (2008) state that higher education institutions should promote sustaining a healthy environment, meaning stressing on education for sustainable development (ESD). Caron (2010) stresses the need to include an epidemiology course in the liberal education curriculum to increase the knowledge of students in population health to be able to assess the community's health care needs, and evaluate interventions.

Bloom and Rosovsky (2003, p.18) describe liberal education as “teaching students how to think rather than what to think, and how to learn rather than what to learn”, which

develops graduates in developing countries who will contribute to the benefit of their countries in different fields both economically and socially. However, some developing countries preferred vocational training as liberal education was viewed as an importer of the values of the colonial west or a luxury that few can afford (Bloom and Rosovsky, 2003). Vocational education is not very popular in Lebanon because it is seen as a second rate type of education used by those who fail in the regular secondary school program (Vlaardingerbroek and El-Masri, 2008). Nevertheless, some students shift from the regular secondary school program to the vocational and technical education because of its direct link to the job market, and also because they know that they can enroll in higher education institutions once they complete the high certification in vocational and technical education (Vlaardingerbroek and El-Masri, 2008). Nasser and Abouchedid (2005) argue that in Lebanon, faculties in universities describe themselves as transferors of knowledge but also providers of vocational techniques and methods. Hence there is ambiguity in the distinction between vocational and liberal education in Lebanon (Nasser and Abouchedid, 2005).

Lomas (1997) who is a supporter and defender of liberal education in higher education institutions describes the new model of education that was introduced to England by the Margaret Thatcher government as a model that shifted education towards business and technology in order for higher education institutions to supply what industrialists required. The new model shifted education towards skill acquisition or vocations (Lomas, 1997).

On the other hand, Svenson and Wood (2007) caution that universities are using marketing departments and tools to capitalize on the fact that new economies need education. But considering students as customers of the knowledge that universities offer and using marketing terminology to describe their relations with their students is creating customers who believe that they have in the university the same rights they have in the market (Svenson and Wood, 2007). Hence students might believe that it is their right to challenge and interfere in critical processes and systems in the university (Svenson and Wood, 2007). Barber (2002) on the other hand, warns that when corporations fund educational institutions, these corporations can change the nature of knowledge and information. On the other hand, Barber (2002) hopes that faculty remain protected from corporate interference in education in order to safeguard the educational system. Svenson and Wood (2007, p. 21) add that the funding of universities by corporations diverted the focus of universities from the “academic rigor” imperative to the “financial” imperative, thus turning them into “commercial enterprises” battling for a market share, which has a negative impact on the quality of university education.

Lebanon, a small developing country on the Eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea, is also at the crossroads between the East and the West which resulted in many civilizations occupying Lebanon and even settling in it, and creating a mix of cultures, ethnic groups, and religious beliefs (Nassar, 1998). Lebanon is a demonstration to the world of how people from different cultures and religions co-exist in an “acceptable way of life” (Nassar, 1998, p. 66). Nevertheless, the history of Lebanon has also known war and political instability which is still going on in the present times.

The university sector in Lebanon has expanded in the last two decades. There are approximately 40 private universities, few of which meet the standards of a higher education institution. Of these private universities, the oldest and most reputable are four that follow the American educational model; two that follow the French educational model; and one institution that follows the Egyptian model (Naufal, 2009). In addition, Lebanon has one state university, the Lebanese University. Naufal (2009) studied the effect of the academic model on learning outcomes of university students in the above universities. Naufal (2009) found that students in the American education universities valued the flexibility and freedom in course choice, and innovative use of technology in instruction, which are necessary in sustaining a liberal education.

LAU is a reputable and well-known institution that was established by American Presbyterian missionaries as an American School for girls in 1835 and grew to become a private university chartered by the Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York (LAU website) with approximately 8,000 students belonging to around 84 nationalities. LAU is governed by an autonomous Board of Trustees and a Board of International Advisors comprised of distinguished individuals who assist in furthering LAU's mission (LAU website). LAU is dedicated by its mission and vision to Academic Excellence, Student Centeredness, Embracing liberal arts in all curricula, and the education of the whole person to develop future leaders in a diverse world (LAU website). LAU offers 39 majors within seven faculties: Arts and Science, Business, Architecture and Design, Engineering, Medicine, Pharmacy, and Nursing (LAU website).

LAU bases its educational standards on the American liberal arts model of higher education. The curriculum at LAU is divided into the required courses for each major, and a liberal arts university requirement that includes courses in Arts, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, Basic Health, Physical Education, Mathematics, History, and Culture (LAU website). LAU offers to the students up-to-date knowledge with exposure to different cultures and values while maintaining freedom of choice (Nassar, 1998). Nassar (1998) adds that LAU provides a setting for the integration of people to have the possibility to learn tolerance of others, solving problems by dialogue, love of freedom, and justice.

LAU students enjoy extracurricular activities that compliment the academic curriculum in developing the whole student that the university has a mission to educate. Types of extracurricular activities offered at LAU include but are not restricted to: Student Government; athletic events; student clubs; international students' cultural clubs; career fairs; cultural exhibitions; films; musical events; and the Model United Nations program that hosts high school students to be trained by LAU students on United Nations values and to find solutions to world economical and cultural problems (LAU website). Involvement of students in the above activities develops their leadership and interpersonal skills, and knowledge about international issues.

Methodology

The idea for this study came from the work of Shiel (2007) in *The International Journal of Learning*, which is part of the HE Leadership Foundation Fellowship in the UK, and aims at developing a change strategy at Bournemouth University (BU) to graduate students who are global citizens. Shieh (2007) used interviews with focus groups of volunteering students and student surveys to note the students' awareness and understanding of global issues and their comments on needed changes at BU to implement in the change strategy. Staff at BU was also surveyed on their perceptions of global issues, the extent to which their courses cover global issues, and their willingness versus inhibitions to change their courses and to participate in the needed training to gain knowledge and skills to introduce global perspectives to their courses. The results of Shieh's (2007) study were reported as percentages of the responses to the surveys.

In this study, the researchers investigate the role of LAU's existing liberal education curriculum in developing the global citizen from the point of view of the students and graduates of LAU. In addition, the researchers investigate the content of the existing education and overall experience provided to students at LAU also from the point of view of the students and graduates of LAU.

Senior, Masters Students, and graduated students in different majors at LAU were surveyed to measure their perception of the type of graduate that LAU's liberal education develops, and of what the education and experience provided to students at LAU include. The survey was distributed to Senior and Master Students in their classes randomly, and was sent by emails to graduated students. Anonymity of the respondents was maintained in this process. 191 (approximately 47.5%) students and graduates from different majors responded out of the 400 students contacted. The researchers believe that this number is a reliable sample.

The survey measured the type of graduates that LAU's liberal education builds with a 19-items scale describing characteristics and knowledge requirements of the global citizen. The instrument was rated on a five-point Likert-type scale (5 = Strongly Agree, 1 = Strongly Disagree). The responses were divided into 2 groups based on the averages of the responses to the 19 statements: group 1 perceive highly the effect of liberal education at LAU on building graduates with specific characteristics and knowledge, and group 2 do not (or low) perceive the effect of liberal education at LAU on building graduates with specific characteristics and knowledge. The reliability of this instrument was measured by a calculated Cronbach alpha of 0.903.

In the second part of the survey, the researchers used a list of 17 statements describing methods of delivering knowledge and experience to students at LAU to measure what LAU students perceived as methods and experiences provided to students at LAU that would develop them into global citizens. This instrument was rated on a five-point Likert-type scale (5 = Strongly Agree, 1 = Strongly Disagree). Averages to the 17 statements were calculated. The reliability of this instrument was measured by a

calculated Cronbach alpha of 0.930. The statements used in this study were inspired by the study by Shieh (2007) but modified by the authors to fit the purpose of this study. The survey also included demographic information about the students and graduates but their results were not used in this study.

In addition, the researchers interviewed 10 undergraduate and 10 graduate LAU female and male students using open ended semi structured interviews in order to support the results of the survey.

The hypothesis tested in this study states that students and graduates in group 1 perceive highly the effect of liberal education and experience at LAU on building graduates with specific characteristics and knowledge, while students and graduates in group 2 do not, or have a low perception of the effect of liberal education and experience at LAU on building graduates with specific characteristics and knowledge.

H1 = Average of Group 1 will be higher than average of group 2.

Hypothesis testing was applied to the differences between the averages of group 1 and group 2 and the averages of the responses to the 17 statements describing the methods used to deliver the education and experience at LAU.

To further test the hypothesis, proportions of the different answers to all the statements were calculated and tested.

Results

Table 1 reports a comparison of the perceived effect of liberal education and experience at LAU on building students with specific characteristics and knowledge. The results in table 1 indicate that all differences were significant at $p < 0.01$. These results indicate that students and graduates in group 1 perceive that the methods used to deliver the education and experience at LAU are effective to build the global citizen. In addition, the means of group 1 are greater than means of group 2 in all 17 statements.

Table 1: Comparison of perceived effect of liberal education and experience at LAU on building students with specific characteristics and knowledge				
LAU educates and provides experience in:		Group 1	Group 2	t-test
1	Courses that incorporated global social, economic, political, physical, and environmental issues.	4.44	3.81	6.69***
2	Courses that incorporated case studies based on international examples	4.23	3.65	5.05***
3	Courses that incorporated global cultures (people, communities, identity, values, behavior, and religion).	4.26	3.54	7.65***

4	Opportunity to engage in community service.	3.93	3.23	5.66***
5	Dealing with diversities and understanding other people's point of view.	4.20	3.47	6.22***
6	Opportunity to engage in international programs and events.	4.00	3.35	5.57***
7	Courses that combined academic knowledge with employer expectations.	4.04	3.36	5.95***
8	Training on leadership skills through student councils.	3.84	3.19	5.25***
9	Training on bearing responsibility through student representation on university councils.	3.92	3.18	5.77***
10	Awareness of international issues.	4.07	3.43	5.80***
11	Student clubs and activities that promote environment sustainability.	3.99	3.45	4.84***
12	Health awareness campaigns to promote care for self and others.	4.11	3.60	4.26***
13	Teaching of languages.	4.05	3.58	4.10***
14	Opportunity to participate in internships in multinational corporations.	3.93	3.39	3.67***
15	Training on accepting cultural differences.	4.08	3.31	6.29***
16	Courses that incorporated the use the of different aspects of information technology.	4.08	3.69	5.99***
17	Open access to the internet and electronic databases and the latest software.	4.55	4.10	4.04***

Note: Total sample across the two groups was 191. Group 1 is comprised of individuals who believe that LAU's education and experience prepares students with better characteristics and knowledge towards Global Citizenship compared to Group 2. Means reported for are such that high values indicate that the individuals believed more in LAU's good education and experience in relationship to Global Citizenship.
*p<0.10, **p<0.05, ***p<0.01

Table 2 shows the proportions of the perceived effect of liberal education and experience at LAU on building students with specific characteristics and knowledge based on the responses to all the statements in the survey. Group 1 is comprised of the proportions of the total agree and strongly agree responses, who believe that LAU's education and experience prepares students with better characteristics and knowledge towards Global Citizenship compared to Group 2 which is comprised of the proportions of responses of students who totally disagree or are neutral).

Table 2: Proportions of perceived effect of liberal education and experience at LAU on building students with specific characteristics and knowledge

LAU educates and provides experience in:		Group 1	Group 2	Z-test
1	Exhibit skills required for good teamwork with persons from different social, disciplinary, and cultural backgrounds	0.85	0.14	14.02***
2	Are aware of global and international topics.	0.76	0.23	10.54***
3	Demonstrate creative and analytical problem solving abilities.	0.74	0.23	9.72***
4	Are qualified for global employment.	0.72	0.27	8.7***
5	Are knowledgeable in their field of work.	0.84	0.15	13.61***
6	Are prepared to understand and work with others from different racial, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds.	0.81	0.18	12.18***
7	Are aware of their role as world citizens	0.52	0.47	0.92*
8	Do not have problems in adjusting and dealing with real life issues in foreign countries.	0.63	0.36	5.42***
9	Are proficient in languages.	0.70	0.29	7.88***
10	Who can participate in and contribute to both local and global communities.	0.67	0.32	6.86***
11	Challenge social injustice.	0.42	0.57	-2.97*
12	Take responsibility for their actions.	0.60	0.39	4.2***
13	Will act to make the world a more sustainable place to live in.	0.51	0.48	0.72*
14	Are concerned with the global environment.	0.49	0.50	-0.31*
15	Are concerned with poverty.	0.30	0.69	-7.47*
16	Are concerned with world peace.	0.41	0.58	-3.38*
17	Are concerned with human rights.	0.58	0.41	3.17***
18	Are concerned with fair trade.	0.42	0.57	-2.97*
19	Are trained on the latest information systems and technology.	0.75	0.24	10.13***
20	Courses that incorporated global social, economic, political, physical, and environmental issues.	0.84	0.15	13.41***

21	Courses that incorporated case studies based on international examples	0.75	0.24	9.93***
22	Courses that incorporated global cultures (people, communities, identity, values, behavior, and religion).	0.75	0.24	9.93***
23	Opportunity to engage in community service.	0.53	0.46	1.53*
24	Dealing with diversities and understanding other people's point of view.	0.67	0.32	6.65***
25	Opportunity to engage in international programs and events.	0.63	0.36	5.22***
26	Courses that combined academic knowledge with employer expectations.	0.61	0.38	4.40***
27	Training on leadership skills through student councils.	0.52	0.47	1.13*
28	Training on bearing responsibility through student representation on university councils.	0.54	0.45	1.74**
29	Awareness of international issues.	0.65	0.34	6.24***
30	Student clubs and activities that promote environment sustainability.	0.64	0.35	5.83***
31	Health awareness campaigns to promote care for self and others.	0.69	0.30	7.47***
32	Teaching of languages.	0.69	0.30	7.67***
33	Opportunity to participate in internships in multinational corporations.	0.59	0.40	3.58***
34	Training on accepting cultural differences.	0.59	0.40	3.58***
35	Courses that incorporated the use of different aspects of information technology.	0.76	0.23	10.54***
36	Open access to the internet and electronic databases and the latest softwares.	0.86	0.13	14.43***

Note: Total sample across the two groups was 191. Group 1 is comprised of total agree and strongly agree responses, who believe that LAU's education and experience prepares students with better characteristics and knowledge towards Global Citizenship compared to Group 2 (Total of students who totally disagree or are neutral). Means reported for are such that high values indicate that the individuals believed more in LAU's good education and experience in relationship to Global Citizenship.

*p<.10, **p<.05, ***p<.01

The responses of the graduate and undergraduate students interviewed follow:

- *Taking courses in cultural studies, economics, management, sociology, psychology helped me understand other people, people from different cultures.*
- *Case studies based on Arab or American or European examples improve the ability of the graduates to understand better the culture of these countries.*
- *Through LAU's liberal education, graduates can exhibit skills required for good teamwork with persons from different social, disciplinary, and cultural backgrounds. They are aware of global and international topics.*
- *We live in an international global environment; taking courses from other disciplines (even if our major is Business or engineering) such as history, psychology and international affairs, gives us an international exposure and helps us understand better the problems encountered in our work.*
- *At LAU, we learn the most up-to-date technologies coupled with social studies which enriched our social intelligence...In addition, we use American books similar to those used in American, Universities.*
- *It is difficult to find a well paid job in Lebanon. Many of us will emigrate to Canada, Australia and to the USA. We have problems in adjusting and dealing with real life issues....I believe that a liberal arts curriculum, internationally oriented enhance smoother integration in the global world.*
- *There is no time for courses which are not related to our field of specializations..... We take the best professional training comparable to international standards.*
- *We should not forget the socio-political pressure....We learn and acquire foreign techniques and we accept other people's culture.....but we have our own believes and culture... We can not mingle with the way of living of the West nor adopt their norms and habits.*
- *We succeed when we work with local firms because we are very knowledgeable in our field of specialization, but our exposure to international experience is very limited. I believe that we face problems working with multinational firms.*

5. Discussion

Many universities view that the liberal education program they offer develops students into global citizens ready to cope with the international challenges of the 21st century. In order to verify the above view of universities, the researchers chose to conduct their investigation at LAU and surveyed Senior and Masters students as well as graduates of LAU because they are the main receivers and appliers of liberal education, and hence they can assess their strengths and weaknesses in the local and international markets.

This study tested the perceptions of the students and graduates with respect to the characteristics and skills acquired from the liberal education and experience they received at LAU. The researchers used a survey that measured (1) the degree of their agreement with the characteristics that they receive from the liberal education program at LAU and (2) the degree of their agreement with the statements that describe the methods used by

LAU to deliver the education and experience to them. Two groups resulted from the responses to the degree of their agreement with the characteristics that they receive from liberal education program at LAU: Group 1 agrees that the characteristics and skills listed are acquired from LAU's liberal education program, while group 2 does not agree (or shows lower agreement) with group 1. A Comparison of perceived effect of liberal education and experience at LAU on building students with specific characteristics and knowledge was performed.

The testing of the proportions of the responses of students and graduates on the degree of their agreement with the characteristics that they receive from liberal education program at LAU showed that students disagreed to some of the statements. This disagreement is indicated by the negative or low z result in Table 2. The higher disagreement was on the statements that indicate that students are concerned with poverty, are concerned with world peace, and are concerned with global environment. It should be noted that these statements had percentages of "neutral" answers more than or slightly less than the "agree" answers percentages. These results can be summarized in Table 3:

Table 3	SA	A	N	D	SD
Are aware of their role as world citizens	13.6%	39.2%	37.2%	8.4%	1%
Challenge social justice	12%	30.4%	44%	9.9%	3.1%
Will act to make the world a more suitable place to live in	13.1%	38.2%	33.5%	13.1%	2.1%
Are concerned with the global environment	13.6%	35.1%	33%	13.6%	4.7%
Are concerned with poverty	8.4%	22.5%	39.8%	20.9%	8.4%
Are concerned with world peace	11.5%	29.8%	36.6%	17.8%	4.2%
Are concerned with fair trade	12.6%	29.8%	44.5%	10.5%	2.6%

These results show that students and graduates are either indifferent to, or slightly agree, or slightly disagree to the above statements. This could be instigated by the effect of the civil war on the Lebanese community and the current political instability that reduced the value of social responsibility. Hence, LAU students and graduates state that the liberal education at LAU builds them into graduates who have the skills for teamwork with persons from different cultures, are aware of global and international topics, demonstrate creative and analytical problem solving abilities, are qualified for global employment, are knowledgeable in their field of work, are proficient in languages, can participate in and contribute to both local and global communities, are trained on the latest information systems and technology, all of which agrees with the work of Suarez-Orozco and Sattin, (2007), Bloom and Rosovsky (2003), Olson (2003), and Lomas (1997).

The testing of the proportions of the responses of the students and graduates on their degree of agreement with the statements that describe the methods used by LAU to deliver the education and experience to them show that some students disagreed to some of the statements. This disagreement is indicated by the low z result in Table 2. The percentages of "neutral" responses to these statements were slightly less than the

percentages of “agree” responses indicating that students and graduates are indifferent to these statements or ignore that these services are provided by LAU. These results are summarized in Table 4:

Table 4	SA	A	N	D	SD
Opportunity to engage in community service	15.7%	37.2%	36.1%	9.4%	1.6%
Training on bearing responsibility through student representation on university councils	15.2%	39.3%	33.5%	8.9%	3.1%
Training on accepting cultural differences	18.8%	39.8%	32.5%	7.3%	1.6%

The interviews with undergraduate and graduate students at LAU confirmed the results obtained in Table 1 and Table 2. Seven of the interviewees approved that the liberal education program at LAU enhanced their knowledge and prepared them to compete in the global market. The other three interviewees preferred professional training to liberal education; did not want to acquire a foreign culture which is different from their own and carries with its unwanted socio-political views; and believed that they have limited exposure to international experience and hence can work in local firms only.

The above results show that the majority of the sample of LAU students and graduates agree with the statements that describe the methods used by LAU to deliver the education and experience that equip them with better characteristics and knowledge towards global citizenship and support H1 tested in this study.

6. Conclusion

People, particularly students, of the 21st century witnessed the development of the knowledge-based-economy due to globalization and the advancement of technology. The world is a global village where people compete on the international stage based on their knowledge and skills. Creation of wealth in this type of economy is through knowledge that equips the future graduate with the necessary skills to compete globally. This increasing importance of knowledge emphasized the role of universities in educating the future graduates to become global citizens. Different views about the type of educational system needed to develop the global citizen were debated. Some believed that liberal education teaches a person “how to think rather than what to think, and how to learn rather than what to learn” which enables graduates in developing countries to contribute to the benefits of their countries in different fields both economically, politically, and socially (Bloom and Rosovsky, 2003 p.18). But liberal education is expensive especially to students in developing countries. Hence, students in these countries prefer vocational education, which they believe would secure a job for them although it is considered in some countries as second rate education. At certain times, even governments of developed countries phased out liberal education from the curriculum of universities to keep only professional studies that answered the requirements of the market.

LAU, which follows the American model of education, reinforced its liberal education program to include courses in Arts, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, Basic Health, Physical Education, Mathematics, History, and Culture.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the ability of the liberal education program at LAU to develop the global citizen. However, after conducting this study and examining previous literature, the researchers were alerted to some obstacles facing the application of liberal education to a developing country in general. These obstacles were not detected at LAU which is a private and well established university using an American education system.

The results of this study show that the liberal education program at LAU, which is delivered through courses and experiences is effective in graduating global citizens who become successful in the international market. These graduates create a knowledge power in the country and add to the reputation of Lebanon as a country of education and culture.

In fact, Lebanon has been looked at as the university of the Middle East. Prominent universities were established in Lebanon more than a hundred years ago and they graduated most of the political and social figures in Lebanon and the region. In the last 30 years, the instability in Lebanon did not affect the higher education standards especially those of the old universities, but caused a wave of immigration out of Lebanon. Unfortunately the majority of these immigrants were the educated youth. The problem is that Lebanese graduates sought employment in, and in many cases immigration to Arab, European, American, and other countries because of the limited job market in Lebanon. In addition, these young graduates adapted easily to their new environments. As a result, Lebanon suffered from the brain drain of its educated youth who immigrated to developed countries where they found better jobs in a politically and financially stable environment, and stayed because they were global citizens capable of coping with the multicultural/multiethnic setting. This brain drain affected the Lebanese economy and deprived Lebanon from the knowledge and skills of these immigrants.

Although the majority of the sample used in this study supported the role of liberal education at LAU in building the global citizen, high “neutral” responses (although statistically insignificant) of some students on the survey statements described their concerns with poverty, world peace, global environment. In addition, interviewees preferred professional training over liberal education, did not want to acquire a culture that carries unwanted socio-political views, and believed that they have limited exposure to international experience and hence can work in local firms only. This drives the researchers to recommend that applying liberal education in developing countries should take into account the cultural, political, and financial environment specific to each country. Hence, the curricula of the liberal education programs applied in developing countries should be adapted to the needs of these countries.

In addition, the researchers recommend that the government of Lebanon work on turning the Lebanese economy into a knowledge-based-economy, as education is one of

Lebanon's main resources. This type of economy would provide jobs in new sectors that would help retain the educated elite in Lebanon.

The researchers ask the following questions: what happens to the identity of these global citizens? Will they forget their country of origin and dissolve in the new communities they work in? Is the liberal education carrying with it cultural views that influence the values and beliefs of the Lebanese youth to the extent that they feel at home in foreign countries? Are the youth immigrants who succeed globally, only the graduates of universities that emphasize the liberal education program? These questions can be the subject of further research.

One of the limitations of this study is that it covers only one university which is the Lebanese American University. Although the results relay the perceptions of LAU students, they would have more significance if they had been compared to perceptions of students and graduates from other universities. The researchers believe that future research in this topic should include views from other universities in Lebanon, especially universities with different educational programs than LAU.

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