

## Assessment Strategies Used by University Instructors

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**ABSTRACT:** *This study aimed to investigate the assessment practices and challenges encountered by instructors when evaluating students in the College of Sharia Sciences at Tripoli University. Qualitative methods, including the distribution of questionnaires to instructors, were employed in the research. The findings indicated that instructors utilized a variety of assessment methods, which were selected based on the educational context and the instructors' perspectives. Some instructors favored formative assessment methods, while others relied on summative approaches. However, certain obstacles were identified, such as student disengagement in assessment activities, language proficiency issues, and limited use of technology. Instructors provided recommendations to improve the assessment system, such as introducing new assessment techniques, integrating technology, and considering student feedback to address any deficiencies.*

**KEYWORDS:** assessment strategies, assessment practices and obstacles, university instructors.

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## INTRODUCTION

Assessment is an essential component that contributes to improving the teaching and learning process. It is a major part of educational institutions which provides comprehensive information about the overall learning development of the teachers and students' performance in the educational settings (Saeed, 2018). In this study, assessment is defined as the use of instruments (e.g., a test or homework assignment) and processes (e.g., asking questions and classroom conversations) for gathering evidence about student learning (Eggen, 2015; Stobart, 2008). Assessment plays a vital role in the educational field in a way that enables educators to determine the progress and success of the learners after being exposed to the learning activities for a certain period, and the success rate of the program (Taras, 2005; Widiastuti, 2016). Hence, assessment is important for educational guidance, counseling, and for identifying the learners' needs.

Assessment can be in the form of formative and summative assessments. Formative assessment is conducted to enhance the teaching-learning practices, meanwhile, summative assessment is intended to measure the students' learning achievement in a specific period of time (Shepard, 2005; McMillan, Venable, and Varier, 2013; Widiastuti, 2016). Assessment is conducted by using a variety of strategies including paper-pencil test, portfolios, projects, oral conversation, observation, and interviews (Berry,

2010). In the context of Libyan universities, assessors tend to adopt some strategies for measuring the learners' performance, like; homework, tests, quizzes, exams, presentations, research papers, and discussions, however, Some Libyan academic instructors largely depend on examinations to measure their students' learning levels which may not be sufficient by themselves. In the academic field, students are still meant to memorize for passing the examinations and get scores rather than to learn for getting benefits from the learning outcomes to be applied and functioned in the real life. The current study is going to reveal more strategies used by academic assessors and investigate the efficiency of those strategies in measuring the students' performance in Libyan universities, in addition, the study is going to provide insights about the obstacles instructors face when assessing students.

### **Research problem:**

Based on the researchers' own experience, most assessment practices do not effectively reflect the exact ability of the students, and thus do not meet the students' expectations or needs. Academic assessment system depends more on grades, and students' learning level cannot be merely judged through grades since grades do not represent the students' actual potential. In the academic field, assessment tools need to achieve more validity, reliability and practicality.

### **Aim of the study:**

This study is carried out to identify and analyze the instructors' assessment practices, and identify the obstacles faced in assessing students in Sharia Sciences classrooms.

### **Research questions:**

The research questions are formulated based on the research aim:

- 1- What are the assessment strategies used by the instructors of Sharia Sciences Collage?
- 2- To what extent do the assessment strategies the instructors use are effective in assessing students' performance?
- 3- What are the possible challenges instructors encounter in using such assessment strategies?

### **Significance of the study**

This study is an attempt to raise Libyan instructors' awareness about the assessment strategies used in the academic field. It will also highlight the efficiency of assessment strategies and the obstacles instructors encounter in using these strategies.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

A teaching and learning process mainly consists of three interrelated elements such as teaching, learning, and assessment. Assessment is an integral part of an educative process, It helps in the formulation, monitoring, directing towards and reviving the goals and objectives of the programs (Arrekkuzhhiyil, 2019). Assessment is a process of acquiring and providing essential information to make an alternative decision on the improvement of teaching and learning practices. Therefore, each assessment activity is a process that deliberately planned to obtain information or data and based on the data and then a decision is made. In relation to learning activities, assessment is a systematic process to determine decisions to what extent learning objectives have been achieved by learners

(Nespor, 1987; Newton, 2007; Shepard, 2005.). According to Webber and Tschepikow (2012), assessment of students' learning outcomes is a significant component of effective teaching and learning in any educational institutions. Van den Akker (2003) described assessment as essential component of the curriculum practice. According to him, assessment is a process for obtaining information about curriculum operation in order to make decisions about student learning, curriculum and programmes and on education policy matters. Knight (2006) defined assessment as the formation of judgements on the quality of students' achievement. Carless, Joughin, & Mok, (2006); Gibbs & Simpson (2004) perceived assessment as a mechanism to inform students about their learning performance and how they can improve on their learning outcomes. Boud and Falchikov (2006) also pointed out that assessment can have powerful effects on what students do and how they do it, communicates to them what they can and cannot succeed in doing and builds or undermines their confidence as learners.

### **Importance of assessment**

The importance of assessment can be categorized into four functions, namely (a) to know the progress and development and success of learners after experiencing the learning activities for a certain period of time. The results of this assessment can then be used to improve the way the students learn (formative function), and to determine the class improvement or to determine whether or not a learner passes from a particular educational curricular (summative function); (b) to know the success rate of the learning program (Taras, 2005; Widiastuti, 2016). Learning as a system consists of several components that are related to each other. The components include the objectives, learning materials, methods and activities of teaching and learning, learning media and resources, and assessment procedures and instruments; (c) for guidance and counseling, especially to find out what matters a learner or group of learners require in remedial services, as a basis for dealing with specific cases among learners; and as a reference in serving the needs of learners in the context of career guidance; (d) for the development and improvement of the school curriculum. This is related to the activities of teachers in conducting evaluation activities to assess the success of learners learn and assess the learning program, which means also assess the achievement of competencies set in the curriculum (McMillan, Venable, and Varier, 2013, Widiastuti, 2017).

### **Types of assessment**

Formative assessment, also known as assessment for learning, is a major source for improvement of students' learning (Clark, 2010; Eyal, 2012; Johannesen, 2013). William and Thompson (2008) stated that many terms are used for formative assessment and discussed some other types of assessing students' learning like monitoring assessment, diagnostic assessment, and formative assessment. In monitoring assessment different activities or actions are monitored which is related to educational learning process like for teacher strategies for assessing students' skills and knowledge, students learning abilities which teacher promotes in classroom, or all those activities which are designed and planned in classroom for effective teaching learning process. It facilitates the effectiveness of the whole education system and provides guidelines or instructions where the mistakes are found in effective teaching learning process and how to overcome these learning difficulties during session. Whereas diagnostic assessment provides detailed information about learning difficulties of learners and provides remedies, how to solve their learner difficulties which they have faced in learning process. The question discussed in diagnostic assessment is what is going wrong and how to overcome

these learning difficulties? However, in formative assessment, the question is dealt with that what to do about it? The students in formative assessment are actively engaged, because of the reasons that are collecting students' data step by step to improve their learning progress (William, 2011).

Summative assessment is taken at the end of session, and it is used for decision making process because it provides comprehensive information about whole session what teacher have taught and what students have learned during whole session (Wojtczak, 2002). Summative assessment is to provide detailed information about student or teacher learning activities after the completion of session or study period (Anthony & Susan, 2005). Summative assessment facilitates decision makers and policy makers about the current performance of the teaching learning process.

### **Common assessment tools**

The following sections describe six assessment tools shown to impact the teaching and learning process: 1) Rubrics, 2) Performance-based assessments (PBAs), 3) Portfolios, 4) Student self-assessment, 5) Peer-assessment, 6) Student response systems (SRS). Although the list does not include all innovative assessment tools, it includes what we think are the most common ones that may be particularly relevant to the educational context of developing countries. Many of the assessment tools currently in use fit under one or more of the categories discussed. Furthermore, it is important to note that these tools also overlap in a variety of ways.

#### ***Rubrics***

Rubrics are both a tool to measure students' knowledge and ability as well as an assessment strategy. A rubric is a set of criteria that articulates expectations and describes degrees of quality along a continuum (Andrade, Ying, & Xiaolei, 2008; Rezaei & Lovorn, 2010; Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). The rubric is not only utilized in conjunction with summative assessments; it is a tool that can enhance the entire learning process from start to finish by serving several purposes including communicating expectations for an assignment, providing focused feedback on a project still in process. Additionally, they encourage self-monitoring and self-assessment and give structure for a final grade on a product (Andrade, et al., 2008; Lee & Lee, 2009; National Research Council, 2002). A rubric allows teachers to measure certain skills and abilities not measurable by standardized testing systems that assess discrete knowledge at a fixed moment in time (Reeves & Stanford, 2009). Rubrics are considered "inclusive assessment tools" that can be used as class-wide assessment tools to help students at all levels make meaningful progress towards curricular goals (Lee & Lee, 2009).

#### ***Performance-based Assessments***

Performance-based assessments (PBA), also known as project-based or authentic assessments, are generally used as a summative evaluation strategy to capture not only what students know about a topic, but if they have the skills to apply that knowledge in a "real-world" situation. PBA pushes students to synthesize their knowledge and apply their skills to a potentially unfamiliar set of circumstances that is likely to occur beyond the confines of a controlled classroom setting (Palm, 2008). Some examples of PBA include designing and constructing a model, developing, conducting, and reporting on a survey, carrying out a science experiment, writing a letter to the editor of a

newspaper, creating and testing a computer program, and outlining, researching and writing an in-depth report (Darling-Hammond & Pecheone, 2009; Wren, 2009).

### ***Portfolio Assessment***

Portfolios are a collection of student work gathered over time that is primarily used as a summative evaluation method. It highlights student effort, development, and achievement over a period; portfolios measure a student's ability to apply knowledge rather than simply regurgitate it. They are considered both student-centered and authentic assessments of learning (Anderson & Bachor, 1998; Barootchi & Keshavarz, 2002). Portfolios are one of the most flexible forms of assessment because they can be effectively adapted across subject areas, grade levels and administrative contexts (i.e. to report individual student progress, to compare achievement across classroom or schools, and to increase parent involvement in student learning) (Sweet, 1993; National Research Council, 2002). The portfolio acts as a repository for work assigned and completed throughout the year. It does not necessitate additional tests or writing assignments. The content included in the portfolio, along with who chooses what to include, vary by the teacher and the learning goals associated with the portfolio. Some portfolios only include final products, while other portfolios will incorporate drafts and other process documents. Some will contain items chosen exclusively by the teacher, while others will fold in input from the student, their peers, administrators and even parents. When the portfolio is well integrated into a teacher's instructional practices, it can function as a strategy to increase student learning across a variety of subject areas.

### ***Self-Assessment***

While the previous assessment tools and strategies listed in this report generally function as summative approaches, self-assessment is generally viewed as a formative strategy, rather than one used to determine a student's final grade. Its main purpose is for students to identify their own strengths and weaknesses and to work to make improvements to meet specific criteria (Andrade & Valtcheva, 2009). According to McMillan and Hearn (2008) "self-assessment occurs when students judge their own work to improve performance as they identify discrepancies between current and desired performance" (p. 1). In this way, self-assessment aligns well with standards-based education because it provides clear targets and specific criteria against which students or teachers can measure learning. Self-assessment is used to promote self-regulation, to help students reflect on their progress and to inform revisions and improvements on a project or paper (Andrade and Valtcheva, 2009).

### ***Peer Assessment***

Peer assessment, much like self-assessment, is a formative assessment strategy that gives students a key role in evaluating learning (Topping, 2005). Peer assessment approaches can vary greatly but, essentially, it is a process for learners to consider and give feedback to other learners about the quality or value of their work (Topping, 2009). Feedback that students are asked to provide can confirm existing information, identify, or correct errors, provide feedback on process, problem solutions or clarity of communication (Butler & Winne, 1995). Peer assessments can be used for a variety of products like papers, presentations, projects, or other skilled behaviors. Peer assessment is understood as more than only a grading procedure and is also envisioned as teaching strategy since engaging in the process develops both the assessor and assesses skills and knowledge (Li, Liu, & Steckelberg, 2010; Orsmond & Merry, 1996). Thus, it is associated with performance gains and cognitive gains for

students who receive feedback and for students as they give feedback. Peers are generally defined as students of equal status in that they are in a similar grade and similar levels of proficiency with content, although there is often flexibility and slightly older students may assess younger students, or a student moving more quickly through the material may be asked to assess a less advanced student.

### ***Student Response Systems***

Student response system (SRS), also known as classroom response system (CRS), audience response system (ARS) or colloquially as “clickers,” is a general term that refers to a variety of technology-based formative assessment tools that can be used to gather student-level data instantly in the classroom. Through the combination of hardware (handheld clickers, receiver, PC, internet connection, projector and screen) and software, teachers can ask students a wide range of questions (both closed and open-ended), students can respond quickly and anonymously, and the teacher can display the data immediately and graphically. The value of SRS comes from teachers analyzing information quickly and then devising real-time pedagogical solutions to maximize student learning (Beatty & Gerace, 2009; Bruff; Caldwell, 2007).

What makes SRS distinct from other assessment tools is its ability to collect and display data instantly rather than waiting days to present the outcome as with a test, essay, or project. SRS has been found to be effective across grade levels and in a variety of subject areas (Beatty & Gerace, 2009; Bruff, 2007; Caldwell, 2007; Rochelle, et al., 2004). Some general examples of effective SRS questions include given a graph, match it with the best description or interpretation; match the method of analysis with a particular data set; sort ideas or steps into the correct order; or apply a familiar idea to a new context.

### **Problems of assessment:**

Black and William (2004) identified three main problems in assessment practices in higher learning institutions which were, the current assessment methods used by instructors are ineffective in fostering positive learning outcomes. Grading practices often prioritize competition rather than personal growth, and the feedback provided, if any, can have a negative impact, especially on low-achieving students who may develop a belief that they lack ability and are incapable of learning. Diamond (1998) described the fundamental problem in assessment practices of higher education courses as the mismatch between the learning targets established and the methods and criteria instructors use to judge and grade the students. According to him, ‘in most cases, the learning goals include higher-order reasoning abilities, but the assessment procedures most frequently used focus on simple recall and recognition of the learned content’.

According to Black and William (1998), assessment practices in higher learning institutes have been criticized for putting a premium on the reproduction of knowledge and passivity of mind at the expense of critical judgement and substantive competence.

### **Assessment in the Libyan context:**

A study on how secondary school Libyan teachers assess students’ oral communication was conducted by Alfourganee (2018). The primary focus of the study was to explore the assessment processes Libyan English language teachers use in assessing communicative competence. It was also intended to raise

awareness to the authorities and stakeholders such as students, teachers, and decision makers of the importance of assessment in general and assessing oral communication in particular. Data was collected through a mixed-method approach using questionnaires, observations, and interviews to evaluate the perceptions and views of students and their teachers regarding assessment practice.

Based on the results, it was found that both teachers and students had concerns about the assessment and there was an argument for moving from employing the old traditional process of assessment, to new assessment practice that helps in understanding the progress that students achieved and how it can be improved. For example, they suggested that in order to transfer what teachers' views were about the effectiveness processes for assessing students' learning, assessment should not be done only at the end of the year to measure students' achievements. Instead, students ought to be examined or assessed on a regular basis using different assessment procedures. "Assessment methods and approaches need to be focused on evidence of achievement rather than the ability to regurgitate information" (Brown, 2004, p. 82). Teachers and students also believed that the teacher's role was to facilitate and guide students' learning. However, the teachers' focus on completing the content of the textbook in the limited time available and the need for summative assessment, affects the implementation of the assessment activities that incorporate students to participate in assessment. The variety of activities used can attract students' attention to make their learning task more interesting and beneficial. This could be achieved through establishing an appropriate environment and positive atmosphere in which students feel secure and encouraged to take part in the learning process.

Another study concerning the assessment beliefs and practices of Libyan secondary school English language teachers was conducted by (Abdalla, 2020). The study aimed to investigate the Libyan teachers' classroom-based assessment beliefs and practices and the relationship between them. For this purpose, a total of 90 Libyan English teachers participated in a survey by responding to a questionnaire which explored their beliefs and practices in the four stages of assessment: namely, planning, implementing, monitoring and recording. Based on their perceptions, other than their confusion over ethical matters in assessment, the teachers' beliefs and practices generally seemed to be at an acceptable level. The results also demonstrated that the relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices is positively moderate and significant in all stages of assessment.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Context and participants:**

This study was conducted in the context of academic education specifically in Sharia Sciences College at Tripoli University. The participants who contributed to the study were 30 Libyan instructors who were randomly selected and are aged differently with varied teaching experience.

### **Study design:**

This analytical study utilized a qualitative tool to gather participants' perspectives and provide comprehensive responses to the research questions. An open-ended questionnaire was employed to gather detailed data on the assessment strategies employed by academic instructors in the College of Sharia Sciences. All questionnaire items were designed to align with the study objectives and address the research questions effectively.

## **Data analysis**

Semi-structured interview was the original data collection method that the researchers intended to use in this study. Unexpectedly, the participants expressed their unwillingness to go for the interview and preferred to provide their responses in writing. Therefore, a list of open-ended questions was prepared; all the arrangements were made to meet the instructors individually to give them the questions to be answered. The aim of the interview is to find out the assessment methods used by the instructors in the College of Sharea Sciences and the challenges they may face. The data gathered was qualitatively analyzed, then organized and classified into four themes as illustrated below:

### **Assessment methods used by the instructors.**

The participants were asked about the assessment methods they use in assessing their students, and various responses were received. For example, some instructors use short quizzes, mid and final exams to assess their students' achievement throughout the semester. Small projects and research papers were also utilized by some of the participants. Only a few uses oral exams and homework to assess their students' performance. Although there are different assessment methods used by the participants in this study as mentioned above, none of them has utilized other formative assessment tools such as self and peer assessment, think -pair and share or reflection. However, the participants' opinions differed regarding the assessment methods they use with their students. Some of them emphasized the effectiveness of traditional mid and final exams while others underestimate the value of such exams because they do not reflect the students' actual performance. They added that there are some students who rarely participate in the classroom, but they got very high marks in the mid and final exams.

On the other hand, some participants assume that summative assessments are the only assessment methods available according to the University of Tripoli rules. They added that summative assessments are the fairest method that can be used in evaluating students, but it should not be the only one. Other instructors stated that summative assessments are the easiest methods of assessment that can be applied with a big number of students and where the necessary facilities are unavailable. They also added that this kind of assessment enforces students to study and does not cost much and is easy to correct. Three instructors think that this type of assessment is the best and the most accurate method of assessment to check students' understanding in the absence of creative teachers. In addition, since the method of teaching as well as the nature of the curriculum focus on students' achievement, summative assessment could be the most suitable way of assessing students. Lack of other assessment tools as well as lack of time are among the reasons behind using this type of assessment at the college. Similarly, two participants argued that summative assessments correspond to the traditional methods of teaching used by some university instructors which mainly focus on providing students with theoretical information such as terms, concepts, and rules. Finally, some participants mentioned that they are required to follow the rules of the university, therefore they have little room to implement other assessment methods.

### **Impact of the assessment methods on students' performance**

Regarding the impact of the assessment methods on students' performance, most of the participants in this study agreed that assessment is very essential as it gives an indication about the students' achievements throughout the semester. They also think that assessments enforce students to study hard and revise what they have learnt regularly, because some students study for exams only. Other participants stated that if the assessments are valid and reliable and not bias, constructive feedback for

students about their acquisition of the material covered in class can be received and it also gives an idea to the instructors that could help them to re-evaluate their ways of teaching or the learning activities they use in class. Two participants wrote that the scores that students get could affect their performance either positively or negatively, the way of correcting the papers and the feedback provided by the instructor could also impact the students' performance. Other participants elaborated that the level of impact depends on the student's seriousness and the psychological stress that the student went through during the exam and after getting the marks. They added that the type of questions could play a role in the level of impact. For example, if the assessment is focusing only on short answers or true and false questions, this would limit the students' thinking skills and encourage them to rely on memorization. Furthermore, four participants demonstrated that if the assessments are differentiated and well designed, they could create a kind of competition among students and encourage them to generate their own ideas and show their learning abilities.

### **Challenges instructors encounter in assessing their students.**

Among the challenges that some participants stated are a lack of seriousness on the part of some students in answering the questions of the exam whereas other students feel shy to participate in the classroom. Other participants wrote that lack of facilities such as written resources, lack of technology and the large number of students prevented them from using more advanced assessments tools. Two instructors stated that poor language is a big challenge for many students as they cannot deliver their responses clearly. Similarly, instructor (13) demonstrated that lack of understanding the questions, low level of students and poor handwriting are the most striking challenges. Whereas instructors (5 & 7) argued that relying on cut and paste in carrying out projects and writing research papers and plagiarism are some of the common challenges they encounter. Missing exams by some students, lack of clear criteria and rubrics for evaluating students are among the challenges faced by instructors (8 & 12). Finally, other participants mentioned that lack of students' interest and preparation are common challenges faced by the instructors when assessing their students.

### **Recommendations for improvement the assessment methods**

The responses showed that helping students to be aware of the assessment procedures and making the assessment instructions clear and understandable are the most important issues that instructors should consider. Changing exams rules and regulations and implementing them strictly are among the solutions given by instructors (4, 8 & 9) to minimize the impact of the challenges they encounter. Other participants stated that changing the methods of teaching, reviewing the curriculum, and focusing on the application of the information rather than memorizing it on the day of the exam are among the strategies that decision makers should work on. Seeking students' feedback about the exams they took, giving them another chance to do the exam and using technology could help in reducing the challenges that some instructors face.

Three participants stated that other assessment methods should be utilized such as open book exam, open discussion, debates among students. Other participants assumed that more focus should be placed on practical tests, oral assessments, writing research papers and portfolios. Moreover, students' professional commitment and cancelling the five marks that are usually added to students to pass the course should also be re-considered. Participants (2, 7 & 9) suggested that, after finishing the written exam, students should go for an oral exam which should carry at least half of the mark. This would

encourage students to demonstrate their understanding and their ability to apply what they have already studied. It also gives the instructors the opportunity to explore their students' talents and presentation skills and to reduce the chances of plagiarism.

Most of the participants stated that helping teachers to be aware of the different assessment methods and their goals must be the starting point to improve the instructors' assessment skills. They added that teachers should be provided with effective training on designing and using different assessment tools including digital assessments and forming committees to moderate the exams before applying them. Finally, the university should seek help from more experienced universities and institutions in this field and more cooperation among instructors should be emphasized.

## **DISCUSSION**

In the light of recent findings, valuable data were gained to enrich the undertaken study with new supportive facts. The participants' responses were diverse concerning the assessment method adopted in their teaching system. Some instructors assured their dependence on the formative assessment tools during the academic year using tests exams and projects for assessing their students' performance, on the other hand, other instructors maintained the utility of summative assessment rather than the formative one, the participants preferred summative assessment as it is considered as more accurate and the easiest method that can be applied with big number of students. Besides that, it motivates students to study, saves time and does not demand facilities for assessing students' performance. According to some instructors, summative assessment matches the traditional methods that focus on the theoretical input where the students acquire conceptual knowledge.

Concerning the assessment impact on the students' performance, It was assured by the majority of the instructors that assessment is crucial to trace the students' academic development during the academic year, this goes in line with Taras, (2005) and Widiastuti, (2016) who stated that assessment help to know the progress and development and success of learners after experiencing the learning activities for a certain period of time. Assessment renders the students more aware to study and memorize. However, some instructors assume that the level of impact relies on the students' effort and the psychological circumstances the students go through during and after the exam. In addition, assessment allows the instructors to determine whether to keep using the same current method of teaching or adopt another teaching method. Assessment assists in evaluating the students' performance, nevertheless, not any assessment method can determine the real performance of the students. Therefore, instructors should adopt different assessment methods to gain sufficient information about the students' academic performance.

There are certain obstacles instructors encounter when assessing students. The unwillingness of some students to answer the exam and to take part in preparing the lessons ,and some students feel shy and hesitant to participate in the classroom activities, this is also maintained by Black and William (2004) who identified three main problems in assessment practices in higher learning institutions which were, the assessment methods that instructors use are not effective in promoting good learning; grading practices tend to emphasize competition rather than personal improvement and assessment feedback, if at all exists often has negative impact particularly on low-achieving students who are led to believe that they lack ability and so are not able to learn. The large number of students and lack of technology

and facilities inside the classroom. The poor language and poor handwriting of students, and their disability to understand the questions are among the reasons provided by the instructors.

Certain recommendations for improving the assessment methods were provided by the instructors. Familiarizing the students with the assessment instructions and methods. Adopting new assessment procedures for encountering the existing challenges. Concentrating on the practical side more than the theoretical one. Considering the students' feedback about the exams and integrating technology could assist in developing the assessment procedures. Utilizing open book exams, open discussions and debates, oral assessment, portfolios, and writing research papers are among the assessment methods suggested by some instructors. If the instructors and the decision makers take into consideration the above-mentioned recommendations better results will be noticed in the assessment system.

## CONCLUSION

This study aimed to identify and analyze the instructors' assessment practices, and identify the obstacles faced in assessing students in the College of Sharia Sciences. To achieve these goals a set of questions via qualitative design were distributed to some instructors from the College of Sharia Sciences. The research findings showed that various assessment methods were utilized by the selected instructors. The selection of the assessment method differs according to the educational context and the instructors' viewpoint, some instructors depended on the formative assessment methods while other instructors relied on the summative assessment methods. The latter maintained the role that summative assessment does in terms of saving time, being more accurate and easier than the formative one. Moreover, many of the instructors assured us of the vital role that assessment - in general- has in improving the process of teaching and learning alike.

However, there are many obstacles instructors encounter when assessing students. These obstacles are related to the unwillingness of the students to participate in the classroom activities and to study for the exams. The large number of students with poor language performance and lack of using technology are among the obstacles faced by the instructors. Thus, a set of recommendations were provided by the instructors. These recommendations are meant to develop and improve the assessment system. Familiarizing the students and the instructors with new assessment methods, integrating technology in the assessment system, taking into account students' feedback concerning exams or any other assessment methods in order to encounter any shortcomings existed in the implemented assessment method.

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