

Classroom Assessment Practices at Secondary Schools: Teachers' Perspective

Sabira Bibi¹ Samreen Mehmood² Shaista Irshad Khan³

Abstract: This research looked into how instructors in Quetta, Balochistan's secondary schools felt about classroom assessment procedures. The study employed a descriptive survey approach, and the sample size was chosen from the target population using stratified random sampling and purposive sampling. These two objectives guided the study: to find out teachers' practices of classroom assessment at the secondary level and to measure the impact of teachers' assessment practices on students' learning achievement. Teachers' surveys at the chosen schools were used to gather data, and a self-made questionnaire was used to gauge students' academic performance. Descriptive statistics were used to examine the data. The research produced a somewhat detailed account of these instructors' assessment procedures. According to this, instructors were competent in evaluating students' learning; nevertheless, they did not indicate a desire to apply the learning taxonomy's assessment objectives. According to the study, all facets of learning assessment require training and demand.

Key Words: Classroom, Assessment, Impact, Practices, Secondary Schools, Quetta

Introduction

Assessments in the classroom aid instructors in making decisions, which makes them vital to the teaching and learning process (Mwema, 2023). In addition to being used to issue grades and measure whether students meet goals, these tests are being used as a teaching tool (Dignath et al., 2023). Everything done for educational purposes has an effect on learning, either positively or adversely (Martinah et al., 2023). Learning is the ultimate dependent variable in education. Assessment is the means by which learning and, consequently, educational quality is determined. The last determinant of any improvement in these is the caliber and advancement of assessment. In the same way that doctors cannot operate effectively without sound evaluation, instructors cannot teach effectively without assessment-related abilities (Constantinou & Wijnen-Meijer, 2022). Every educational activity relies on assessment to determine its validity and efficacy, and it is the core or center of all educational activities. The quality of assessment has an impact on the quality of educational processes, outputs, and inputs and, therefore, on the standard of education that society enjoys.

Global competencies that will put our children in a competitive position among the next generation of global citizens should be cultivated in them through education. 21st-century education is daring, claims 21st Century Schools (2008). It's not like the norm. It is sophisticated, demanding, inventive, and adaptable. It tackles an ever-evolving world with both amazing new potential and spectacular new issues. Fortunately, more and more 21st-century schools are being supported by a rising body of research. In a critique of Tony Wagner's book "The Global Achievement Gap," Conlon (2008) enumerated seven 21st-century survival skills.

¹ PhD Scholar, Department of Education, Abdul Wali Khan University, Mardan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.
Email: sabiraghilzai786@gmail.com

² Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Abdul Wali Khan University, Mardan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.
Email: samreen@awkum.edu.pk

³ Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Abdul Wali Khan University, Mardan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.
Email: dr.shaistakhan@awkum.edu.pk

We expect all instructors to educate all children on how to think and communicate effectively in order for them to survive in the twenty-first century, and they must evaluate these abilities and compare expectations to what the world will demand of our high school graduates, claims Conlon (2008). In addition to encouraging creativity and curiosity, if we implement this in every school, our nation will have a workforce capable of producing inventions on a constant basis, and every Student will have the skills necessary to get and maintain a decent job and be a productive member of society. The 21st century will see no more prosperous and competitive economy than one built on invention.

Statement of the Problem

Student evaluation is crucial because instructors' capacity to comprehend their pupils and align their behaviors with accurate assessments is the foundation for good teaching decisions (Brookhart, 2023). Past studies have indicated that there are several issues with the way teachers assess their students in the classroom. Teachers' inadequate understanding of fundamental testing and measurement concepts (Abd Halim, 2024), their lack of assessment training (Nguyen, 2022), and their inability to use and follow the measurement guidelines they learned in measurement courses (Kubiszyn & Borich, 2024) are some of these.

Teachers spend a large portion of their class time on activities related to student assessments and use a variety of classroom assessment techniques to gauge their students' learning outcomes. Their methods for teaching and evaluating students in the classroom serve to define and improve the educational system (Bui & Nguyen, 2024). Because of this, this study will try to raise awareness about how secondary school teachers see their methods for classroom assessments as well as their abilities and competences in assessing students' learning.

Research Questions

1. Which sorts of assessment practices are carried out by secondary school teachers?
2. What is the link between teachers' assessment practices and learners' learning achievement?

Significance of the Study

This work advances the fields of instruction and evaluation. Along with increasing knowledge of various classroom assessment paradigms, it also aids in investigating diverse techniques to evaluation with regard to students' learning. Further empirical understanding of assessment practices is another goal of this work.

Delimitations of the Study

This study was delimited to the province of Balochistan. Additionally, it is restricted to government secondary schools, and instructors and students of grades 9 and 10 participated in the survey.

Methodology

The researcher triangulated the extensive data using a mixed-technique approach. Thus, information was gathered in both quantitative and qualitative forms. The study's population consisted of 63506 pupils and 4432 teachers in the Quetta district, according to BES (2021–2022) (BBISE, 2022).

Table 1

Population teacher educator

	Boys	Girls	Total
	41140	22366	63506
Grand Total			63506

Table 2

Population of the students in the study

	Boys	Girls	Total
	9194	10166	19360
Grand Total			19360

Table 3*Population of the teachers in the study*

	Male	Female	Total
	1576	2856	4432
Grand Total			4432

Sample and Sampling Techniques of the Study

The Quetta district's graduate secondary school teachers were chosen as the target group. Thirty-eight secondary school teachers were chosen by the researcher using purposive sampling. The researcher selected a balanced number of male and female secondary schools (19 boys' schools and 19 girls' schools). The sample size is shown in the below table.

Table 4*Sector-wise sample of the teachers*

	Male	Female	Total
Urban	150	150	300
Rural	150	150	300
Grand Total			600

Table 4 shows that there are 600 instructors in all, with 300 male and 300 female teachers taking part in the study. Of these, 300 were from metropolitan regions, and 300 were from rural ones.

Table 5*Sector-wise sample of the students*

	Male Students	Female Students	Total
Urban	150	150	300
Rural	150	150	300
Grand Total			600

There are 600 students in all, according to Table 5, and 150 boys and 150 girls from rural regions and 150 boys and 150 girls from urban areas participated in the study and survey, respectively.

The research tools used in this study included a questionnaire for teachers and a focus group discussion with educators to learn about their perspectives on assessment practices. A self-developed test of the curriculum was also distributed to teachers to gauge student learning achievement. Urdu, Pakistan's official language, was translated into these instruments using a back translation technique.

Reliability and Validity of Instruments

Five schools in the district that were not involved in the main study participated in a pilot study to determine the validity and reliability of the research tool. After the pilot investigation, further instrument errors were found. Five secondary school teachers participated in a pilot test of the questionnaires, and Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to assess their reliability. In order to determine the validity of the expert opinions, the instruments were corrected appropriately. The researcher then administered each instrument and collected them all right away.

Data Analysis

All the collected data was tabulated and cross-checked to ensure that all entries were correct. After the data had been tabulated, it was analyzed through SPSS. The application produced tables, charts, images, and descriptive data. It was feasible to draw the right conclusions about the methods of classroom evaluation thanks to the interpretation of the descriptive statistics, whereas qualitative data were analyzed through thematic analysis.

The surveyors included the schoolteachers who provided a series of responses related to the phenomenon of assessment practices that are being carried out by secondary School teachers in the Quetta district, and all these responses revolved around a central mean. They classified the classroom assessment as a key component of the educational process, which serves as a means to measure the Student's learning and understanding in the classroom. According to them, the educational assessment practices in Balochistan have been evolving to improve learning outcomes. It faces a number of multifaceted challenges in the shape of resource limitations and the lack of quality teacher training. The key assessment practice mainly includes the Provincial Board Exams that measure a student's achievement in core subjects and ensure a general standard across schools. The teachers also employ the tool of continuous assessment, which assesses a student's progress by conducting regular tests within the classrooms and assigning quizzes and projects to get feedback and support.

The teachers also use the formative assessment, which is a cluster of both formal and informal assessments. The teachers employ formal assessments in the classroom to evaluate and provide feedback on students' learning. The examinations for most of the assessments are written tests because of the deficiency in facilities and the scarcity of certain required tools. The written examination assesses the important learning matters in fundamental academic subjects to solve the problem. The formal assessments, however, mostly do not reveal the full abilities of the students as they only include the written part of the comprehension and ignore its reading, listening, and speaking components. Consequently, many teachers use these tests alongside other activities that require practical application of knowledge to be proved, which can be effective in contexts where access to such testing materials is limited.

The informal component of assessments is of great importance in the context of Balochistan, whereby the teachers often engage students through questioning and observations. Oral questioning, for instance, allows for an instant check on the understanding of students and helps encourage certain students who might find it hard to write for a clear understanding. The Group assignments help the students reinforce the knowledge gained in class and, at the same time, offer the teachers a chance to determine the student's skills and their interpersonal character. Furthermore, the teachers also apply formative assessment through observation while conducting classroom activities in order that students with a silent nature and those who have language differences can also be incorporated into the learning process.

It is important for both the teachers and students in teaching and learning. It helps teachers understand how well the students are grasping the teaching knowledge and where there are potential deficiencies. It is, hence, important to know to what extent the teaching strategies must be adjusted so as to meet the student's needs in the continuously evolving modern arena. It provides valuable feedback to students by helping them to understand their strengths and make advancements in their studies. A timely improvement in teaching strategy and constructive feedback in return from students can motivate everyone to upgrade their learning process. They serve as a diagnostic tool for identifying specific student difficulties and adhering to the misconceptions that exist in the minds of teachers about students. This can help in providing targeted interventions and support for individual students.

Table 6
Shapes of Classroom Assessment in Balochistan

	Percentage
Formal Assessments	
Standardized Test	37%
Annual Exams	43%
Written Assignment	20%
Informal Assessments	
Observation	28%
Oral Questions	46%
Group Assignments	26%
Valid N (List-wise)	

The assessments that take place on a regular basis promote more accountability for both the students and the teachers as a whole. On the one hand, they encourage students to stay engaged and on track with their studies. On the other hand, they hold teachers accountable for ensuring that their teaching style is effective. Furthermore, the classroom assessments are not just about grading but are part of a continuous cycle of improvement. The insights gained from assessments can enhance the instructional practices and the professional development of teachers. When used effectively, assessments can encourage active learning. The technique of self-assessment involves students fostering a deeper engagement with the study material, which enhances their critical thinking skills.

Table 7*Regression*

Dependent Variable: Student's Academic Grades				
Variable	Coefficient	Std Error	t-stats	P-value
C	5.25	4.45	1.18	0.24
Teacher's Assessment Practices	0.41	.05	8.18	0.012
R-Squared		0.6414		
Adjusted R-Squared		.6402		
F-Stats		22.162		
Prob F-Stats		0.0023		
Durbin-Watson Stats		1.9118		

Table 7 indicates a Regression analysis whereby the impact of teacher's assessment techniques on the Student's academic achievement is visualized. The "Student's Academic Grades" is the dependent variable, while the Teacher's Assessment Practices is the independent variable. The predictor, "Teacher's Assessment Practices," has a coefficient value of 0.41 with a very low p-value of 0.012, which suggests a statistically significant positive impact on students' grades. This means that for each unit increase in teacher assessment practices, students' grades increase by 0.41 units on average while assuming all other variables remain constant. The model's goodness-of-fit is high, with an R-squared of 0.6414, meaning that 64.14% of the variability in student grades can be explained by this predictor. The F-statistic of 22.162 and its p-value of 0.0023 confirm that the overall model is statistically significant. Lastly, the Durbin-Watson statistic of 1.9118 indicates minimal auto-correlation in the residuals, which supports the model's reliability.

Conclusion

The study shed light on the assessment practices in the secondary schools of Quetta, Balochistan. The findings revealed that while teachers display a fair level of competence in assessing students' learning, their assessment practices are limited when concerning tasks that require higher thinking and practical skills. The data suggested that current assessment methods primarily focus on foundational knowledge rather than encouraging students to apply concepts at a deeper level. This gap reflects a need for professional development that emphasizes the importance of varied assessment types, especially those that challenge the students to apply knowledge practically and critically.

The study thus underscores the necessity for targeted training programs to expand teachers' assessment skills. The educational outcomes for students could improve if the teachers are equipped with the tools that helps in implementing a broader spectrum of assessment method which are linked to critical thinking and application-based learning objectives. Ultimately, this approach would not only elevate the quality of assessments but also foster a learning environment that supports comprehensive skill development. It shall prepare students more effectively for future academic and professional challenges.

Recommendations

Professional Development and Training for Teachers:

Workshops and Training Sessions: Organize regular professional development workshops focusing on assessment methods, formative assessment strategies, and the use of feedback to improve learning outcomes.

Continuous Support Programs: Implement ongoing support programs that provide teachers with resources and guidance on effective assessment practices.

Integration of Formative Assessment Techniques:

Use of Diagnostic Assessments: Encourage the use of diagnostic assessments at the beginning of each term to identify students' strengths and areas for improvement.

Digital Tools for Assessment: Integrate digital tools and platforms for assessment to streamline the evaluation process and provide instant feedback to students.

Training in Digital Literacy: Provide teachers with training on how to use technology effectively for assessment purposes.

Diverse Assessment Methods: Encourage the use of diverse assessment methods (e.g., projects, presentations, practical tests) to evaluate a wide range of skills beyond traditional written exams.

Focus on Continuous Assessment: Shift towards a continuous assessment approach, reducing reliance on high-stakes exams and promoting a balanced evaluation of students' progress.

Parent-Teacher Collaboration: Establish channels for communication between teachers and parents to share assessment results and collaboratively support students' learning.

References

- Abd Halim, H., Hamzah, M. I., & Zulkifli, H. (2024). Secondary school teachers' conceptions of assessment: A systematic review. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 124, 102311. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2023.102311>
- Brookhart, S. M. (2023). *Classroom Assessment Essentials*. ASCD.
- Bui, H. P., & Nguyen, T. T. T. (2024). Classroom assessment and learning motivation: insights from secondary school EFL classrooms. *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching*, 62(2), 275-300. <https://doi.org/10.1515/iral-2022-0020>
- Constantinou, C., & Wijnen-Meijer, M. (2022). Student evaluations of teaching and the development of a comprehensive measure of teaching effectiveness for medical schools. *BMC Medical Education*, 22(1), 113. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-022-03148-6>
- Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approach* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th ed.). Pearson Education Inc.
- Creswell, J. W. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approach* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Dignath, C., van Ewijk, R., Perels, F., & Fabriz, S. (2023). Let learners monitor the learning content and their learning behavior! A meta-analysis on the effectiveness of tools to foster monitoring. *Educational Psychology Review*, 35(2), 62. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-023-09718-4>
- Hossan, D., Dato'Mansor, Z., & Jaharuddin, N. S. (2023). Research population and sampling in quantitative study. *International Journal of Business and Technopreneurship (IJBT)*, 13(3), 209-222. <https://doi.org/10.58915/ijbt.v13i3.263>
- Kubiszyn, T., & Borich, G. D. (2024). *Educational testing and measurement*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Leavy, P. (2022). *Research design: Quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods, arts-based, and community-based participatory research approaches*. Guilford publications.
- Martinah, M., Putra, A. Y., & Indrawati, S. W. (2023). The Influence of the Independent Learning Curriculum and Teacher's Performance on The Learning Outcomes of Public High School Students in Kayuagung Sub-District. *Journal of Social Work and Science Education*, 4(3), 647-656. <https://doi.org/10.52690/jswse.v4i3.603>
- Mwema, J. N. (2023). *Classroom Assessment Practices in Public Secondary Schools Regarding Academic Performance* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Nairobi).
- Nguyen, A. N., Nguyen, T. P., Kieu, K. T., Nguyen, Y. T. H., Dang, D. T., Singer, J., ... & Lambrechts, W. (2022). Assessing teacher training programs for the prevalence of sustainability in learning outcomes, learning content, and didactic approaches. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 365, 132786. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2022.132786>
- Stantcheva, S. (2023). How to run surveys: A guide to creating your own identifying variation and revealing the invisible. *Annual Review of Economics*, 15(1), 205-234. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-economics-091622-010157>