

Reconsidering Quality of Theses/ Projects in terms of Innovative Topic Choice: A case study of a university in Lebanon

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ABSTRACT: *The topic of trends in educational research has been widely debated in the education field in the Arab world with scholars and associations including but not limited to the UNDP, UNESCO, NCER, ANND, The World Bank, Muhammad Faour, and Al-Rashdan. However, the published articles have not addressed the issue of the topics graduate students select for their theses. In this paper, the researcher investigated the quality of the research topics graduate students choose for their theses based on innovative topics in their field. The methodology followed a case study research design that sampled 48 Masters level students and faculty from the American style university in Lebanon. The instruments for data collection are as follows: Surveys that were deployed to students who started writing their theses in the academic year 2012-2013, to assess their perceptions regarding the latest trends in educational research in relation to the topics they are aiming to research in their theses; interviews with faculty to check the concentration being laid on trends & innovation and the research standards they are requiring from students; and document analysis where the researcher reviewed as well as questioned the topics that students researched for their theses in the past five years (84 topics chosen by MA in Education students in the last five years). In this study, the researcher closely looked at students' perceptions towards quality and educational trends, faculty's advising and perceptions of quality (mainly topic choice), and at the latest topics being researched by students in order to show the divergence between what is being taught, the latest trends and the students' decisions when thinking about a research topic. The results reveal that student's perception of the issue of trends in education lies in the local context only rather than internationally. Moreover, faculty members are aware of the challenges of quality and are working to create a mechanism to improve the quality of thesis/ project presented by students. The study shed new light on the little recognized issue of quality and value added considering the topics and innovation of the students' theses in educational research.*

Keywords: Educational Research, Quality, Added Value, Thesis topics, Trends, Quality assurance

A. Introduction

In nature, most students pursuing a master's degree have to go through a process of writing an MA thesis or project to graduate. In academia, evaluating these theses and projects can be quite subjective. Research on assessment of the quality of theses and projects submitted prior graduation is minimal thus not focusing on the original contribution candidates are producing to research through their theses or projects.

Despite the fact that universities have been assessing doctoral and master's theses for many years, there has been little research done on the processes involved in that assessment (Tinkler & Jackson, 2000). Scholars have conducted little research (Mullins, K., 2003; Verba, C., 2005) on the quality and added value of the research topics graduate students are tackling in

their theses. Reform in education has triggered universities to raise the bar when it comes to research performed for MA theses or projects.

B. Rationale & Purpose:

The demands for quality assurance are increasing and the institutions are raising the standards to ensure adequate provision of quality of their programs. It has always been of great interest to the researcher to assess the quality of the education Lebanese institutions offer to their students. The university under which this study was conducted is known for its good reputation in educating students in the department of education to be professionals in the field. The question that has always triggered the researcher as a professional in the field was whether the quality of education provided by this university qualifies the students to perform research of added value to the subject field. The researcher was also interested to identify if the research work standards that the students are meeting are correctly preparing them for the academic needs of postgraduate studies. The review of the quality and standards of research in this specific university does not seek to blame or diminish the educational system but rather to shed light and diagnose the system's status and if needed underline the importance of re-evaluating it. Thus the purpose of this study is to identify from a faculty and students' perspective the emphasis being laid on maintaining standards of quality when choosing a research topic, a topic that would mainly add value to the field, relates to trends in the field, and reflects innovation in the field. The researcher tackled the issue of quality in terms of time invested, advising process and choosing a topic that adds value to the field from both the students and faculty member's perspective. The reason for taking the issue of quality from this perspective is that the researcher was more interested to question the quality of topics researched and shed light on the importance of quality consideration from the first steps taken by students rather than looking at it at the end of the process.

C. Research Context:

The study took place in an American style university in Lebanon where the majority of students come from middle to high socio-economic status. The university is accredited by the New England Association for Schools and Colleges (NEASC). The department of Education started offering an MA degree in Education since 2000, and students are to complete 30 credits in order to graduate. After the completion of 8 courses (24 credits), students ought to choose either to write a thesis or do a project and take an extra elective course. The MA aims to further the qualifications of professionals in the field.

D. Research Questions:

The research project on which this article is based aims to answer two basic research questions:

To what extent are MA students taking into consideration the latest research trends when selecting their theses/project topics?

To what extent are faculty members raising the bar and considering the trends and the quality of theses they are supervising?

More specifically the study aims to answer the following questions:

To what extent are MA students considering the importance of being innovative in choosing a research topic to improve their research skills and add value to the field?

To what extent are faculty members guiding students to select challenging topics and maintain certain standards of quality in their research?

E. Literature Review:

The issues of the quality, the research standards and the latest trends in educational research have become of great importance in education worldwide. Research studies have been conducted to assess the quality of higher education institutions (Shah & Mayekar, 2013; Masri, & Wilkens, 2011; European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, 2013), the standards for conducting research and research supervision (McCallina and Nayar, 2012; Baptista, & Huet, 2012; Wadesango, & Machingambi, 2011), and the trends and challenges in higher education (Verbra, 2005; Smith III, & Sandvik, 2012)

However, no research was specifically conducted on the quality of MA theses/ projects in relation to the latest trends in educational research.

For the purpose of this investigation, the literature review bounded the scope by analyzing MA students' theses/ projects topics in terms of quality and research trends.

Consequently, the following emerging literature stresses three educational standpoints:

- Research Supervision ensuring quality
- Trends in educational research and choosing a good topic
- Analysis of the current situation of higher education in Lebanon in terms of quality and research

1. Research Supervision ensuring quality

Supervision of graduate research work is central for the success of graduates in their degrees; however it is a teaching and learning process that is poorly set in place. The vagueness of the process may be one of the main reasons that graduates experience this process as a complex one (Grant, 2001). The issue of effective supervision by academics with Ph.D. degrees has been widely questioned (Dinham & Scott 1999; Ortun 1999). "Much research has explored

the characteristics of 'effective' supervision, and much has focused on collecting information about postgraduate research students' positive and negative experiences that can inform guidelines about supervision" (Petersen, 2007, p.476). As Bourke, 2007 (page 1042) states "As there is no Ph.D. curriculum as such, it is the thesis examiners who set the standard of what is acceptable as a thesis (or dissertation), and consequently set the standard for the award of a Ph.D." Thus standards are not set neither institutionally nor on a national, regional or international level ensuring the quality of the research students are tackling whether at a Master's or Ph.D. level.

Efforts are being exerted worldwide (Van Damme, D., 2000) to ensure quality with respect to the factor of globalization in higher education institutions. Masri & Wilkens (2011) state that "Higher education plays an important role in society because it creates new knowledge, transfers it to students, and promotes creativity and innovation." They add that "Higher education institutions are key actors in the production and dissemination of knowledge through research and instruction" (p.1). Since reform is a process that entails decades, higher educational institutions should play a role in developing quality assurance mechanisms in terms of research at graduate and post graduate levels.

In their research Carton, Jerrams, & Betts (2009) discuss the deficits that exist in the understanding of the roles and responsibilities of supervisors within research supervision. As (Baptista & Huet 2012) discuss in their article, there is an emerging need to develop a good research environment for students which is the responsibility of the supervisors, since this is the students' opportunity to develop their skills in research. The concern of all faculty members is to maintain the standards of quality, effectiveness and productivity of students' research within the ongoing changes in the society. Faculty and/ or research supervisors, face an ongoing challenge in meeting the academic quality assurance standards when supervising any student's research. A study performed by De-Miguel (2010), assessed the quality of doctoral thesis through assessing the thesis from different stages: prior assessment of the thesis, assessment of the publications derived from the thesis and assessment of the public defense. The author then proposes a set of models to evaluate the thesis in terms of its report and defense.

The issue of effectiveness in evaluating theses/ projects requires implementing quality mechanisms such as using rubrics to assess the level of students' achievement of any these/ project requirements. "In an effort to respond to the pressure for more quantitative measures of educational effectiveness, programs are encouraged to apply rubrics to theses and dissertations and use the resulting 'scores' or levels of achievement of its graduates as partial evidence of the extent to which program outcome goals are met" (Hamilton, Johnson, & Poudrier, 2010, p. 569).

Rudd (1975) in his study to investigate the students' perception of their graduate experience in Britain, noted that there exists a wide variation in the quality of the student's supervision of their graduate work. In his study Rudd recommended a creation of institutional mechanisms to ensure the implementation of quality of graduate supervision. Cullen et al. (1994) in their three stage model of supervision state that the first step in supervision is

recognized as excreting the time and effort in guiding students to find a research problem, question or topic. Cullen et al. emphasize that the key for the process of writing up a thesis is the formulation of this topic since it allows the appropriate guidance to occur from the beginning were the supervisors guide students away from misleading paths in their topic choice without undermining students' originality and ownership of their topic.

2. Trend in educational research and choosing a good topic

One of the challenges any MA student encounters in his/ her completion of an MA degree is finding a well-rounded and interesting topic to research for their thesis/ project. A study conducted by Vebra (2005) discusses the issue of a good topic from a faculty member's perspective. The paper presents the faculty member's view by stating that the topics may be as wide as human knowledge. In fact various fields require a variety of criteria, paradigms as well as different research methods to investigate each. The article instead continues to display a set of advice for students when considering a topic for their dissertation. The advice included a list that can be summarized with the following points: originality, choosing a friendly topic from a student's perspective, a topic worth investing, and a manageable thesis topic. Moreover faculty recommended choosing a topic including informative and convincing results, looking at gaps in previous research and determining an approach to fill that gap, considering the future and job orientations.

Moreover a study conducted by DesJardins (1995) discusses the steps in completion of a good dissertation including advice to students as researchers and faculty as supervisors. The article discusses that a good topic choice is simply choosing a topic that is," interesting to the researcher, the advisor and the research community."(P. 5)The article also discusses that the student's role in determining a thesis topic is to follow up on the latest research done in their field and look for solving a real problem existing in the field.

A study performed by Smith III, & Sandvik (2012) referred to four main global trends in education. The first trend discussed was student's university and career readiness, taking a longitudinal perspective in education, the shift from print to digital content in education and most importantly individualized learning.

According to the 66th annual Education Writer's Association conference held on May 4, 2013 the top six trends in education were the following: investment in early education, assessing common core standards, online courses effectiveness, change in traditional higher education degrees, adaptive learning in K-12 and higher education, and diversity.

[\(http://voxglobal.com/2013/05/top-trends-and-issues-in-education-takeaways-from-the-education-writers-association-ewa-conference-2013/\)](http://voxglobal.com/2013/05/top-trends-and-issues-in-education-takeaways-from-the-education-writers-association-ewa-conference-2013/)

Olsen & Fuller (2010) explain that the educational trends and research for the upcoming years are as follows: Standards-based education, Experiential learning, employment needs, school readiness indicators, quality systems, professional development, assessment in early childhood education, leadership in early childhood education centers and environmental rating scales in

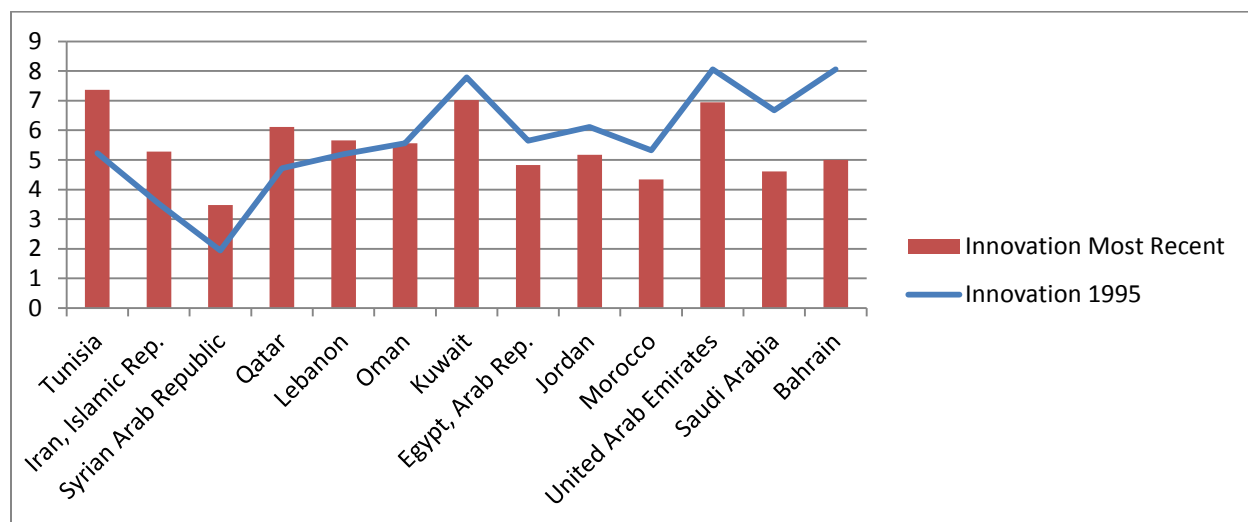
childhood programs. <http://www.education.com/reference/article/education-current-trends-issues>

3. Current situation of higher education in the Arab world in general and specifically in Lebanon in terms of quality and research

According to a study conducted by Al- Rashdan (2009), one of the challenges of higher education in the Arab countries is the low quality research with unclear objectives. As noted by Al- Rashdan (2009, p.82), “Scientific research faces another problem namely that the research policy in universities and academic institutions has no clear objective serving the goals of the university or society, and the studies that are carried out are done so without purpose.”

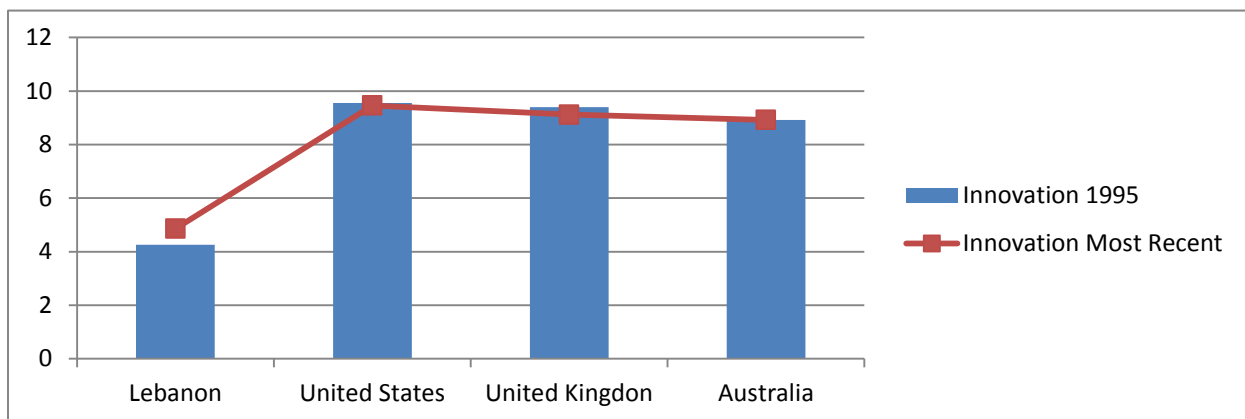
Numerous efforts are being placed to improve the quality of higher education in the Arab world in general and in Lebanon specifically. Figure 1 shows that according to the innovation system index, Tunisia ranks highest among the Arab countries followed by Kuwait, UAE, and then Lebanon. On the other hand only 5 countries show an increase in the innovation index value since 1995 while the other 8 countries show a decrease in their index value. However, as the Arab Knowledge report states (2009, p. 184), “Despite the efforts exerted by the Arab scientists and researchers, the extremely low amounts spent by Arab countries on research and development have had a negative impact on Arab innovation performance in both quantitative and qualitative terms.”

Figure1- Innovation system index for 1995 in comparison to the most recent period



Source: http://info.worldbank.org/etools/kam2/KAM_page7.asp

Figure2- Innovation system index for 1995 in comparison to the most recent period



http://info.worldbank.org/etools/kam2/KAM_page7.asp

Moreover, figure 2 shows the innovation system index of Lebanon in comparison with the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia. It is obvious that Lebanon lags way behind in terms of research and innovation in comparison to the developed countries compared to.

According to the strategic plan document prepared by Lebanese Association for Educational Studies (LAES) in 2006 “Higher education in Lebanon suffers from serious quality problems which emanate from archaic standards in private higher education and from failure to abide by what was issued later, and the absence of structures needed to control quality in private higher education, the absence of national frameworks and structures for quality assurance.” LAES has stated in its strategic plan a set of objectives including three of direct correlation to this study: developing a national framework for quality control, scientific research and quality assurance in higher education.

According to the Regional study on Research trends in Adult Education in the Arab states, most of the research conducted by students for their theses and by professors in the Arab countries tackled similar research topics. The topics mainly discussed were curriculum and textbooks, teaching methods, educational administration, educational policy, students’ achievement and teachers’ training (UNESCO, 1999).

Conclusion of the Literature:

Many efforts have been conducted to address the issue of research supervision whether at the graduate or post graduate level, however little research is conducted regarding the first step of research i.e. choosing a research problem (topic) to investigate. The literature still lacks

the issue of student's innovation in the topic choice as a bridge of adding value to the field. Thus this research study tackled the issue of topic choice as a factor of quality in research work as the researcher wanted to shed light on the faculty's' supervision in this matter and the students' perception of its importance. The researcher aimed to build up the initial steps of investigating this issue to fill in the gaps and encourage future research in this matter.

F. Research Methodology:

Consideration of the issues of quality and stressing on different aspects is vital in assessing the whole status of higher education. The literature review focused on several aspects in assessing the whole supervision process of theses, on the status of higher education in Lebanon and the Arab world when it comes to research and innovation and on the trends in educational research. Thus this study aims to investigate from a students' and faculty's' perspective the importance being laid on the students' choice of topic and the faculty's' advising in that perspective.

1. Sample:

The sample of this study is comprised of three different groups. Sample one is comprised of 42 students who are currently working on their theses/ projects in the education department of a reputable university in Beirut. Students were asked to fill out a survey and determine the process of choosing, advising, and approving their thesis topic. The sample contained 40 females (95.3%) and 2 males (4.7 %) candidates.

The sample also includes six faculty members who have been supervising theses/ projects for more than 10 years in the Department of education.

Furthermore, data was obtained from 100 students who have submitted their theses/ projects in the last five academic years.

2. Data Collection Instruments:

Two custom-made instruments were developed:

Instrument 1: Questionnaire for students currently working on their theses or projects

The design and the format of the questionnaire followed the principles stated in various research methods text books (see for instance Robson, 2000, 2003; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). Accordingly a questionnaire was designed, piloted and then sent via Survey Monkey to 48 students currently working on their thesis or project. The questionnaire consisted of 20 questions. The questionnaire included close-ended questions, 9 multiple-choice questions and 3 simple responses of (yes, no). Another set of 6 open-ended questions were given to allow

students to express their opinions freely and reflect on the issue. Moreover, 2 questions included ratings in relation to time allocated for the thesis and faculty's concentration on the thesis quality.

Instrument 2: Interviews with faculty members from the department of education

The researcher has used face to face interviews with all full-time faculty members at the department of education who constantly act as advisors or committee members of the thesis/ project done by students. Face to face interviews were selected as the best method for interviewing faculty as the researcher thought that faculty should be pressed to explicitly explain the process of supervising a thesis and the load they exert on students when choosing a research topic. Again, the semi-structured interviews were conducted on one-to-one basis. They followed the interview guidelines stated in the various research methods textbooks (Cohen et al, 007; Robson, 2000, 2003).

Instrument 3: Database of theses/ projects in the last three years

A list of all the theses or projects performed by students in the last five years was obtained. The researcher aimed to summarize these theses and projects according to the themes and relate them to the latest trends in research.

3. Data Collection Procedures:

The questionnaire was sent to all students via Survey Monkey after requesting the entire email list from the department. Out of the surveys sent, 19 students responded with a return ratio of 45%.

The researcher sent the faculty members of the Education department an email requesting face-to face interviews and then interviewed each one of them for around 10-15 minutes.

The researcher had requested from the Education department the list of the data-base of all students who have submitted their theses/ projects in the last five years. The database included the names of the students, advisors, and committee members appointed for supervision of their thesis / project. The researcher accessed the university library database to obtain more detailed information such as the title or topic of the thesis/ project and the purpose of conducting the research study

4. Ethical considerations

When considering the ethical perspective of conducting this research study many concerns were taken into consideration. Ethical issues of conducting research on human subjects were tackled by the researcher by receiving approval from the Committee on Human Subjects in Research (CHSR). The participant's privacy and confidentiality was treated with respect. The

participants who assisted in the completion of this study signed a consent form and were given the choice to drop out of the study whenever requested. The researcher carried out the research with respect and concern for the dignity and welfare of the people who participated. (Fraenkel, Wallen, Hyun, 2012)

5. Data analysis /Results:

1. *Topic Choice: consideration of the latest trends in Education*

One theme was the considerations of the latest trends in education, and it was tackled from two perspectives, the students through questionnaires and the faculty through face-to-face interviews.

Students' responses to the questionnaires showed that the majority of students (63.2%) choose their thesis/ project topic after taking the emphasis courses of their specialty. Moreover, the majority of students (47.4%) state that they chose their topic by reading articles related to their emphasis field. 57.9 % of the respondents added that when choosing their thesis topic, they considered previous work in the field for future research. The students (89.5%) also revealed that they did some readings on the latest trends in education related to their area of emphasis before choosing their thesis/ project topic. However, only 26.3% of the respondents discussed the trends in their area of emphasis to come up with a topic with their advisor. With reference to the above responses, 91.7% of the respondents considered that their thesis/project is related to the trends in education in their area of emphasis. The topics and the themes under which these topics are underlined were summarized in a table (check appendix-2).

Through the face-to-face interviews, the faculty members were asked, "To what extent do they recommend students to choose a topic related to the latest trends in education according to their emphasis?"

Their reflection on this matter varied where two faculty members mentioned that they encourage students through their emphasis courses to highlight ideas that students consider worth investigating when they read articles throughout the course. The articles presented in these emphasis courses are most of the time related to the trends in the field. Another two faculty members reflected that it depends on the Lebanese market, what might be a trend according to literature, might not reflect the school and institution needs in Lebanon They further mentioned that it's not about the trend but rather about the importance of the topic discussed, as the country requires a lot of academic research which has to make sense from a lot of perspectives whether theoretical, practical, or conceptual. One of the faculty members mentioned that students usually seek help to choose their thesis/project topic, which ends up as a reflection of the faculty member's interest thus directly related to the latest trends in the area of emphasis. Nevertheless, another faculty member mentioned that discussing the latest

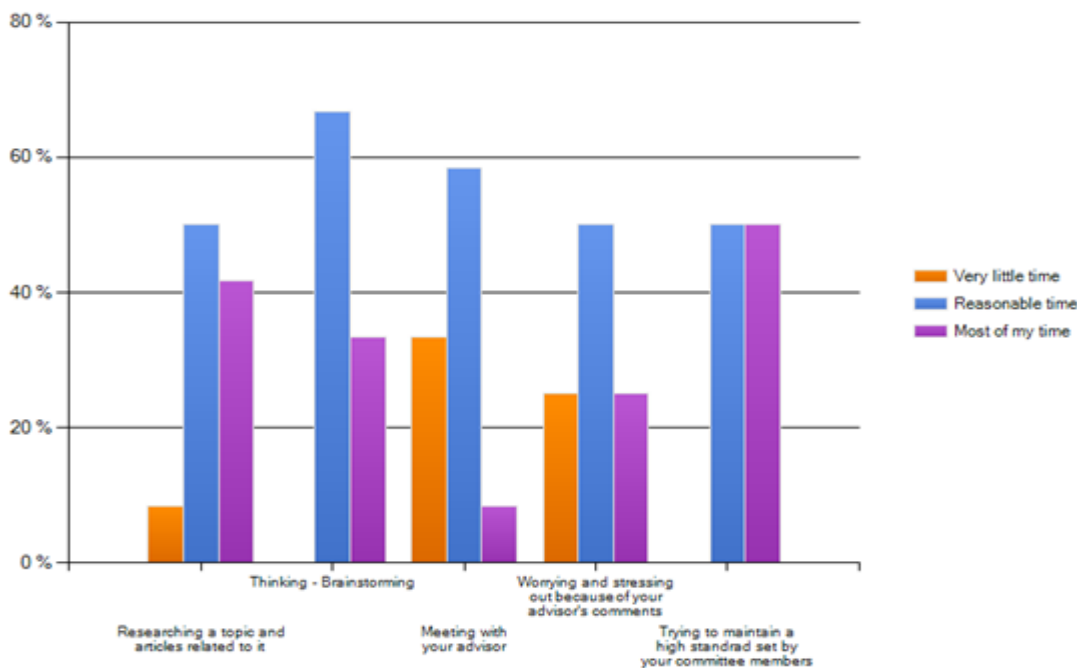
trends with the students was not the only concern where the encouragement to think outside the box and away from the student’s comfort zone always occurs.

On the other hand, the faculty members were asked, “To what extent do they believe that the emphasis courses are preparing students to choose thesis/ project topics related to the latest educational trends?” In this matter, the faculty members reached a consensus that the three emphasis courses are not enough, and that it requires a lot of guidance from the faculty to tune students towards reading more about their emphasis field. Faculty also stated that they intend to include in these three courses as many readings as possible related to the latest trends in the field. Faculty also shared that they are discussing the issue of adding emphasis courses, but the problem of low enrollment has been holding the department back for years.

2. Allocated time for topic choice and other related issues

Another theme this paper tackled was the amount of time allocated by students to decide on the topic they seek to investigate in their thesis/project. The aim of investigating this issue was to investigate the time and effort students exert on the first step of the process of writing an MA thesis, choosing a topic that would initiate from a personal interest thus keeping in mind a problem that would effectively add up to the research in the field. The majority of students (52.6%) stated that it took them less than one month to choose their topic, while 10.5% mentioned that it took them from 1 to 2 months, and 36.8 % stated that they needed more than 2 months to select their topic .

The students were also asked to rate the time allocated for several thesis/project related issues such as researching articles, brainstorming, worrying and stressing out because of their advisor’s comments, and trying to maintain a high standard set by their committee members. The results are as following:



3. Quality considerations

The third theme that this study tackled was assessing the faculty’s concentration on quality when advising or being a committee member of a thesis or project. On the other hand, the study also tackled the quality issues from a student’s perspective thus exploring whether students emphasize the depth and quality of the topics chosen to investigate in their thesis or project.

a. Advising theses/ projects: Through the students’ surveys, respondents were asked if they have changed their thesis/ project topic, and the results showed that 42 % of the students changed their original chosen topic. The reasons the respondents listed were that 20% discovered that their original topic choice was not applicable in Lebanon, 60% stated that a new interest derived from the original topic, and 20% stated that they changed their topic as a result of their advisor’s advice as the original topic was not up to the standards. Students were also asked through the survey questions to provide three helpful tips they received from their advisors. The responses resulted in the following themes: the extensive readings to write a well-structured literature review, the coherence and organization of ideas, the detailed presentation of the research methodology used, the concentration on references .the sampling methods representing the population, the use of a research-based study, and the calmness while working.

Students were also asked how they chose their committee members where the majority (50%) stated that they chose experts in the field in relation to their topics, 41.7% chose the members according to their advisor’s recommendation and 8.3% built their choice according to their friends’ recommendation. When students were asked to rate their advisor’s and committee members’ effectiveness in recommending articles, correcting their work, and raising the bar, the students’ ratings came as the following.

Rate the following: (1 as the highest and 3 as the lowest)			
	1	2	3
How effective were your committee members in recommending articles & specific scholars in the field	33.3%	25.0%	41.7%
How strict were your committee members in their correction criteria of your work	25.0%	66.7%	8.3%
How motivating were your committee members in recommending changes and raising the bar of your work	41.7%	33.3%	25.0%

When faculty members were asked about the advising of any project or thesis, the question emphasized whether they propose a thesis/ project topic to their students or ask students to prepare a list of topics to discuss with them. Two faculty members mentioned that throughout the three semesters, when students take their emphasis courses, students are

asked to highlight topics worth investigating in the articles read in the course. Unfortunately according to these two faculty members, this method is not always taken seriously by students; and in cases like that, the faculty members try to propose topics that are related to the latest trends or try to discuss topics that are related to the students' everyday work experiences where the study is seen to be more feasible. On the other hand, one faculty member mentioned that lately and according to some experiences with the students, students rarely come up with their own ideas. In cases like that, a topic is proposed according to the faculty member's interest, and it is discussed further until the faculty member and the student reach a place where their ideas intersect. Two faculty members stated that the encouragement of the students to choose their own topics occurs most of the times, and if students fail to choose a topic, faculty members propose a list of topics until the student is able to find a topic that he/she can find themselves to make it more fruitful. These two faculty members emphasized that they encourage students to think outside the box. Nevertheless, one faculty member stated that usually advising for a topic is a collaborative process where students come with their own ideas, and guidance occurs in a way to fine-tune the topic and make sure it's feasible for a research study.

Moreover when faculty members were asked about three points they emphasize on when students choose their topics, the themes were as the following: a sound publishable topic, originality, a new contribution to the field, an acceptable research design, an extensive reading of literature, feasibility, research tools, a purpose of their topic choice, recent references, and a learning growth potential from the process.

b. Standards: Added Value to the field

This research study also tackled the added value of the students' projects/ thesis to the field of education. As any other study conducted in the field, the rationale and the originality of the study and their impact in the field is the focus of any researcher.

One way of measuring the students' perception of their topic choice was to question their feedback on the impact of their study as an added value to the field. Through questionnaires students were asked about the purpose for choosing their project/ thesis topic. The majority of the students (47.4%) reflected that their topic choice was based on their curiosity or passion for that specific topic. Moreover, 31.6% of the respondents considered their topic choice according to the need in their field of study. However, 21.1% stated that their choice was dependent on the need in their place of employment. Nevertheless, 0% of the students responded related their topic choice to serving the department of education or supporting any professor's research.

On the other hand, students were asked whether their original topic changed after they started working on their research. 42.15% of the respondents confirmed changing their original topics. The researcher also investigated this issue by asking respondents to state reasons for changing their original research topic. The majority of students (60%) responded that the reason lying behind their change of topic is a new interest derived from the original topic. Another 20% stated that their original topic choice was neither applicable nor feasible in

Lebanon. Nevertheless, the remaining 20% stated that they changed their topic according to an advice from their advisor that the original topic was not up to the standards.

Students were also asked explicitly about their perception of the value added of their research study whether to the field in general or to Lebanon in specific. Students' answers varied but mainly fell under the following themes:

- ✓ Originality of the topic as it has never been studied before in Lebanon
- ✓ Importance of the issue in the field and not applied before as a case study in Lebanon
- ✓ Exposure of a need for developing educational systems in the inclusion of disabled children in regular classrooms in Lebanon
- ✓ Raising awareness of the issue of assessment in institutions and evaluating an educational system
- ✓ Providing hope for many researchers and educators in the field
- ✓ Providing new teaching techniques to improve teaching of mathematics
- ✓ Setting up a new dimension for further research about this topic in Lebanon
- ✓ Providing administrators with case studies revealing ethical decision making

Through faculty interviews the researcher also aimed to discuss the quality management mechanisms the department is implementing and the faculty's roles in sustaining quality to promote research of added value. Faculty members were directly asked whether the department is implementing such a mechanism and to what extent is the value of a project/ thesis discussed. Five faculty members stated that the issue of quality was an ad-hoc practice in the department as faculty have been aware that maintaining a specific standard is a necessity in an American based institution. They added that recently the issue of quality was discussed further in the latest departmental meeting aiming to create a certain framework for all faculty members to follow such as developing a rubric to evaluate the thesis/ project topic by a forum of faculty prior to student's establishment of a research. Moreover, the department discussed administering a written comprehensive exam after completion of 15 credits (5 courses) to evaluate student's readiness to write a project/ thesis. One faculty member stated that the quality and added value of any project/ thesis is dependent on the advisor, committee members, and the students. The issue of quality and added value according to students, from this faculty's perspective, is that students are not really concerned with quality but rather choose readers who are not rigorous and meticulous in supervising their thesis. Moreover, many students are very limited with the time limit for their project/ thesis completion.

The researcher also obtained information of the topics chosen by students in the last five years and the results were summarized in the table (check appendix-1). The topics were summarized under 11 themes: Curriculum, teaching strategies, leadership and management-school effectiveness, technology, citizenship, motivation, intervention programs, academic achievement, gender issues and culture, assessment and evaluation and attitude and perceptions.

6. Discussion:

The issue of quality is by any means the most important aspect any educational institution should consider. Research in the field of Education is highly dependent on the latest trends and on the social needs, whether on a national, regional or international level. The purpose of the study was to shed light on the issue of quality and their consideration of the latest trends in education in terms of topic choice; and the added value research of MA students in their completion of their thesis/ project.

The research study basically aimed to determine the extent to which students considered the latest trends in education when selecting their topics and the extent to which faculty emphasized the above issue as part of the advising process in ensuring quality. The results revealed that the students perceive that they take into account the latest trends in education when selecting a thesis topic. On the other hand, faculty considered that the emphasis courses are not enough to discuss and ensure the students' consideration of the latest trends. Faculty stated that a lot of personal effort from the student is required to keep track of the research globally and consider it when choosing a topic. Nevertheless, faculty also raised the issue of trends in terms of research in Lebanon. It was mentioned that the Lebanese context lags way behind in terms of research and it is vital to consider the societal and school/ institutions needs when considering a topic to research. This is evident in the Literature review discussed above in the innovation index calculated by the World Bank. Although Lebanon is one of the top countries in the Arab world in terms of research and innovation (figure.1), however the discrepancy in the index between Lebanon and the developed countries (figure 2) , confirms the faculty's perception of the issue of trends.

According to the themes and topics that emerged from the analysis of the thesis/ projects in the last 5 years and from the topics that students are currently working on the researcher considers some points that need to be addressed. Students are certainly tackling topics that are of great importance to their work place and the societal needs but are mainly tackling topics that have been of importance for decades. However, in comparison to the literature and the latest trends in education addressed by (Smith III et al, 2012; Olsen et al, 2010; 66th Annual Education Writer's Association) students are not considering the emergence of new trends and priorities that need to be tackled and addressed in Lebanon.

Considering the students' responses to how much their topic is of added value to the field, the majority of respondents presented their research as an added value to the research in the Lebanese context. Reflecting on that, the researcher aimed in the research question to determine the added value of students' topics to the field of education in a wider context whether regional or international. The study definitely reflected the need of research in Lebanon in all aspects and domains; however the students' responses also revealed that the students are thinking locally when considering topics. Thinking locally is definitely of great benefit to the Lebanese context, however the research that students perform, if published, is what will add up to the literature, so faculty should be attentive in this matter by encouraging students to be innovative thinkers who aim to be part of the change in investigating topics.

With respect to the research questions that aimed to reveal faculty member's consideration of quality and guidance in students considering the importance of being innovative in choosing a research topic to improve their research skills and add value to the field the following was revealed.

It is vital to mention that quality was investigated in this research study from a different perspective tackled by researchers in previous literature. Research done by De-Miguel (2010) assessed the issue of thesis quality in terms of defense and report. The researcher in this study aimed to shed light on the effort exerted by faculty in their theses/ project supervision in guiding students to be innovative in their topic choice. In this aspect the results reflected that advisors should guide students to exert more effort and stress more importance on the issue of their topic choice in tackling a research problem. As Cullens discusses in his study time and effort is needed in the first steps of the advising process to ensure a research problem that would guide students in the right track. This research revealed that the faculty's role is to re-stress on the issue of topic choice in consideration of quality since little effort is done in this domain. Moreover, the researcher aimed to determine what faculty members emphasize on when students choose their topics, a question asked both to students and faculty members. Common themes emerged to answer this question such as research design, well- structured literature review, and a sound topic that contributes to the field. The responses reflected that the faculty members are reaching their students and students are advised in such a way they are aware of what they are required to do, however not mentioning the issue of trends and quality. Although the topic issue is discussed, however more guidance and effort in this matter is to be attained.

The researcher also tackled the issue of quality mechanisms performed in the department. The faculty members acknowledge the fact that the process of thesis/ project supervision was an ad hock process in the department and establishing a certain procedure has been on the top priority of the departmental meeting's agenda for months. The department is aiming to reach a consensus on a quality mechanism for the thesis/project process in the department and start implementing it as soon as possible.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations:

This study reveals that there are issues that need to be addressed when considering an assessment of the quality and added value of any thesis or project when it comes to topic choice. Although students perceive that they are considering the latest trends in education when selecting their topics for their thesis/ project, the results reflect that students are looking at the issue of trends from a local perspective. Faculty have a major role to play in this context, where they should raise students awareness on the issue of globalization and guide them to consider the thesis/ project topic choice by considering the trends globally and adding value to the field of education in a wider context by stressing on the issue of innovation. On the other hand, this study revealed that faculty members are aware of the weakness of quality consideration in the thesis/ project process thus working on implementing quality mechanisms.

Faculty members are thus working on raising the bar for students but are not currently doing so.

8. Limitations:

The study has encountered several limitations such as the time limit that the researcher was bound to; therefore I recommend that the study should be attempted on a longer period of time. Moreover, the study was attained in one university in Lebanon. Nevertheless, the response rate of the students' sample was not as expected therefore limiting the scope of this study. Moreover another limitation was the lack of literature in consideration of the importance of topic choice, thus this study pinpoints a new issue to be considered as part of quality mechanisms in assessing and supervising theses and projects at an MA level.

9. Suggestions for further research:

The issue of quality is of vital importance in any higher education institution therefore, the researcher suggests that this research should be tackled on a nationwide perspective where all universities from the same background are studied. The researcher recommends that the research is tackled in the future in a wider perspective including all the perspectives of theses/projects (topic, methodology, scope, rationale, literature review, and added value to the field) to investigate the issue of quality. The study will ensure further reliability and validity.

10. Acknowledgments

The author acknowledges gratefully the effort and the contribution of all the students who participated in this study, the faculty members in specific, and the education department in general.

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Appendix-1:

Theme: Curriculum- Math- Science- Languages- Arts				
Emphasis	Topic	Purpose	Year	P or T
Math education	Investigating difficulties faced by grade 1 to 6 students while learning geometry, based on the Lebanese curriculum's objectives & content	To provide curriculum designers with a picture of the gaps that needs to be addressed. It will also provide textbook publishers objective evidence of consistency or inconsistency in regards to the curriculum as well as to students' cognitive development. More importantly, teachers will become better aware of the factors that create obstacles to students when performing geometric tasks.	2013	T
Math Education	Study of the alignment between the Lebanese secondary- level national math exams for the literature & humanities track and the reformed math curriculum	Teachers in Lebanon can benefit from this study in understanding the process of developing national exams, their structure and content, and their aligned or non-aligned aspects with the curriculum.	2012	T
TESOL	The effects of integrating critical thinking in L3 intermediate classes: a case study	This study explored the integration of critical thinking in L3 classes and the need for this integration.	2012	T
General	The integration and the impact of environmental education in school curriculum	this project is important to address the Ministry of Education to do further research studies and develop tools to evaluate environmental literacy in schools' curricula and assess its effectiveness	2012	P
TESOL	Discussion based approach in second language Lebanese classes	to indicate the effect of the discussion-based approach on students' motivation, involvement, and understanding	2012	T
TESOL	Language and thought: A coexisting relationship	The importance of this study lies in the fact that it tackles a long-existing debate on whether there exists an influential relationship between language and thought.	2012	P
General	Investigation of the coherence of the science instructional program at elementary grade levels	check if the program succeeds in aligning the curricular objectives with suitable instructional materials and practices, assessment practices and professional development activities	2011	P

TESOL	Writing center effectiveness: Students' and tutors' perceptions	How effective do students and tutors view the writing center in terms of improving student writing? I also aimed at gathering clues about the reasons for students' perceptions and information about the tutors' styles in tutoring and the strategies that they use.	2011	P
Special education	Effectiveness of the LiPS program on Phonological awareness of Bilingual children	To determine the effectiveness of the LiPS program in improving phonological awareness skills of bilingual grade1 students having poor phonological awareness knowledge in Arabic and English languages. Specifically, this study aims at examining the effectiveness of the Linda mood program on the English language and the extent of extending this effectiveness to Arabic.	2011	P
TESOL	The Effectiveness of Trained Peer Response on ESL Students' Writing Quality and Revision Types	To evaluate how peer feedback training affect students' revision types in a multiple-draft, process-approach writing classroom	2011	P
TESOL	Children in the early years classroom code- switching	To show how much students have been code switching nowadays and to describe the reasons young children code switch in the classroom with one another.	2011	P
TESOL	My Classroom Writing Kit	The purpose of this kit is to focus on such activities to bring about good quality writing.	2011	P
TESOL	The effect of language web quest on the higher order thinking skills of Lebanese high school students	To measure the effect of technology, through an inquiry based activity, Web Quest, in improving the higher order thinking skills of high school students in Lebanon.	2010	T
General	Feedback: all that effort, but what is the effect? Teacher and peer feedback	To investigate the influence of peer and teacher feedback on L2 writing and to examine Lebanese students' attitude concerning this formative Pedagogical tool.	2010	P
General	An inquiry based modeling approach to developing graphic skills in seventh grade biology	To redesign a biology unit adopting inquiry based modeling approach aiming to improve grade 7 students graphing skills, focusing in graph construction and interpretation	2010	P
Special education	the effect of Diglossia in vocabulary acquisition in Arabic of Lebanese bilingual students in a private school in kfarshima	To determine if Diglossia impedes the vocabulary acquisition and comprehension of Lebanese bilingual students in lower elementary mainly KGII, grades 1 and 2 and to determine which language students are comfortable to use its vocabulary	2010	P

General	A Preschool Program Based on Multiple Intelligences	To develop a comprehensive program for the early childhood cycle based on the theory of multiple intelligences	2010	P
Special education	Metacognitive awareness of reading strategies	To investigate the nature of the relationship between reading comprehension abilities of a sample of Lebanese non-native English speakers and their self-perceived metacognitive strategy use	2010	P
TESOL	The effect of guided reading on reading ability and motivation	To find out how guided reading influences the reading abilities of struggling readers and their motivation to read	2010	T
TESOL	Towards establishing a writing center: The Lebanese American university as a case study	To pave the way for setting up a writing center at LAU, investigating the reality at the university as far as students' proficiency in writing and expressing themselves	2009	P
Math Education	Probability in the 6th and 7th grades in the Lebanese math curricula: An investigation of its teaching and learning	To describe, analyze and evaluate the teaching/ learning of proportionality in Lebanese schools for grades 6 & 7.	2009	T
TESOL	Exploring motivation and critical thinking through visual literacy in language classes	To explore how motivation and critical thinking are developed in upper elementary classes within the greater area of Beirut	2009	P
Math education	Problem solving in grade 9 Lebanese textbooks a study of curriculum textbook coherence	to assess problem solving teaching/ learning in grade 9 math through: analyzing the grade 9 math textbooks in terms of its coherence with the PS goals and objective in the curriculum	2009	P
TESOL	Self-regulated learning in second language classrooms	shed light on the perceived benefits of modeling of instructions as an effective method that should help prevent students who have trouble in reading and writing in the second language classrooms and whether this method of instruction promotes self-regulated learning environment and enhances students' achievement	2009	P
General	Between art illusion and art education in schools	Examine how Lebanese private schools are dealing with arts as an academic discipline	2008	P
TESOL	Lebanese students choice of foreign languages and its influence on their life	Examine the history of foreign languages and its influence on students' academic professional and social life and the cause of students shift from French medium school to American universities	2008	P
TESOL	White lies telling in Lebanese	To investigate the phenomena of white lies	2011	T

	discourse: a cross- cultural study (language)	telling by adult Lebanese in their daily discourse.		
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Theme:	Teaching Strategies			
Emphasis	Topic	Purpose	Year	P or T
TESOL	LEBANESE SUPPLEMENTAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICE PROVIDER: A CASE-STUDY	Purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of a supplemental educational service (SES) provider, in Beirut, and its impact on student academic achievement and customer satisfaction.	2013	T
General	Using Simulations to Develop the Quality of Grade Four Students' Explanations of Inheritance and Heredity	The purpose of this study is to test the effectiveness of the use of simulations within inquiry-based learning on students' quality of explanations in the domain of genetics.	2012	T
ECE	Helping shy children through play	This project explored the efficacy of incorporating social skills training program into short-term group play therapy on promoting the social skills of shy children.	2012	P
TESOL	The effect of using visual aids on second language speaking	to examine the role of using visual aids in terms of enhancing oral fluency	2011	T
General	Instructional supervision: A case study of an exemplary model and how teachers and supervisors perceive it	To describe this system and to examine teachers and subject supervisors' perceptions in one of the association's schools in the South of Lebanon.	2011	T
General	The effect of problem based learning in chemistry education on middle school students' academic achievement and attitude	To offer the teachers alternative educational strategies that they can use during the instructional process. The researcher hopes that students' engagement in science learning will increase when using the PBL method. This active learning and engagement will lead to an enhancement in students' performance.	2010	P
TESOL	Effects of the students team achievement approach on students' achievement in spelling	To find out to what extent the cooperative learning method namely the STAD could have an important function in improving students' spelling achievement	2010	P
Math education	Exploring the effect of using mathematical group discussion on 7th graders problem solving abilities	Explore the types of questions used by the teacher in a math class and to investigate the effect of using mathematical group discussion	2009	T

	in geometry	on 7th graders' problem solving abilities in geometry		
Math education	A pilot study of instructional unit on functions using multiple representations with emphasis on problem solving in grade 10	To develop and pilot an instructional unit emphasizing multiple representation of functions	2009	T
TESOL	the impact of a match between tracing and learning styles in the student's english achievement level	To investigate the different learning styles of the university students enrolled in intensive English programs at an American affiliated university in Lebanon	2009	T
TESOL	the task based approach to improve students' speaking skills	To identify the factors that lead the students' inability to speak English fluently and study the strength of the task based approach which is aimed to improve the quality of students' speaking skills	2009	P

Theme: Leadership and Management – school effectiveness				
Emphasis	Topic	Purpose	Year	P or T
Manag.	Authentic Leadership: Perceptions and Implications	To identify whether the division head is an authentic leader by eliciting the perceptions of teachers and the afore mentioned division head	2012	t
Manag.	Can principals without educational background become effective leaders?	To investigate whether one private school owner in Lebanon who manages his own school with minimum education qualifications is an effective principal.	2011	p
Manag.	The perceived role of academic Deans in private universities in Lebanon	To examine the role perceptions of academic deans and to present a comparison of perceptions in relevance to the academic deans, chairpersons, and faculty.	2010	T
Manag.	Attributes and roles of subject leaders : perception in two Lebanese public schools	To investigate the criteria used to select subject leaders their evaluation, training and professional development provided. To determine the attributes and responsibilities of subject leaders	2008	T
Manag.	Teachers and students perceptions of the effective enforcement of school's discipline	To investigate the alignment between the written school discipline policies with practice and to elicit the perceptions of the students and teachers about the effectiveness of such enforcement	2010	p
Manag.	Teachers' and students' perceptions of a principal's actual	To investigate the preferred and actual role a Muslim School principal from the point of view	2009	P

	and preferred roles	of the stakeholders		
Manag.	Assess for reform a case study of a preschool	To examine the effectiveness of the educational program at a preschool and propose suggestions for improvement	2009	T

Theme: Technology				
Emphasis	Topic	Purpose	Year	P or T
General	Academic Networking: Bridging the Gap between Teachers and Students of the 21st Century”	The findings of the proposed research will provide feedback that enables administrators, professional development teams, and teachers to reflect and benefit from the proposed technology integration solutions, as well as understand the justification and relevance of emerging technologies such as the Internet and social media.	2012	t
General	The effects of teachers’ attitude & perceptions on their ability to integrate technology	However, few investigations were conducted in Lebanon in order to research how teachers’ perceptions or beliefs regarding technology affect their abilities to integrate computer use in their teaching practices.	2011	T
Math education	Effect of technology integration in teaching quadratic functions on Lebanese students’ learning, problem solving, abilities and attitudes	investigate the effectiveness of integrating technology in mathematics teaching and learning.	2011	T
Math education	Implementing Dynamic Geometry Software-Based Constructivist Approach (DGS-CA) in Teaching Thales’ Theorem: Impact on Students’ Achievement, Problem Solving Skills and Motivation	To investigate the effect of a DGS-based Constructivist Approach (hereafter referred to as DGS-CA) on students’ motivation, geometric problem solving abilities, and learning achievement.	2011	T
Special education	Website for special education	To develop a website called “Special Needs Education”. It is intended to be an online guide that presents information about different types of special needs includes a database that lists different institutions and specialists working in this field over the Arab world. Moreover this website gives the chance to the users to ask questions and interact with professionals in forums.	2011	p

Manag.	Assessing the Uses of ICT in a Private Lebanese University Changes in the Working Modes of Teachers and Librarians	To assess the different academic uses of ICT in a private Lebanese university (namely the Lebanese American University, LAU) in the service of the academic life of the university.	2010	p
Math	Exploring Grade Eight Students' Development of Geometric Reasoning in a Problem Solving Situation Using Dynamic Geometry Software	present study aims at exploring Lebanese students' development of geometric reasoning in a problem-solving situation using Dynamic Geometry Software	2010	T
Math education	Developing and Piloting a teaching/learning unit in similar triangles using DGS	Attempts to show that such a concept could be successfully integrated in 8th grade if it is supported with DGS(Dynamic Geometry software)	2010	T
Special education	How beneficial is story comprehension to go computer software program on students with reading comprehension deficits?	Investigate the effectiveness of a computer software in promoting reading comprehension for a particular population	2009	P

Theme: Citizenship				
Emphasis	Topic	Purpose	Year	P or T
General	A program for counselors to promote citizenship among Lebanese students	This project will be of significance to school counselors for promoting citizenship among students in middle schools in Lebanon	2012	p

Theme: Academic Achievement				
Emphasis	Topic	Purpose	Year	P or T
Manag.	The relationship between school entry age and academic achievement in Lebanon	To examine the correlation between age and academic achievement among students of a Lebanese private school.	2011	T
Special education	Body image, self-esteem and academic achievement of 8 th and 11 th grades male and female Lebanese students	To extend past research by studying the relationship amongst body image and self-esteem of female and male teenagers and expand the knowledge about how academic achievement is related to body image and self-esteem.	2011	T
General	The effect of the implementation of the readers' workshop on reading	To determine the effect of the implementation of the readers' workshop on students' reading	2009	P

	achievement in a first grade mixed ability classroom	levels and comprehension skills in a first grade mixed-ability classroom		
TESOL	Textisms: The pragmatic evolution among students in Lebanon and its effect on English essay writing	To explore the use of textisms among university students in Lebanon and its effect on academic English essay writing.	2011	T

Theme: Motivation				
Emphasis	Topic	Purpose	Year	P or T
TESOL	The effect of rich literacy environment on students' motivation	To examine the effect of rich literacy environment in Kindergarten II classes on students' motivation and to determine how a literacy rich environment enhances students' motivation.	2011	P
TESOL	Motivating young learners using games by Michelle Tony Frangieh	to examine the effect of gaming on young learners when introducing a new topic to them in the language classroom	2011	P
TESOL	Motivating students to read through storytelling	To investigate whether storytelling in grade 6 students in Lebanon motivates learners not only to read more but also to read stories of different genres. It also sheds lights on effective ways or techniques of storytelling that can be used with sixth graders in Lebanon	2010	p

Theme: Intervention Programs				
Emphasis	Topic	Purpose	Year	P or T
Special education	The effect of diet supplementation on children with ADHD	To investigate whether a relationship exists between changes in dieting and children diagnosed with ADHD.	2012	P
General	The Effects of Bullying-themed Literature on the Bullying Behavior of Upper Elementary Students in Lebanon	To examine the effectiveness of a bullying intervention program that utilizes bullying-themed literature as its major component on reducing bullying behavior in upper elementary classes	2012	T
Manag.	Views of stakeholders: effects of rules on students' behavior and academic performance	To help other teachers, administrative personnel, and educators to make appropriate decisions regarding the various types of school rules and the type of interventions and consequences that should be implemented in order to improve students' achievement and behavior.	2011	P
General	An eating disorder prevention program for adolescents in Lebanese Schools	To develop a program used by school counselor for the prevention of eating disorders	2009	p

Manag.	Research based design fro after school program kit	Prepare an educational kit to help implement extracurricular activities and support services to improve elementary students' academic achievement and engagement in the classrooms	2009	P
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Theme:	Gender Issues and Culture			
Emphasis	Topic	Purpose	Year	P or T
Math education	Gender differences in math achievement, students' attitudes and teacher's beliefs	To reinforce research on gender differences in math education in Lebanon and to study the topic as it pertains to students' attitudes and achievement, teachers' beliefs, as well as teachers' differential behavior with boys and girls if it existed.	2011	T
TESOL	Cultural Literacy Awareness Kit`	To focus on the applications that are implemented by teachers in the classrooms in order to educate their students and teach them about their culture	2010	P
TESOL	Diversity in Language and Identity in the Unique Lebanon	To shed light on the nature of the Lebanese unique culture that is full of language use and ideologies that may conflict with each other	2009	P
TESOL	The effect of gender and cultural factors in student language acquisition	To unveil the variable obstacles by the omnipresent institutions that are slowly but surely drowning academic progress to a steady hold and to shed light on the possible alternatives that serve to remedy-if not downright enhance students language acquisition and proficiency in English as a Second language	2009	T
TESOL	Gender discrimination in the language classroom	To explore the problem of how teachers react toward' s students' achievement and discipline	2009	T
General	Western "Pop" cultures in Lebanese universities	To explore the degree to which contemporary western ideology and its popular mass expression influences educational setting the Middle East and uses Lebanon as a case study	2009	T
Manag.	Exploring Social Justice/ Injustice in a Lebanese private school	To investigate the presence or absence of social justice elements in a low middle school in Lebanon.	2009	T
General	The effects of School bullying on students' perceptions of the School Environment	To examine middle school students' perceptions of their school in Beirut as a consequence of bullying	2009	P

Theme: Assessment and Evaluation				
Emphasis	Topic	Purpose	Year	P or T
Manag.	Teacher evaluation: formative not evaluative?	To develop a set of recommendations to modify the current practice of teacher evaluation in JHS. These set of recommendations will be modified to match a more formative evaluation system, as opposed to the summative evaluation procedures that are used till today in JHS.	2011	P
General	Teachers' and students' perspectives on using rubrics in the writing classroom	To examine the viewpoints of Lebanese students and teachers regarding the use rubrics in elementary writing classrooms.	2011	P
General	Research based design for formal assessment techniques	To present different informal assessment techniques to assist teachers in making better judgments regarding their students' achievements and lead students to become active participants in their own learning.	2010	p

Theme: Teacher's/ student's attitude and perceptions				
Emphasis	Topic	Purpose	Year	P or T
Manag.	Teacher's attitudes towards professional development activities and their impact on their practices and motivation: a case study	The purpose of this study is to explore teachers' attitudes towards the professional development (PD) activities offered at school X and to investigate the influence of teachers' attitudes on their practices and motivation	2011	T
General	Teacher's Perceptions toward school counselors in selected private schools in Lebanon	To assess teachers' perception of school counseling in Lebanon	2009	P
MNG	Examining how stakeholders perceive the quality of the learning support unit for learning disabled student in an international school in Bahrain	To evaluate how special education services are provided in a private international all-girls school in Bahrain	2009	P
General	Lebanese Middle school students' attitude towards math as a subject and towards math teachers	Examining the relationship between the attitudes of middle school students towards mathematics as a subject matter and their attitudes towards their math teachers	2009	P
TESOL	Discourse of aging in the Autumn of life	To get a holistic understanding of the discourse of elderly from different areas of enquiry, language and communicative abilities in old age, identity in old age and social practices in old age	2009	P

Appendix-2:

Project/ Thesis	Proposed Title	Theme
Project	The Language Gaps Between Grades 6 & 7 in Lebanese Public Schools	Curriculum- Teaching Methods
Thesis	Difficulties in geometric proof formulation	
Thesis	The Effect of Language of Instruction on Math and Science Achievement of Grades 5 and 11 Lebanese Students	
Thesis)	A Case Study: Teachers' Implementation of Elementary Mathematics Reform Curriculum	
Thesis	Effect of Lindamood Phoneme Sequencing Program (LiPS) on a Bilingual Student : A Case Study	
Thesis	An Arabic Picture Vocabulary Program that Aims at Developing Visual Imagery, Oral Language and Memory skills	
Thesis	Using Simulations to Develop the Quality of Grade Four Students' Explanations of Inheritance and Heredity	
Thesis	A study of the alignment between the Lebanese Secondary-Level National Math Exams, General Science Track, and the Reformed Math Curriculum	
Thesis	Analysis of the Lebanese Elementary Science Curriculum in terms of its Coherence	
Thesis	Piloting a Technology-enriched Unit to teach Locus at the Intermediate School	
Thesis	A Study of the Alignment between the Lebanese Secondary-Level National Math Exams, Humanities track, and the Reformed Math Curriculum	
Project	Mathematical Representations (to be re-formulated)	
Thesis	Difficulties in learning the concept of Limit in Lebanese secondary school curriculum	
Thesis	Grade Eight Students' Interpretation of their Teacher's Verbal Input about Energy and Its Relationship to their Achievement	
Thesis	The Effect of Language of Instruction on Math and Science Achievement of Grades 5 and 11 Lebanese Students	
Project	The effects of self-science program on the emotional intelligence and academic achievement of upper elementary students in Lebanon	Educational System
Project	Case study of collaboration (twinning)between a Lebanese and a French school, a case study	
Thesis	The influence of a transformational leader on teachers 'performance	Leadership &Management
Thesis	Social competence versus anger in Kuwaiti Youth	Intervention Program
Thesis	Mentoring at a Lebanese preschool: a case study	
Thesis	Shortage of male teachers in Lebanon: myth or reality?	Gender Issues

