
INQUIRING ABOUT THE ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES TEACHERS USE FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF INSTRUCTION AT THE SECONDARY LEVEL IN DISTRICT QUETTA BALOCHISTAN

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research study was to identify the formative use of assessment and its contribution to the improvement of instruction in secondary classes in District Quetta. The inquiry about assessment strategies used to enhance secondary-level instruction in District Quetta was the main goal of the study. The other objective was to suggest a potential system of assessment for schools. The researcher conducted a convergent mix design research. A questionnaire for quantitative data and an interview technique for qualitative data were created and used in the secondary schools of the district of Quetta. Thematic analysis was used to examine the qualitative data, while descriptive analysis using SPSS was used to examine the quantitative data. The researcher discovered that teachers employ a variety of assessment methods, tactics, and strategies to enhance instruction. Assessment strategies, observation, tests, classroom discussions, questioning, Quizzes, assignments, writing copies, and exams are prevalent assessment techniques in schools. The researcher made several imperative recommendations that would be very beneficial to secondary school

teachers, researchers, curriculum developers, planners, and legislators in introducing formative use of assessment data to direct instruction in the appropriate direction.

KEYWORDS

Assessment, Formative Assessment, Formative use of assessment, instruction

INTRODUCTION

A learner's experiences and personality are shaped by assessment in classrooms, along with promoting learning. Teachers who appropriately orient their concepts will benefit from using appropriate assessment strategies. It enables teachers to enhance their classroom delivery. The most authentic and effective tool for organizing, planning, managing, and all other crucial policy requirements of education is assessment (Broadfoot, 1990). To acquire a clear picture of students' learning, the assessors use a variety of assessment tools. The researchers discovered that different measures are taken as inputs and outputs for national exams and tests. The school's assessments provide a level of assurance, and teachers strive to meet these measurements' validity (Williams & Paul, 2004). Testing is a useful assessment method for gauging learners' learning and achievement, according to another study. It can be applied for brief periods of learning. The classic method of assessment, the paper-pencil test, is used the most frequently to gauge learners' academic achievement. These tests fail to take into account the student's multidimensional personality and traits. Tests using paper and pencil methods are the sole way to assess a student's memory. The current focus of experts, working on education quality, is the need for better classroom assessment. The need for multidimensional assessment methods is emphasized, and examples including checklists, questions, portfolios, observations, interviews, and performance tools are recommended by many researchers. Instructions can be made better by using the extensive data that multidimensional tools can supply. Teachers can use these tools to get more authentic and trustworthy data regarding the multidimensional elements of the teaching-learning process, which is useful for pedagogical development. These multidimensional assessment strategies will provide in-depth data regarding students' abilities, knowledge, attitudes, and skills (Zubeida, 2006).

The paper-pencil test, observation, continuous assessment, student achievement, and anecdotal records are some of the ways teachers adopted to assess scholars' academic performance. The program's strengths and limitations can understand by using this data. The information also indicates which portions of the program may be kept the same and which ones need to be changed. Additionally, this information can be utilized to make decisions about the planning, implementation, and assessment processes to achieve desired outcomes. According to Linn (1990), assessment is a continual process that a teacher can employ to gather information about a student's academic development by utilizing a variety of tools, including observational checklists,

performance-checking instruments, paper-pencil tests, and project techniques (Linn, 1990). These results showed that teachers use a variety of assessment methods and instructions for grading, value judgment, and instructional improvement.

Another researcher explains that teachers might use a variety of continuous assessment strategies, including observation, tests, and assignments, to understand the level of students learning (Anikweze, 2005). McMillan, (2002) indicated that teachers use several assessment strategies in their lesson instructions. They don't rely solely on one assessment instrument to get information on learning progress. There are different forms of assessment, including standardized tests, tests created by the teacher, and homework assignments. Research finds that there is an ongoing informal assessment to assess the student's behavior, abilities, and efforts in addition to all of these official and objective evaluations (McMillan, 2002). According to researchers, the majority of teachers developed their quizzes, tests, and exam, tools, keeping in mind the goals and strategies of the instructions, which helps them become more skilled at assessment (Empraetall, 1993).

The development of tools, strategies, pans and systems for assessing students' achievements is traced in the history of educational assessment. The primary goal of these kinds of efforts is an improvement. Nearly all of these strategies and methods are used to assess students' accomplishments, and achievements for assessment certificates. The other objective of the assessment is to assess each student individually, as well as assess the effectiveness of the program. The researcher discovers that these assessment measures are used to assess the performance of students, educators, and teachers to improve the quality of schools, teachers' standards, and the educational system (William & Black, 1998).

Theoretical / Conceptual Framework

The "sociocultural constructivist theory of learning," which promotes the formative use of assessment, served as the theoretical framework for this study. The sociocultural constructivist perspective describes the learning process in detail and holds that students develop concepts, knowledge, and understanding via the use of their cognitive processes (Piaget, 1954). This theory emphasizes a cooperative teaching approach. The process of constructing knowledge through teaching involves the teacher acting as a facilitator between the student's learning and objectives and helping them learn, keeping in mind the possibilities for scaffolding (William & Black, 2009). According to the sociocultural constructivist theory of learning, both the teacher and the student are equally accountable for the learning process (Heritage 2010). According to researchers, the teacher is a change agent in society, in the classroom, and the school, and is important to the nation's empowerment (Broad foot, 1998). It is an assessment that, despite being overlooked, played a crucial and essential role in improving the

standard of education.

The following highlights the significance of this research study:

- The relevance, significance, and ramifications of formative assessment to enhance instruction will be more clearly understood by teachers, administrators, and curriculum developers as a result of this research.
- It will strengthen the connections between instructions and assessment.
- It will assist in enhancing the methods and strategies for incorporating the formative use of assessment in structions and guidance.
- It will encourage a culture of integration in the classroom between assessment and other teaching-learning resources.
- It will motivate additional research to focus on the creation of pedagogical strategies for enhancing assessment.
- The research will assist to inform all stakeholders (professionals, curriculum developers school administration, students, and instructors) on the significance of the formative use of assessment and its role in enhancing pedagogical instruction.
- The results of the research study will help to promote and improve the current standard of assessment programs in public and private organizations.
- It could be crucial in improving secondary school students' learning achievement performance..

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

1. To explore the current assessment strategies used for the formative purpose and their use for pedagogical improvement, at the secondary level in District Quetta

RESEARCH QUESTION

1. What assessment strategies are used for the improvement of instruction, in schools at the secondary level in district Quetta?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A convergent parallel mixed method design was used for this particular research study. To obtain both qualitative and quantitative data for this study, interviews and questionnaires with a five-point Likert scale were used. The phrase "mixed research design" refers to research for gathering, analyzing, and combining qualitative and quantitative data in a single study or set of studies to understand a research problem (Creswell & Clark, 2011). The design of convergent (or parallel) mixed-method research is to understand a research problem by simultaneously gathering both quantitative and qualitative data, merging the data, and using the results (Creswell, 2011).

Data Collection & Variables of the Study

The researcher employed two tools, for quantitative data, a Likert scale, and for qualitative data, an interview was used. "Over the years, several methods have been used to measure character and personality traits" (Likert, 1932). "Likert scale is one of the most important and commonly used psychometric tools in educational and social sciences research (Ankur Joshi, Saket Kale, Satish Chandel & D. K. Pal, 2015). Ethnographic interviews have become a generally used qualitative methodology for collecting data; thematic analysis is one such way (Aronson, 1992). Thematic Analysis (TA) is a manageable, flexible, and progressively popular method of qualitative data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2012; Benner, 1985). The five-point Likert-type questionnaire for the survey was used in 20 (10 boys and 10 girls) secondary schools. The number of participants from each school was ten. The researcher developed the questionnaire and interview protocol. For the validity of the questionnaires, the researcher got it checked two Ph.D. scholars and five educational subject specialists of the Bureau of curriculum and extension center Quetta Balochistan. The experts' comments and suggestions were incorporated. Pilot testing for reliability was conducted in 2 schools; 20 teachers were the sample.

The questionnaire was practiced and completed by teachers in front of the investigator. Twenty interviews, one from each school, were conducted with school staff. The survey Likert scale questionnaire consisted of 19 statements. These statements were about the teachers' concept of formative use of assessment for the improvement of instruction. The survey tool was used to determine the formative use of assessment. The interview consisted of essential questions about teachers' perception of assessment, tools, strategies, techniques used by teachers, and formative use of assessment in school practice. Teachers were interviewed face to face. Interviews were recorded and described. Qualitative data were organized and analyzed through SPSS. The statements were analyzed through tables and graphs. Teachers' responses were noted, and then data was interpreted thematically. The qualitative data was evaluated and interpreted through thematic analysis using micro and macro coding and themes. It was interpreted against interview questions and thematically, keeping research objectives and questions in mind. Results were inferred from both quantitative and qualitative data by triangulation procedure. The discussion was elaborated by triangulating quantitative and qualitative data and related research literature.

Population

All 98, 41 Males and 57 Female government secondary school teachers of the Quetta district were the populations, of this research study.

Sampling

A stratified sampling technique and convenience were applied to conclude the research

study sample. In the first strata, 20 schools, ten boys and ten girls, were selected through a simple random sampling procedure. In the second strata ten teachers from each school, teaching secondary level, were selected. Overall, 20 interviews one interview with each school staff were conducted. The researcher collected data from 200 secondary school teachers and interviewed 20 staff. Participants. N= 200

Instruments

Two types of tools were used to collect the data. Questionnaires and interviews were the research tool of the study. The questionnaire consisted of five Likert scales to collect quantitative data. The interview schedule was consisting important questions to collect qualitative data.

Data Collection Procedure

The researcher collected the data personally from the schools. Tools were administrated face-to-face for quantitative data. A 5 Likert scale questionnaire was used to collect government high school boys' and girls' teachers' data personally. The interview was conducted in 20 schools face to face.

Data Analysis procedure

The Quantitative data collected from the respondents were analyzed using SPSS, descriptive statistics. Every statement was analyzed separately and then thematically. The Qualitative data collected from the respondents were analyzed using thematic analysis. Parallel mixed-designed research data analyses involve two separate analysis procedures. Descriptive/inferential statistics are used to analyze quantitative data, and thematic analysis related to the relevant narrative data was used for quantitative data analysis. The analysis is linking/ combined or integrated into meta-inferences (Teddlie, C., & Tashakkori, A, 2009). A parallel mix designed and data analysis techniques remain a popular alternative for mixt research, as indicated by recent examples (Bernardi, Keim, & Lipps, 2007 as cited Tashakkori, A, 2009, p. 268).

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

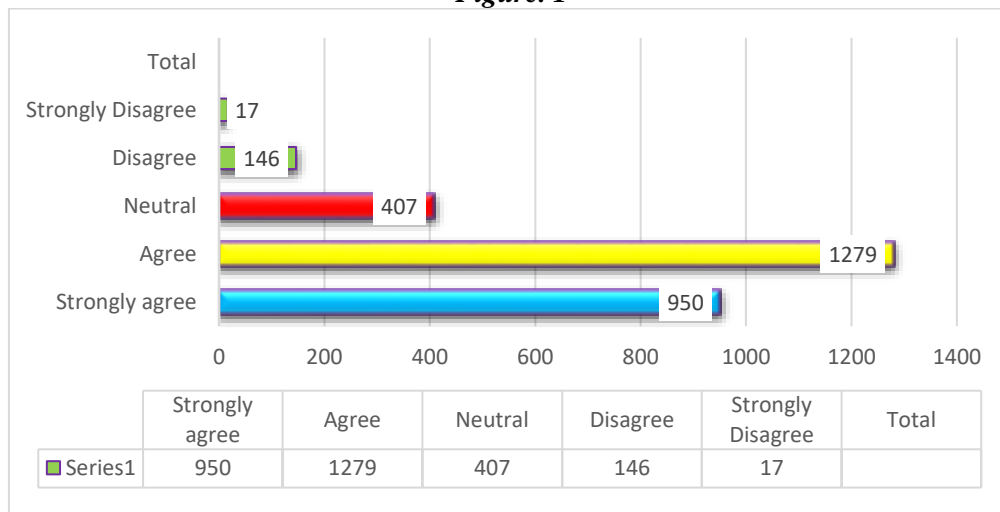
All statements of the Likert scale questionnaire were positive and organized from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The participant responses strongly agree was considered the participant's in-depth knowledge of the formative use of assessment.

Table. 1-B: Current use of assessment strategies, tools, and techniques, in schools

Likert scale	Participant responses	Percentage
Strongly agree	950	33.92%
Agree	1279	45.67%
Neutral	407	14.53%
Disagree	146	5.21%

Strongly Disagree	17	0.60%
Missing	1	0.03
Total	2800	

Figure. 1



The above table shows that most teachers' responses either strongly agree or agree. Out of 2799, 950 strongly agree, and 1279 agree on responses, which showed the degree of Current assessment strategies, tools, and techniques used in schools. Only 407 teachers responded neutrally with very few no's, 146 disagree and, 17 strongly disagreed, one did not respond.

Reliability of Instrument

Table. 3: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.933	44

Reliability is the degree of consistency of a measure. A test is reliable when it gives the same repeated result under the same conditions. The values for reliability coefficients range from 0 to 1.0. A coefficient of 0 means no reliability, and 1.0 means perfect reliability. According to the results, Cronbach's Alpha value is 0.933. This indicates the strong reliability of the instrument.

Quantitative data Findings

Quantitative data shows that most teachers' responses about the most critical assessment strategies, techniques and tools strongly agree or agree. Out of 2799, 950

strongly agree, and 1279 agree responses showed the degree of Current assessment strategies, tools, and techniques used in schools. Only 407 teachers responded neutrally with very few no's 146 are disagree and 17 strongly disagreed, one did not respond. It shows that the majority of teachers are using basic assessment strategies.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Thematic Analysis

Qualitative data were analyzed by using a thematic analysis procedure.

Findings

Data was also analyzed thematically. The critical findings of Teachers' perceptions about formative use of assessment are, the data on the current use of formative assessment and strategies for the improvement perfection of pedagogical practices indicated that Teachers considered Classroom Observation, classroom discussions, questioning, Quizzes, test, and exams to be the prevalent assessment techniques in schools. Copies (regular writing assignments) indicate students' weaknesses and strengths. By completing copies and checking, students learn about their writing skills and mistakes, and then they can improve. The assignment is an assessment strategy to understand students' creativity strengths and weaknesses. Tests and quizzes results in marks and grades indicate students' achievement and cognitive level. Students' interests, abilities, understanding, application, and creativity can be judged by using these techniques. Observation helps teachers to know about student behavior, interest and learning abilities, student capabilities, cognitive and psychomotor skills, as well as the outcomes of planning. The teacher can plan and change their teaching based on assessment data.

DISCUSSION

The current study's findings are consistent with the dominant literature in the field. However, in some places, the findings illuminated the existing literature. Quantitative data shows teachers' agreement, that student assignments, quizzes, observation, and question answers are assessment tools. Likewise, qualitative data also shows that teachers have some basic information about assessment strategies, tools, and techniques. The data provided information that observation, questioning, written test, examination, student assignments, and "copies" are the distinctive assessment strategies teachers use in schools. The teachers' responses also indicated that only a few teachers have some knowledge about the other assessment development and implementation tools and strategies. The respondent understands students' assignments and that it plays an essential role in the development of creative skills, which is an important indicator for continuous assessment. They also viewed that students' collaboration, cooperation, interaction, and helping each other can be understood through assessment by using the observation technique. They agree that

communication between students and teachers can comprehend thorough assessment, as well as student creativity, can be judged through evaluation.

Teachers viewed the observation, tests, assignments, presentations, asking questions observing activities, Presentation, verbal communication, test numbers, and grades to provide data about students' learning. They considered body language, questioning, involvement in the discussion, and dynamic performance are also indicators of students' interest and involvement. Assessment literature supported teachers' views as it is considered by researchers "Continuous assessment suggested beneficial activities for students and instructors to effort in different ways for the accomplishment of the learning program. There are many strategies, tools, and techniques such as observation, tests, and assignments, teachers can use for continuous assessment to achieve learning findings " (Anikweze, 2005).

The above discussion indicated that teachers are aware of the assessment and its kinds of tools, strategies, and techniques. They had clear and comprehensive knowledge about the essential benefits of assessment. They also knew teachers' usage and students' usage of assessment. Their responses to qualitative and quantitated data are similar, enhancing the perception of assessment validity.

The data also provide information on the current use of formative assessment strategies for the perfection of instruction at the secondary level. Data indicated that teachers had information about the assessment strategies and used some essential formative and summative assessment strategies. Teachers' responses are the same and opposite in comparing qualitative and quantitative data. Almost all teachers agree that tests and quizzes, observation, and question answers are the tools of assessment, and observation is the most common tool of assessment used for inclusive learning. Similarly, qualitative data provided information about teachers' beliefs. They indicated that observation helps teachers to know about student behavior, interest, learning behavior, student capabilities, cognitive and psychomotor skills, as well as the outcomes of planning. Teachers are planning and adapting teaching accordingly. Teachers believed that these kinds of techniques could judge students' interests, abilities, understanding, application, and creativity. The literature supports this stance. There is a range of assessment types, just as standardized tests, teacher-made tests, home works, these are formal and objective and informal continuous in nature, to assess student's behavior, skills, efforts and achievements (Mc Millan, 2002)."

The culture of "copy" (assignment) writing, which is typically not regarded as an assessment approach, is another significant part of our institutions. The quantitative and qualitative data provided by instructors support their position that they can assess students' "copies" to understand the reflective writing method, which is important to

improve writing skills and our educational system. Presentations and questioning are assessment strategies, according to the teacher, and they are used in classrooms. This indicates that they both formally and informally use assessment strategies in their classes. Teachers are aware of portfolio development and indicated it is essential for continuous assessment. Surprisingly, instructors claim in quantitative responses that using a portfolio as an assessment technique is an essential component of their school's assessment process. However, there is no support for this claim in the qualitative data. Teachers describe that there is no continuous assessment system and portfolio development in their schools during the post-interview discussion. Similar results were found when using the project as an assessment approach with quantitative data; however, qualitative data and post-interview discussion have not supported this stance.

Teachers used both formal and informal assessment techniques though with a low level of understanding of the importance and usage of data. Classroom observation, questioning, tests, quizzes, “copies” (assignments), and exams, are the most common assessment strategies applied by teachers in schools. Continuous assessment procedures and portfolios are not adopted by schools. The assessment data is used for the improvement of instruction informally by teachers without any proper assessment policy regarding the usage of assessment data.

- 1) To advance the pedagogical process, continuous assessment techniques and a variety of assessment tools must be used.
- 2) The use of appropriate assessment techniques and tools helps guide instruction.
- 3) The chance for self-assessment cannot be offered by conventional tests, such as exams.
- 4) Data about the achievement of instructional objectives as well as achievement of learning outcomes can be obtained through assessment.
- 5) Assessment is the procedure that demonstrates the current judgment, teaches the position, and lays out the course for the following action.
- 6) Useful assessment techniques can be used to evaluate students' engagement, achievement, and knowledge.
- 7) The assessment offers timely and authentic feedback for the improvement of the entire educational process as well as the learning progress of the students.
- 8) Assessment data on learning indicators from observations, tests, questions, and facial expressions assist teachers in assessing the development of their student's learning. Data on students' participation in class—both passively and actively—is also provided.
- 9) The data tools used by students to complete their assignments give information on their engagement and assessment. Through assignments, it is possible to see the level of originality and intelligence among students.

10) Paper and pencil tests give information about the student's writing and cognitive data. Additionally, it offers indicators of students' interests, knowledge, competence, and comprehension. Assessment enables observation of the intellectual levels and individual characteristics of students.

11) The most popular assessment tool in practice, for classifying learners' aptitudes, and levels of knowledge is the exam. Examinations assist teachers in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of their scholars and assist students in choosing the subject for the next session. Exam data offer a comprehensive record of scholars for upcoming decisions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. An efficient training program is required for all instructors to apply the highly technical assessment of formal and informal strategies and techniques employed in the classroom.
2. Students must offer opportunities for self-evaluation so that they can assess their level of motivation, skills, accomplishments, and performance quality.
3. It is vital to change the old teacher-centered and limited assessment system to an authentic and alternative assessment system because "formative use of assessment" is more useful than traditional exams.
4. Instead of using one-dimensional techniques, several assessment techniques must be used.
5. The need for time is the paradigm shift from a critical to a supportive attitude to assessment.
6. During the instructional process, continuous and authentic assessment techniques are beneficial to both students and teachers. Through continuous feedback, it is possible to strengthen the learning process and reinforce the weak areas. Instead of focusing on only one aspect of students' learning as is the case with exams in contemporary schools, continuous assessment uses a variety of assessment techniques to gather information about their multidimensional learning. Continuous assessment must be used to improve the assessment method.
7. To reach precise objectives, standard assessment strategies, tools, and techniques should be created by the learning outcomes of the students.
8. Students are more interested in marks so in the final evaluation the weightage must be given to the learners' assignments, copies, and classroom performance.
9. Assessment kit must be developed.
10. The teachers should receive assistance from the government and organizations in developing acceptable assessment strategies, techniques, and tools for teachers and students.

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