ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN MOROCCO: THE STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS

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Abstract:

Assessment for learning has been a topic of study for decades, with a focus on how learners can benefit from the tests they take. The major issue with this type of assessment is its implementation. This article investigates the benefits of assessment for Moroccan university learners. 1148 of these learners filled out a questionnaire that included questions about the fundamentals of assessment and how it can serve learning purposes. The findings show that although the majority of the learners report that their tests meet the requirements of good tests, some students still doubt this. They also show some good practices of alternative assessment and feedback. However, there is still room for improvement as some students do not benefit from the assessments they take.

Keywords: assessment practices, formative assessment, higher education, student-centered learning

1. Introduction

Assessment has always served teaching and learning purposes. In higher education, it can have different goals depending on the lecturers' objectives. Lecturers assess their students to know how they are progressing, to help them learn better, or to check how much they have learned. Each of these approaches to assessment has a different effect on the learner. Many studies have tackled the issue of assessment from a teaching perspective (e.g. Gulikers *et al.*, 2004; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Popham, 2018; The Manitoba project, 2006; Wiggins, 1990). However, the way the learners interact with assessment, especially in higher education in Morocco, seems unexplored. It is the intent of this article to investigate how Moroccan university students at Hassan II University of

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Casablanca perceive the assessments their lecturers assign and the follow up of the assignments.

This study tries to answer the following research questions:

- What are the Moroccan university learners' perceptions of the quality of the assessment they take?
- To what extent does the assessment in the Moroccan university system serve the learning goals?

2. Literature Review

Delivering classroom inputs may lead teachers to assume that teaching is taking place, but without effective assessment, there would be no evidence that learning has taken place. Well-designed assessment is crucial for determining whether and to what extent learning objectives have been met. Assessments play a significant role in informing education-related decisions; without assessments, decisions would be disinformed, and inaccurate assessments would lead to misinformation. Therefore, making informed decisions necessitates accurate, well-designed assessments. To achieve this, teachers must be equipped with the necessary assessment literacy.

2.1 Assessment Literacy: Components and Operationalization

Prior to the book that Popham published on assessment literacy (2018), the same author advocated the same concept in different articles. In 2009, he argued that assessment literacy is more fundamental than a faddish concept (Popham, 2009). He believes that: *"assessment literacy is a commodity needed by teachers for their own long-term well-being and for the educational well-being of their students."* (p. 11). Later, he urges teacher trainers to help teacher trainees become assessment literate for the benefit of students and instructional improvements (Popham, 2011). He provides a definition of the concept he is advocating: "*Assessment literacy consists of an individual's understanding of the fundamental assessment concepts and procedures deemed likely to influence educational decisions.*" (Popham, 2011, p. 267). With the aim of describing and operationalizing the construct of assessment literacy, he wrote a book in 2018. He outlines six key understandings in his principles of assessment literacy:

- **Validity:** Validity concerns the accuracy of a test's interpretations based on evidence. A test is not inherently valid; validity refers to the strength of the argument supporting the use of a test's results for a specific purpose.
- **Reliability:** This involves the consistency of a test in measuring what it aims to measure. It includes test-retest reliability, alternate-form reliability, and internal consistency reliability.
- **Fairness:** Fairness ensures that a test is free from bias. It involves empirical analyses and judgmental scrutiny to confirm that a test treats all test-takers equitably.

- **Score reporting:** Effective score reporting provides clear, actionable insights that align with the intended use of the test, helping educators make informed decisions.
- **Formative assessment:** This is an instructional process where teachers and students use assessments to adjust learning strategies, significantly enhancing student learning.
- **Affective assessment:** This assesses students' attitudes, interests, and values, which can have a profound impact on their success both during and after their schooling.

The above principles collectively aim to enhance educators' assessment practices, making them more effective and aligned with educational goals. In addition to the above key concepts, this paper covers three more concepts:

Authenticity in assessment refers to the degree to which an assessment mirrors real-world tasks and challenges the students are likely to encounter outside the classroom. Authentic assessments require students to apply their knowledge and skills in a manner that reflects how they would use them in real-life situations. Some examples are: project-based learning, case studies, portfolios, to cite only a few. Wiggins (1990) argues for these types of assessment despite their expenses, time-consuming and labor-intensive corrections.

Gulikers *et al.* (2004) suggest a five-dimension model which aims to align educational assessments more closely with real-world tasks and professional practices. It has five dimensions. First, tasks which should resemble those carried out in professional practice. Such tasks should integrate knowledge, skills, attitudes, complexity, and ownership resembling the criterion task (the real-life professional task). Second, the physical context which should reflect the environment in which the assessment takes place. An authentic assessment environment should mirror the real-life context where professional tasks occur, including the availability of resources and the conditions under which professionals operate. Third, the social context should mirror the practices in the professional context. If professional tasks are collaborative, the assessment should involve collaboration, fostering social interaction and accountability. Fourth, assessment outcomes should be valued in the professional context. This can include reports, presentations, or other deliverables that reflect the standards and expectations of the professional field. The last is related to assessment criteria, which should be derived from professional standards. These criteria should be clear, transparent, and aligned with the expectations of professional practice, ensuring that students understand what is required for success and how their performance is evaluated.

Practicability in assessment refers to the feasibility of implementing an assessment in terms of time, resources, and effort. An assessment must be practical to administer and grade, especially in environments with limited resources or large numbers of students.

Feedback in assessment is the information provided to students about their performance, with the aim of improving their learning. Effective feedback is timely, specific, and actionable, guiding students on how to improve their understanding and skills. Hattie and Timperley (2007) define the concept of feedback, its importance, its

positive and negative effect, and then they suggest a model aiming to reduce discrepancies between current understandings and performance and a desired goal. The model addresses three major questions related to the goals to reach (feed up), the progress toward the goal (feedback), and the activities needed to make better progress (feed forward). The authors then argue that the effectiveness of feedback depends on the level at which it operates: task performance, the process of understanding, regulatory or metacognitive processes, and personal levels unrelated to the specifics of the task. It underscores the importance of tailoring feedback to the appropriate level for it to be effective in reducing the gap between current and desired performance.

2.2 Assessment and Learning

In relation to learning, the Manitoba project (2006) distinguishes between three types of assessment. *Assessment for Learning* is designed to help teachers understand how well students are learning during the instructional process. It is formative, ongoing, and aims to improve student learning by providing feedback that informs teaching strategies. *Assessment as Learning* emphasizes the student's role in assessing their own learning. It encourages students to reflect on their progress, set goals, and regulate their learning. This type of assessment fosters self-monitoring and promotes independence. *Assessment of Learning* is used to evaluate and document what students have learned at the end of an instructional period. This is summative and typically involves grading or certification, providing a final judgment on student achievement. Each type serves a distinct purpose, with the first two focusing on the enhancement of learning and the last on evaluating the outcomes of learning.

Operationally, assessment for learning is defined as follows: "*assessment for learning is the collection and interpretation of assessment information whose intentional use enables teachers and students, acting individually or interactively, to reach decisions that have a positive impact on instruction and learning.*" (Laveault & Allal, 2016, p. 3). Birenbaum (2016) distinguishes between two schools of assessment, assessment culture vs. testing culture, claiming that the schools adopting the former are "*complex, learning-oriented, and student-centered systems, whose aim is to improve teacher practice and student learning*" (p. 287) whereas those adopting the latter are "*test driven and subject-matter centered, concentrating on quantitative comparisons of outcomes rather than trying to understand what caused them*" (p. 288). Andrade and Brookhart (2016) have reviewed the literature on how assessment for learning impacts the students' stages of self-regulated learning, namely goal setting, monitoring progress and revision and adjustment. They also state that students need feedback on both performance and process, while teachers focus more on the former than on the latter. Allal (2016) claims that such an impact should be part of the assessment culture within schools. This culture includes the teachers' beliefs, their assessment practices and their assessment tools. She calls for boosting this culture through co-regulation in its different facets, namely self-regulation, co-regulation, and socially shared regulation.

The most problematic issue in assessment for learning is its implementation. A seminal book (Laveault & Allal, 2016) discusses the different challenges of this

implementation with contributors from different countries. In a review of this book, Wiliam (2018) welcomes the idea because "*the failure of improvements in assessment practice to improve teaching and learning in schools across the world is at least in part due to lack of consistent implementation*" (p. 682), and that "*that progress in implementing better assessment practice in classrooms around the world has not been greater*" (p. 683). The book devotes a section to teacher development, but the contents of its chapters lie beyond this article. Similarly, *The Curriculum Journal* issued a special issue of assessment for learning in 2014. The articles, by researchers from different countries, in this issue report how teachers implement assessment for learning and the degree to which it improves the learning outcomes (Hayward *et al.*, 2014). The complexities of the concepts underpinning assessment for learning and the challenges of its implementation have originally triggered the investigating of this area in the Moroccan higher education system.

2.3 Assessment Literacy in Moroccan Higher Education: The Needed Asset

The challenges that Moroccan open-access higher education institutions face make it difficult to establish effective systematic assessment mechanisms. Three detrimental difficulties are massification, absenteeism and lack of standardized course packs. According to the Higher Council for Education, Training and Scientific Research (Higher Council, 2018), 87% of Moroccan students pursue their university studies in open-access institutions, and the total number of these reached one million and 10.000 students. High student-to-teacher ratios have made providing instant individualized feedback and conducting thorough assessments more difficult, if not impossible. In addition, large student bodies necessitate more resources which institutions cannot afford, such as spacious classrooms and amphitheaters, teaching materials, in addition to faculty. These demands strain open-access institutions' capacity to deliver quality education and assessment. The same official report underscores the high levels of absenteeism, pointing out that a significant proportion of the students registered in open-access institutions are more interested in the scholarship and the "student card" than in pursuing their higher education studies (Higher Council, 2018, p. 43). High levels of absenteeism indicate low levels of engagement on the part of the students. This is very likely to undermine the effectiveness of assessment. By skipping classes, the students may miss critical information, learnings and feedback which assessments are meant to provide. More importantly, absenteeism can compromise the reliability of assessments; it can skew assessment results and make it harder to draw conclusions about students learning and progress. In addition, another challenge open-access higher education is struggling with is the lack of textbooks and course packs. This issue entails that constructive alignment between teaching content, instructional approaches, learning outcomes and assessment is left to the faculties' genuine efforts. Without standardized course materials, students may not have equal access to the information needed to succeed. This can lead to disparities in learning outcomes and negatively affect the equity of education and the fairness of assessment.

What exacerbates the situation is that exams in the Moroccan educational system, both within K-12 and higher education, are at high stake. The national Baccalaureate

exam in Morocco significantly impacts their holders' educational trajectory (Rahhou, 2022). In addition, university graduates' chances to integrate into the labor market or to enroll in MA programs largely depend on their BA grades. To address this issue, there is a need to enhance educational accountability, at least by assuring that student evaluation has an effect on their learning.

3. Methodology of Research

This study investigates the students' perceptions of the assessment they undertake in the open-access institutions in higher education in Morocco. Such institutions accept students without any prerequisites. This type of higher education, unlike regulated-access, is featured with large size classes taught in large auditoria. The average lecturer / student ratio amounts to 106 (MoHE, 2023). The outcomes of the crowded classes and other factors (see Higher Council, 2018 above) result in learners' poor performance. Naturally, the lecturers' monitoring of learning in such conditions is a big challenge, and thus getting the students' voice may help to boost reform.

The research strategy adopted in this study is a survey. A questionnaire was administered to students from different departments (n = 1148) in open-access institutions at Hassan II University of Casablanca. The participants are distributed as follows:

Table 1: Sample Distribution by Department

Department	Participants	Percent (%)
Geography	143	12.5
Arabic Studies	153	13.3
English Studies	459	40.0
Islamic Studies	232	20.2
Economics	64	5.6
French Studies	66	5.7
Philosophy	31	2.7
Total	**1148**	**100.0**

Most of the departments in human and social sciences are represented, though with a diversity of percentages.

3.1 The Questionnaire

As mentioned above, the questionnaire tries to work out the students' perceptions of learning from the assessments they take. It contains items that investigate the learners' perceptions of the quality of assessments they undertake, the effect of assessment on them, how they benefit from feedback, whether they are involved in the correction of their own assessments or their peers, whether they work collectively, and whether they benefit from alternative assessments.

These items are distributed as follows:

Table 1: Items in the Questionnaire

Component	Number of questions	Main objectives of items	Type
Department	1		
Reliability	4	Quality of assessments	Likert scale
Validity	3		
Fairness	4		
Score reporting	3		
Feedback	4	Learning from feedback and scorer.	
Effect on student	2		
Scorer	2		
In-class assignments	6	Traditional vs. alternative assessments	Frequency
Outside class assignments	5		
Assessment administration	4	Assessment administration	
Group or individual projects	2		
Frequency of assignments	1		
Total	**41**		

The figures of the items in the questionnaire are of two types: Likert scale and frequency questions. The former is tallied based on a scale of 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, and 4 = Strongly Agree. These numbers are reversed when the item is negative. Therefore, the higher the score is, the more positive the students are about the item. The same numerical representation is adopted in the items of Frequency with Never = 1, Rarely = 2, Often = 3, and Always = 4. There is no negative question in this pool.

The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the Likert scale items is .79, of frequency questions .85, and of the entire questionnaire .91.

3.2 Data Analysis

The calculations are done using SPSS. The means of the groups of items (see Table 2 above) are calculated, and then descriptive and inferential statistics are performed to compare the different variables. Chi-square calculations are performed to compare the variations across departments.

4. Findings

The findings are reported moving from general to specific, starting from the items that can answer the first research question and then those that can be considered to answer the second. The means of the principles of assessment are displayed in the following table:

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Dev	Variance
Reliability	2.40	.56	.321
Fairness	2.24	.49	.242
Validity	2.14	.54	.297
Score reporting	2.23	.45	.210
Feedback	2.04	.51	.267
Effect	2.15	.62	.384

All the principles of assessment have exceeded the mean of 2 on the scale of 1 to 4. Details (Table 4 below) provide the distribution of degrees of agreement with each principle. The scale calculates this distribution in a range below the mean of 2, 1 to 1.75 = Less existent, 2 to 2.75 = existent, 3 to 4 = very existent.

Table 3: Breakdown of the Descriptive Statistics

	Less existent		Existent		Very existent	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Reliability	176	15.3	724	63.1	248	21.6
Fairness	237	20.6	829	72.2	82	7.1
Validity	293	25.5	734	63.9	121	10.5
Score reporting	186	16.2	875	76.2	87	7.6
Feedback	389	33.9	687	59.8	72	6.3
Effect	258	22.5	696	60.6	194	16.9
Mean	257	22.3	758	66.0	134	11.7

The table above shows that the students believe that, in general, all the principles of an assessment as stated in assessment literacy (Popham, 2018), meet the requirements of a well-designed assessment. However, the three principles that show the effect of assessment on the learners, and by extension, on learning, still need more efforts to align with the others, namely Validity, Feedback and Effect. The latter received high percentages in *Less existent* values and low percentages in *Very existent* ones. Interestingly, it is worth exploring whether the departments differ in this regard.

Table 4: Differences Across Departments

	df	Chi-square	Sig.
Reliability	12	48.33	0.00
Fairness	12	20.28	0.62
Validity	12	19.14	0.08
Score reporting	12	16.29	0.17
Feedback	12	41.17	0.00
Effect	12	26.34	0.01

Table 5 shows that, in addition to the high means of *Less existent* in the previous table, there are some differences across departments. Some departments must make more efforts to align with the others in reliability, feedback, and effect. The discrepancies in the principles happen to be in two variables that are crucial in assessment for learning.

Table 6: Correlation Across the Fundamentals of Assessment

	Reliability	Fairness	Validity	Score reporting	Feedback	Effect
Reliability	1					
Fairness	.268**	1				
Validity	.549**	.327**	1			
Score reporting	.258**	.201**	.273**	1		
Feedback	.569**	.250**	.586**	.306**	1	
Effect	.485**	.196**	.542**	.316**	.604**	1

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The table above shows that despite some weak correlation coefficients, the fundamentals correlate significantly. This implies that the orientation of the students' choices is consistent across the items.

The data processed so far provides evidence to answer the first research question. The students consider the assessments they take to be of fairly good quality. However, the inconsistencies appear in the sensitive questions that concern benefits the learners can draw from such assessments. The data related to the other research question is tackled below.

Table 5: Traditional vs Alternative Assessment

	Traditional		Alternative	
Least frequent	165	14.4	105	9.1
Less frequent	651	56.7	495	43.1
Frequent	329	28.7	525	45.7
Very frequent	3	.3	23	2.0

The lecturers assign both traditional and alternative assessments. The traditional assessments often take place in the classroom, with the lecturer invigilating the students while they take the tests. The number of traditional tests seems less frequent as the lecturers do not give a diversity of tests. The law stipulates that the tests have to be written and happen in the classroom. Apart from written tests, the other tests are less frequent. The differences across the departments are significant. Traditional tests differ from a department to another (X^2 (18, N=1148) = 78.04, p = .002) and so do the alternative ones (X^2 (18, N= 1148) = 81.12, p = .000).

A close look at the alternative tests shows that they are assigned less frequently.

Table 6: Alternative Assessments

	Open task		Portfolio		Journals		Authentic tests		Group projects		Individual projects	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Never	165	14.4	139	12.1	182	15.9	221	19.3	275	24.0	265	23.1
Rarely	415	36.1	404	35.2	385	33.5	469	40.9	589	51.3	537	46.8
Often	414	**36.1**	421	**36.7**	370	32.2	324	28.2	248	21.6	308	26.8
Always	152	13.2	184	16.0	211	18.4	134	11.7	36	3.1	37	3.2

The projects that help learners apply what they learn in the classroom and work collaboratively are rarely assigned, with over 70% admitting they are scarce.

Table 7: Assessors

	Self-assessment		Peer assessment	
	Frequency	**%**	**Frequency**	**%**
Never	242	21.1	160	13.9
Rarely	418	36.4	392	34.1
Often	330	28.7	407	35.5
Always	158	13.8	189	16.5

Table 9 shows that the opportunities for learners to learn from their or their classmates' mistakes are also scarce.

Table 8: Assessment Administration & Feedback

	In-class correction		Technology delivered feedback		Criterion-referenced	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
Never	113	9.8	155	13.5	124	10.8
Rarely	408	35.5	412	35.9	416	36.2
Often	467	40.7	416	36.2	437	38.1
Always	160	13.9	165	14.4	171	14.9

The same rare frequency occurs in the process of assessing. Almost half of the students testify that exam correction and transparency need to improve. Surprisingly, even after the covid when there was a compulsory shift to online teaching and learning, the technologies remain underused.

Table 9: Assigning Mid-term Exams

Never	256	22.3
Rarely	445	38.8
Often	363	31.6
Always	84	7.3

Although the laws call for assigning mid-term exams to draw the learners' attention to their progress, 60% percent of the learners state they rarely or do not take these exams. Therefore, they may not learn from their mistakes.

To answer the second research question, it seems that the opportunities that are likely to make learners learn from their assignments are not frequent. The types of tests, the process of exam taking, the feedback, and the correction need more reforms to boost assessment for learning. Ironically, even traditional tests are underused.

5. Discussion

The study addresses two critical questions regarding the perceptions and effectiveness of assessments in Moroccan universities. First, it investigates how students perceive the

quality of their assessments, and second, it explores the extent to which these assessments support learning goals. The findings reveal that while students generally view their assessments as satisfactory, certain key areas, such as validity, feedback, and the impact on learning, require significant improvement. Traditional, in-class assessments dominate, with limited use of formative practices like self-assessment or peer feedback, which are essential for helping students reflect on their progress and apply learned knowledge.

Before embarking on the discussion of these findings, it is noteworthy that research supports the importance of formative assessments in enhancing student learning outcomes. Studies like Yazidi's (2023) show that formative assessment practices increase engagement, motivation, and retention. Despite this, systemic, institutional, and teacher-related barriers continue to hinder their widespread adoption in Moroccan open-access universities.

Systemic issues, such as the high-stakes nature of exams, which significantly influence students' academic and professional futures, give impetus to both parents' and learners' skepticism about alternative forms of formative assessment, believing that focusing on traditional assessment better prepares students for their summative assessment (Kasmi & Anasse, 2023). This conviction often pushes educators towards exam-centric approaches rather than meaningful learning. Additionally, open-access schools host the overwhelming majority of higher education students (MoHE, 2023). Consequently, overpopulated classrooms and the high students-to-teacher ratio further obstruct the implementation of formative assessments, as faculty members face challenges in providing individualized feedback and encouraging student interaction. Worst of all, giving feedback seems to be a chronic issue in higher-education assessment practices, as this issue was raised in previous studies, which underscored its detrimental effects on students' learning, motivation and trust in academic honesty (e.g. Baghit *et al.*, 2024).

Institutional factors, particularly the lack of technological infrastructure, also play a role. While platforms like Moodle and Canvas can alleviate the burden of grading and facilitate formative assessments, open-access institutions often lack the necessary resources and faculty training to implement these technologies effectively. In line with this approach, Zaibout *et al.* (2024) reported open-access campuses' lack of digital infrastructure. Without access to modern educational tools, both teachers and students remain reliant on traditional face-to-face instruction and assessments.

Teacher-related barriers also contribute significantly to the problem. Many faculty members lack assessment literacy, which makes the adoption of alternative assessment methods difficult. Teachers' familiarity with traditional practices may resist change due to their unfamiliarity with alternative assessment and its potential for transforming students' learning (e.g. Bouziane, 2017; Kasmi & Anasse, 2023; St-Amand *et al.*, 2022; Yazidi, 2023). In addition, many teachers lack digital literacy. During the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, online teaching primarily consisted of sharing static materials rather than engaging students with interactive, formative assessment opportunities (Zaibout *et al.*, 2024). The gap between rapidly advancing technologies and slower

pedagogical adaptation, as noted by the authors, highlights the need for targeted professional development to bridge this divide.

5.1 Implications

The findings of this study have several important implications for the Moroccan higher education system, particularly in terms of assessment practices and their impact on student learning outcomes. The implications can be divided into three key areas: policy, institutional practices, and teacher professional development.

5.2 Policy Implications

The results of this study indicate the need for a shift in assessment policies at the national level. The current emphasis on high-stakes exams, which predominantly determine students' academic and professional futures, undermines the adoption of more formative and student-centered assessment methods. Policymakers should reconsider the balance between summative and formative assessments to ensure that assessments not only evaluate learning but also enhance it. Revisiting the weight of final exams in students' academic trajectories and promoting alternative, competency-based assessments would allow for a more comprehensive evaluation of students' skills and knowledge.

5.3 Institutional Practices

At the institutional level, universities must take steps to create environments that are conducive to modern assessment practices. This involves not only improving technological infrastructure but also promoting a culture of continuous feedback and formative assessment. Open-access institutions, in particular, need to invest in multimedia classrooms, reliable internet access, and digital learning platforms such as Moodle or Canvas. Additionally, smaller class sizes or alternative teaching methods, such as blended learning, could help alleviate the pressure on faculty, making it more feasible to implement formative assessments that provide valuable feedback to students.

5.4 Teacher Professional Development

The study highlights a critical gap in assessment literacy and digital proficiency among faculty members, which impedes the integration of alternative assessment methods. Therefore, teacher training programs should be prioritized to equip educators with the necessary skills to adopt formative assessments and use technology effectively in their teaching. Professional development should focus not only on ICT literacy but also on how to design and implement assessments that foster learning, encourage self-reflection, and improve student outcomes. By empowering teachers with the right tools and knowledge, institutions can shift towards more student-centered assessment approaches that promote active learning and deeper understanding.

5.5 Student-centered Learning

The limited use of formative assessments, peer feedback, and self-assessment observed in the study suggests a missed opportunity to engage students more actively in the

learning process. Institutions should explore ways to involve students more deeply in their own learning journey through assessments that encourage reflection and growth. This could include incorporating more collaborative projects, portfolios, and reflective essays, which provide students with the chance to learn from their mistakes and continuously improve. By emphasizing learning as an ongoing process rather than a one-time measurement, students are more likely to stay engaged and motivated throughout their academic experience. It is this approach to learning that the challenges of the 21st century demand. Otherwise, students will fail to cope with the requirements of the automation age.

5.6 Equity and Access

The study also reveals disparities in access to digital tools and resources, particularly in open-access institutions, where students may lack the necessary technology for effective digital learning and assessment. Addressing these inequities is critical for ensuring that all students, regardless of their socio-economic background, have equal opportunities to benefit from modern educational practices. Open-access institutions should consider providing students with greater access to digital resources, such as computers, internet access, and online learning platforms, in order to bridge the digital divide and support more equitable learning outcomes.

6. Conclusion

This study reveals significant gaps in open-access Moroccan university assessment practices, particularly in areas like feedback, validity, and their impact on learning. While students perceive assessments as generally satisfactory, traditional, exam-oriented methods dominate, limiting opportunities for deeper learning and reflection. Systemic, institutional, and teacher-related barriers—such as reliance on high-stakes exams, overcrowded classrooms, and insufficient digital resources—impede the adoption of formative assessments. To address these issues, reforms in policy, investment in technology, and enhanced teacher training are necessary to create a more student-centered, effective assessment system that better supports learning outcomes and prepares students for future challenges.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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