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Investigating Students' Attitudes Toward Take-Home Exam

A Case Study of Third Year EFL Students at Mohamed Khider

University of Biskra

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Declaration

I, Rania Djidjekh, do hereby declare the work I presented in my dissertation is my own and has not been submitted before in any institution or any university for a degree.

This research work was conducted and completed at Biskra University.

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to:

The memory of my beloved grandmother whom we have lost this year

I miss you beyond words. May Allah grant you paradise

My beloved mother “Farida”, who valued education, pushed me to acquire it, and is continuously encouraging me

My dear father “Abd Essalam” whose prayers and endless love always helped me

My beloved sister “Zineb”, my brother-in-law “Zineddin”, and the closests to my heart, my niece “Maram” and my nephew “Adem”

To my dearest friends who have always supported me to keep going. “Wiem”, “Nour”, “Maroua”, “Zeyneb”, “Nesrine”, “Maissa”, and “Alaa”. Thank you for the good memories we have made together.

I would like to thank that one person who always was there for me when I needed a hand to help and a shoulder to cry, who tolerated my mood swings and my unbearable attitude during this year. I am truly thankful for having you in my life.

Thank you so much. My love for you all can never be quantified.

Last but not least, I would like to dedicate this work and express gratitude to myself. I want to thank me for believing in me. I want to thank me for doing all this hard work. I want to thank me for not being a quitter and not giving up.

“Rania Djidjekh”, you made it!

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Abstract

Take-home exams have been introduced in the English Division of Mohamed Khider University of Biskra during the Covid-19 pandemic as a new assessment tool. Previous research works have illustrated that THE plays a significant role in reducing test anxiety and is qualified to assess and promote students' higher-order thinking skills. Meanwhile, researchers have debated on the issue of THE's high chance of reducing students' academic integrity. This research aims to investigate students' attitudes towards take-home exams. A qualitative research approach has been employed to explore this phenomenon. In order to obtain data, a questionnaire has been conducted with (30) third-year LMD students at the English Division of Mohamed Khider University of Biskra. Moreover, two interviews have been operated with two groups of experienced teachers who teach at the English Division of Mohamed Khider University of Biskra. One interview with (2) teachers who have conducted THE and another with (2) teachers who have never conducted THE to gather further opinions and perceptions on this type of examination. The findings demonstrate that students have different attitudes towards THE. Teachers, on the other hand, expressed a variety of interesting opinions and criticism on THE. However, the overall result indicates that if a THE is adequately designed, it could make of a practical assessment method that challenges the traditional assessment approach.

Keywords: Take-home exam (THE), students' attitudes, higher-order thinking skills, academic integrity, test anxiety, traditional assessment

List of Abbreviation and Acronym

THE: Take-Home Exam

THEs: Take-Home Exams

ICE: In-Class Exam

ICEs: In-Class Exams

Ceil: Le Centre d'Enseignement Intensif des Langues

HOCS: Higher Order Cognitive Skill

HOTS: Higher Order Thinking Skill

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

LMD: Licence, Master, Doctorat

List of Tables

Table 3.1: THE activate higher-order thinking skill.....	55
Table 3.2: Students' level of confidence during THEs compared to ICE.....	57
Table 3.3: Students' level of anxiety during THEs compared of ICEs.....	58
Table 3.4: THE's level of challenge compared to ICEs.....	59
Table 3.5: THEs level of confusion compared to ICEs.....	60
Table 3.6 : Students' level of comfort during THEs compared to ICEs.....	61
Table 3.7: Students' consideration of take-home exam.....	63
Table 3.8: Teachers' justification for the use of THE.....	69
Table 3.9: Teachers' satisfaction with THE they have designed.....	71

List of figures

Figure 1.1: Principles of Assessment.	10
Figure 2.1: Bloom’s Taxonomy	31
Figure 3.1: Student’s Gender.....	45
Figure 3.2: Student’s Familiarity with the Concept “Take-Home Exam”	45
Figure 3.3: The Period When Students Have Taken THEs.....	46
Figure 3.4: Students’ Perception of THE.....	47
Figure 3.5: Students’ Studying Before THE.....	48
Figure 3.6: Types of Question Forms Used in THEs.....	49
Figure 3.7: The Googleability of THE Questions.....	50
Figure 3.8: Plagiarism in THE.....	50
Figure 3.9: Tools of completing take-home exam.....	52
Figure 3.10: Students wasting of time during THE.....	53
Figure 3.11: Students’ Experience With Take-Home Exam.....	53
Figure 3.12: Factors that had Positive Impact During the THEs.....	55
Figure 3.13: Take-Home exams Activate Higher-Order Thinking Skills.....	56
Figure 3.14: Students’ level of confidence During THEs compared to ICEs.....	57
Figure 3.15: Students’ level of anxiety during THEs compared of ICEs.....	58
Figure 3.16: THE’s level of challenge compared to ICEs.....	59
Figure 3.17: Table 3.5. THEs level of confusion compared to ICEs.....	60

Figure 3.18: Students' level of comfort during THEs compared to ICEs	61
Figure 3.19: Students' preference between THEs and ICEs.....	62
Figure 3.20: Students' opinions on teachers' use of THEs	66
Figure 3.21: Reasons why teachers would use THEs.....	66

Table of Contents

Declaration	I
Dedication	II
Acknowledgment	III
Abstract	IV
List of Abbreviation and Acronym	V
List of Tables	VI
List of figures	VII
1.Statement of the Problem.....	2
2.Research Questions and Hypothesis	3
3.Research Objectives.....	3
4.Research Methodology	3
4.1.Research Approach	4
4.2.Data collection Method.....	4
4.3.Population and sample	4
4.4.Data Analysis and Procedures	4
5.Significance of The Study.....	5
6.Structure of the Dissertation	5
Chapter One : EFL Assessment	8
Introduction	7
1.1. Assessment: Definition and Organization	7
1.1.1. Types of Assessment	9

1.1.1.1. Diagnostic Assessment	9
1.1.1.2. Formative assessment ..	9
1.1.1.3. Summative Assessment	10
1.2. Principles of Assessment	10
1.2.1. Practicality	11
1.2.2. Reliability	11
1.2.3. Validity	11
1.2.4. Authenticity	12
1.2.5. Washback	12
1.3. Importance of Assessment and Assessment Literacy in EFL Classroom.....	13
1.4. Traditional Assessment.....	14
1.4.1. Definition	14
1.4.2. Tools of Traditional Assessment	14
1.4.3. Issues of Traditional Assessment.....	16
1.5. Alternative Assessment.....	17
1.5.1. Benefits and Characteristics of Alternative Assessment	20
Conclusion	21
Chapter Two: Take-home Exam	22
Introduction.....	23
2.1 Examination: Definition and Types	23

2.1.1 In-class exams.....24

 2.1.1.1 Closed-book Vs Open-book Exam25

2.1.2 Take-Home Exam27

2.2 Attitude and Examination30

2.3 Take-Home Exam Pros and Cons32

2.4 Academic Integrity34

2.5 Higher-Order Thinking Skill.....36

Conclusion37

 Chapter Three: Field work And Data Analysis.....38

Introduction.....39

3.1. Research Approach39

3.2. Students’ Questionnaire40

 3.2.1. The Sample40

 3.3.2 Aim of The Questionnaire40

 3.3.3 Description of Student’s Questionnaire40

 3.3.4Validating and Piloting the Students’ Questionnaire.....41

 3.3.5 Administration of the Questionnaire.....41

 3.3.6 Analysis of Students’ Questionnaire.....41

3.3. Teachers’ Interview64

 3.3.1.The Sample64

3.3.2 Description of The Interview	64
3.3.3 Aim of The Interview.....	65
3.3.4 Administration of Teachers' Interview	65
3.3.5 Analysis of Teachers' Interview	66
3.3.5.1 Interview 1: Teachers Who Have Conducted THE	66
3.3.5.2. Interview 2: Teachers Who Have Not Conducted THE	73
3.4. Discussion and Interpretation of Findings	77
Conclusion	80
General conclusion.....	83
Limitation of Study and Suggestions for Future Research	83
Recommendations.....	85
List of References	87
Appendices.....	95
الملخص	103

General Introduction

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

One of the major concerns in higher education is improving students' assessment in order to make it more effective and student-centered. Take-home exams are one of the techniques progressively offered today to help decrease students' test anxiety and giving them positive attitudes towards tests and, eventually, enhance their knowledge and abilities performance.

From a broader scope, assessment is a fundamental element in the teaching and learning process as it indicates whether the educational goals are achieved or not. It provides feedback to both students and teachers about the effectiveness of their learning and teaching experiences. Instructors, with the aim of achieving the educational objectives, are required to design effective teaching instruction and provide students with relevant sources to make a lesson easily understandable as well as relevant learning materials.

Assessment comes after to measure the teaching effectiveness and whether the target objectives were accomplished or not. Assessment methods are undoubtedly important and changing these methods is seen as a key to boosting educational quality to upgrade in higher education. Plair (2015) acknowledges that different methods of assessment are expected to have an influence on student learning, with each method serving a particular function. It has also grown as a result of objectively assessing the abilities and skills of students.

As an assessment instrument, examination has an important role in the educational system. It is designed to assess students' learning and teachers' teaching as well. Hence, it is done to measure the skills and abilities obtained and accomplished during the period of study. Knowledge in the language is not the only skill that should be assessed, but also other skills like cognitive/ critical thinking skills and student's ability to gather information and use it.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Meanwhile, assessing these skills can be a very uneasy task, especially by using traditional assessment techniques because they can be time-limited as well as resource-limited, taking into consideration the stressful situation students experience. The addressed assessment technique here is in-class-exam; this type of examination is not time-consuming because the test is designed to be completed in that particular short time. What is good about this type of assessment is that it ensures the absence of cheating which supports academic integrity.

Take-home exam, on the other hand, is defined as an open-book exam taken off-campus. It is, in contrast to in-class-exam, done at home or wherever place outside of the classroom in which the student has complete access to any resources whether it is handouts, books, or on the internet. Take-home-exam also gives advantages for students to work free of under pressure. While few research works have been conducted on take-home exams in the Algerian setting, this work will investigate students' attitudes towards take-home-exam.

1. Statement of the Problem

The sudden spread of the Corona Virus has caused an unprecedented chock in the educational system. Due to the ongoing pandemic, the higher education ministry had no choice but to adopt a staged approach to returning to campus by setting social distancing measures to protect students.

Before this pandemic, lectures, tests, and examinations were administrated in person, highly restricted, with the presence of students in campus, under the supervision of the instructors. In the current situation, to prevent the spread of Covid-19, some teachers have introduced a home-based version of examinations, Take-Home-Exam.

Most students are familiar with open-book examination inside the classroom; this type of examination is one in which students are allowed to use textbooks, class notes, or other

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

approved materials to answer their exam in a limited time. The other form of open-book exam is take-home-exam answered at home and returned within a particular period of time.

Take-home-exams were introduced this study year as a replacement for regular in-class examinations of some modules, specifically for the purpose of reducing students' stress and, most importantly, reducing crowding inside the university to prevent the spread of covid-19. To uncover students' attitudes toward take-home-exam, the researcher intends to obtain data by a questionnaire for third-year LMD students who have experienced a take-home exam at least once.

2. Research Questions and Hypothesis

This research seeks to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: What are student's attitudes toward take-home-exam?

RQ2: What are the pros and cons of Take-home-exam?

RQ3: Do take-home exams promote students' higher-order thinking skills?

Parallel to the above research questions, it is hypothesized that students would show positive and negative attitudes towards take-home exam based on its pros and cons.

3. Research Objectives

More specifically, the present study sought to:

- To investigate students' attitudes toward take-home-exam based on their experience
- Investigate teachers' perceptions of take-home exam
- To identify take-home-exam pros and cons.

4. Research Methodology

In this section, research design and data collection methods are discussed.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

4.1. Research Approach

This study investigates attitudes toward take-home exams. Therefore, the researcher adopts a qualitative research design. The goal of any qualitative study is to gain a rich and detailed insight into a particular topic, concern, or phenomenon based on firsthand experience. This research design is utilized to learn more about a phenomenon by exploring the attitudes and opinions of individuals who have witnessed it. As a result, an exploratory study design was used to collect data regarding a newly discovered phenomenon in a specific setting, i.e., take-home exams at the English Division at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra.

4.2. Data Collection Method

To conduct this study, the researcher is going to use a questionnaire and two interviews. A questionnaire for students which was self-reported to help respondents check their accurate understanding of the questions. The interviews are a set of open-ended questions for two groups of teachers: teachers who have conducted THE, and teachers who have never incorporated this type of examinations to gain a deeper understanding of students' and teachers' attitudes and opinions towards THEs.

4.3. Population and sample

The present study's population is third-year LMD students at the Branch of English studies at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra. However, the study targets students who have experienced take-home exam at least once. Hence a purposive sampling was used in which only students who have experienced take-home exams were chosen to participate in the questionnaire. Moreover, two groups of EFL teachers at Mohamed Khider University were selected to participate in the interview. From a population of 7 teachers who have conducted take-home exam, only 2 were interviewed. Additionally, from a population of more than 40 teachers who have not conducted take-home exam, only 2 were interviewed.

4.4. Data Analysis and Procedures

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The data collected through the students' questionnaire and teachers' interview are presented using counts and descriptive analysis through Excel. Teachers' interview transcripts are analyzed using thematic analysis.

5. Significance of The Study

This study draws attention to a newly introduced and used assessment method, take-home exam. Hence, it lays under its contribution to future studies on students' assessment in higher education. This study will provide valuable analysis of the use of take-home-exam as an assessment instrument that can contribute in the further development of assessment in higher education.

6. Structure of the Dissertation

This study is divided into two parts. The first part is devoted to the literature review. While the second part is devoted to the field work that includes the analysis of data and discussion of findings.

The first part constitutes two chapters. The first chapter deals with an overview of EFL assessment, its types, principles, importance, and traditional assessment vs alternative assessment. While the second chapter deals directly with take-home exam as a type of alternative assessment and examinations and its benefits and drawbacks. Moreover, attitudes of students towards examination are viewed and the assessment of higher-order thinking skills is discussed.

The second part starts with a literature review of the research methodology used in the study. A description of the sample and the administration of the research tools are provided. Additionally, it is devoted to the analysis of the data gathered from the students' questionnaire and teachers' interviews in order to answer the research questions.

Chapter One

EFL Assessment

Introduction

This chapter intends to shed the light on the literature surrounding our research topic's base. It begins with a definition and overviews on assessment and its types: diagnostic, formative, and summative; self-assessment and peer assessment, followed up with principles of assessment, the importance of assessment literacy in EFL classroom, traditional assessment, and finally, alternative assessment.

1.1. Assessment: Definition and Organization

Assessment, according to Brown, (1990) refers to a set of measures used to evaluate a specific trait of individuals. It is then, in the field of education, a systematic process used by teachers for the aim to identify and gather information about student's knowledge, performance, abilities, and understanding. It is a fundamental element in the teaching and learning process as it indicates whether the education goals are achieved or not. Assessment is also used to identify students' strengths and weaknesses. Educators assess students aiming to address their needs to overcome barriers to learning.

In the EFL classroom, language assessment is identified as the act of gathering information and judging learners' capacity to understand and use the target language (Chapelle & Brindley, 2002, as cited in Djoub, 2017). In other words, it is an analysis of a learner's ability to use the language in a particular context and interpret the meaning of a particular discourse. According to Stiggins (2007), a good language assessment constitutes of the following characteristics:

- They arise from and serve clear purposes.
- They arise from and reflect clear and appropriate achievement targets.
- They rely on a proper assessment method (given the purpose and the target).

CHAPTER ONE: EFL ASSESSMENT

- They sample student achievement appropriately.
- They control for all relevant sources of bias and distortion. (as cited in Djoub, 2017, p. 10),

According to Crooks (2002), the motivation behind school-based assessment is to improve students' learning and to offer input to parents and students. Assessment gives instructors data in regards to the adapting needs of the students to give an unmistakable and exceptional image of their present abilities, perspectives, and progress.

In addition, assessment provides feedback not only to students about the effectiveness of their learning but also to teachers about the effectiveness of their teaching. Teachers are likely to use the results of their assessment to improve their teaching strategies to what better fits their students' level. Brown (1990) stated two main functions of assessment: 1) to demonstrate whether the learning has been successful. 2) to point illustrate what teachers are expecting from students (as cited in Yambi, 2020).

Assessment answers three main questions: are students learning what they are supposed to be learning? Is teachers' teaching style effective enough? Are the educational goals being met? These questions illustrate the power of assessment over teaching and learning as it affects decisions about students' grades and improvement, instructional needs, curriculum effectiveness, and most importantly, teaching quality.

Fisher (2017) discussed the contribution of students' assessment in enhancing critical reflective teaching. In his book "Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher", Stephen Brookfield emphasizes that critical reflection is an integral feature of improving as a teacher and enhancing students' learning outcomes. This highly insists that students' assessment does not only allow instructors to monitor their teaching effectiveness, but it also contributes to the development of a rationale for pedagogical decisions in the classroom.

CHAPTER ONE: EFL ASSESSMENT

1.1.1. Types of Assessment

Monitoring student's learning is measured using different types of assessment. According to Plair (2015), there are three forms of assessment

1.1.1.1. Diagnostic Assessment

Diagnostic assessment is a form of pre-assessment (Diagnostic Assessment, n.d.) that is done at the beginning of a course or a unit. Its main purpose is providing and collecting data about students' prior knowledge about a topic with the aim of identifying their points of weakness and learning gaps. Diagnostic assessment feedback helps instructors to determine the snapshots of where students currently stand to design efficient instructional choices that meet their needs and aid in improving their level (Plair, 2015).

1.1.1.2. Formative assessment

Formative assessment, often described as assessment for learning (Ali, 2011), is another type of assessment that is used to monitor students' learning during the instructional period (Plair, 2015). Its major aim is to determine students' achievement levels in order to enhance student learning throughout the learning process. Formative assessment determines students' achievement levels in order to enhance student learning throughout the learning process. Instructors assist students in identifying their strengths and weaknesses and concentrating on how they need to improve over the course of their remaining studies by analyzing students' performance through formative assessment and sharing the results with them. As Nicol (2009) illustrates in his book, *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, that formative assessment from a broader view involves not only instructors but also students in judgmentally evaluating their own and their colleagues' work. All in all, formative assessment provides feedback that enables teachers and learners to make accurate decisions about their teaching and learning.

1.1.1.3. Summative Assessment

Summative assessment, often described as assessment of learning (Ali, 2011), could be a written test/ exam, oral presentation, or any other format that is set at the end of an academic term to evaluate students' knowledge and skills obtained through the study period. It is designed to make the final judgment about the achievement of students (Awoniyi & Fletcher, 2014). Due to necessity that results must be clear, standards must be understood, and dependability must be ensured, there is a premium on reliability with summative assessment. These summative judgements are commonly described simply, as a grade-point average, a 'A' level grade, or a percentage. (Brown & Knight, 1994). Overall, summative assessments, as in final-term exams, are done to assess students' achievement and assign a final grade based on their academic performance.

1.2. Principles of Assessment

To preserve assessment effectiveness, some principles should be taken into consideration when designing assessment activity. Brown (2004), in his book "Language Assessment: Principles and Classroom Practices", states five principles of assessment: Practicality, reliability, validity, authenticity, and washback.

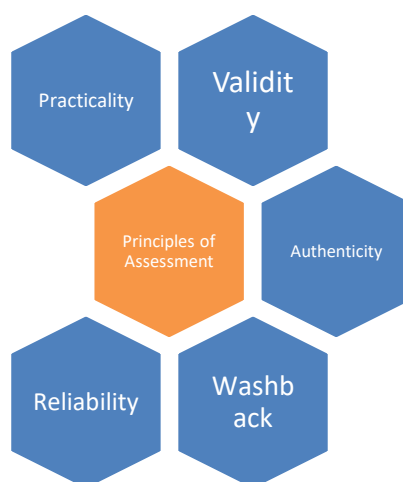


Figure 1.1: Principles of Assessment. Adapted from: Language Assessment: Principles and Classroom Practices by H. Douglas Brown (2004).

CHAPTER ONE: EFL ASSESSMENT

1.2.1. Practicality

It refers to the extent to which administering and taking a test can be practical. A practical assessment should not consume more time and money than necessary to meet the objectives (Brown, 2004). Another quality of practicality is about the ease of administering the assessment. This refers to the ability of the examiner to score accurately the test.

1.2.2. Reliability

A reliable assessment is one that accomplishes similar outcomes in different situations. This clearly means, according to brown (2004), the results of a test given to a student on two different "occasions" should be equivalent. However, four variables, as reported by Brown (2004), can influence evaluation reliability: student-related reliability, which can be physical or psychological conditions, rater-related reliability, which includes "human errors, subjectivity, and bias", test-administration reliability, which refers to the environment in which the assessment takes place, and test reliability, which refers to the nature of the test.

1.2.3. Validity

Validity of assessment refers to its effectiveness in measuring what is claimed to be measured. In other words, it ensures the accuracy of the assessment tool in measuring students' achievement of the intended educational outcomes (Durham University, 2021). For example, a test in academic writing should require only the objective of an academic writing course, which is writing skill. So, to achieve the validity of assessment, the objectives of a course or a lesson should be taken into consideration. According to Brown (2004, pp. 22,26), there is no definite measure of validity, however, he stated five types of evidence that might help in establishing a valid assessment task.

- 1) Content-Related Evidence: refers to the relationship that exists between the test format and the syllabus upon which the test is based.

- 2) Criterion-Related Evidence: It is concerned with the syllabus in relation to the level at which the elements are learned and students' competence level.
- 3) Construct-Related Evidence: Brown (2004, p. 25) notes that construct validity asks this question "Does this test actually tap into the theoretical construct as it has been defined?"
- 4) Consequential Validity: This signifies assessment's ability to quantify a test taker's language skills and the degree to which that test would agree with the test taker's success.
- 5) Face Validity: Refers to the extent to which learners believe in the test's fairness. This means, the test tests what it is supposed to test.

1.2.4. Authenticity

The state of being real is referred to as authenticity. Therefore, an authentic assessment is one that measures student's abilities in real-world scenarios. In other words, authentic assessment challenges students to apply what they learned by engaging real word scenarios or situations. The fact that real-life situations are considered informal and the tests that are done are only formal and in academic contexts makes it uneasy to administer real-life-like tests.

1.2.5. Washback

The 'Washback' phenomenon is an academic phenomenon that occurs in almost all institutional teaching processes. Brown (2004, P. 28) defines washback as "the effect the test has on instructions in terms of how students prepare for the test", whereas Gate (1996, p. 101) refers to it as the "influence of testing on teaching and learning". Washback is commonly regarded as either positive or negative. A positive washback occurs when a testing technique promotes successful teaching instruction, whereas a negative washback results when the objectives of instruction do not meet the focus of assessment tasks. Based on the washback effect, the learning process is assessment-centered (Nasab, 2015). Students, depending on

CHAPTER ONE: EFL ASSESSMENT

what is going to be assessed, determine what is essential and what is not. In other words, students devote time only to lessons that are going to be assessed.

1.3. Importance of Assessment and Assessment Literacy in EFL Classroom

Assessment is considered as one of the most important tasks in the educational process as it is the key to gain the information needed to evaluate both teaching and learning. In the EFL classroom, assessment is very essential to ensure the effectiveness of the teaching process to meet the objectives specified (Abbas, 1994). Abbas (1994) discusses the impact assessment has on language teaching. He asserts that assessment can directly influence EFL students' motivation towards the language learning process through the competing between EFL students for the best achievement. This creates a sense of accomplishment that results in positive attitudes towards the instructional program. Moreover, assessment focuses on clear and practical objectives that can help in both assessing and improving learners' language skills.

Inbar-Lourie (2008) defines assessment literacy as the ability to discuss critical questions on assessment purposes, the method used, the circumstances of assessment, and the results (as cited in Djoub, 2017). In other words, assessment literacy equips teachers with the skills and knowledge needed to consider what and how exactly they are assessing and what choices they need to choose to effectively assess their students. A question was raised by Djoub (2017, p. 9): "How can teachers' beliefs and knowledge of language assessment affect their assessment practices and attitudes within this process?", and answer this question, the author conducted a questionnaire study for several EFL teachers. The results of the study have shown that participants did not have any training concerning assessment for the sake of ensuring its effectiveness in the EFL classroom. The lack of assessment literacy reflected on their perspectives of what assessment really means and their assessment practices on learners (Djoub, 2017).

CHAPTER ONE: EFL ASSESSMENT

As reported by Coombe et al. (2009), assessment literacy can be attained by:

1. Understanding what a good assessment means while recognizing the different views about the nature of education which may lead to dissimilar approaches to assessment.
2. Providing professional development through both online training of teachers and through assessment workshops at all levels.
3. Being committed to a significant change in educational practices.
4. Making assessment resources (especially online) available to language teachers to achieve successful professional development. (As cited in Djoub, 2017, p. 11)

Djoub (2017) added that assessment literacy derives its importance from the fact that it helps ease learners' stress about taking the exam which prevents negative washback. It also encourages them to fully participate in the assessment process and draw inspiration from it.

1.4. Traditional Assessment

1.4.1. Definition

Traditional assessment is a classic assessment method that has been used since a long period of time. It is broadly known by paper-pencil-based tests usually in form of true/ false, short answers, multiple choices...etc. Belle (1990, p. 8) defines traditional assessment as “evaluations that include standardized and classroom achievement tests with mostly closed-ended items, such as true/false, multiple-choice, and fill-in-the-blanks”. The types of this assessment are designed to measure students’ ability to recall information transferred from the teacher to students.

1.4.2. Tools of Traditional Assessment

According to clay (2001), some tools are used in traditional assessment which are: multiple-choice, true/false, matching, short answer, essay, and oral.

CHAPTER ONE: EFL ASSESSMENT

- a. **Multiple-Choice:** or multiple-choice questions (MCQ) are questions that require students to choose only one correct answer among the offered multiple answers choices. As cited in Irawan (2017), Davis (2009, p. 1) illustrates that multiple-choices types of tests are used to assess “simple knowledge and complex concepts”. Ona adds that multiple-choice tests are easy to be scored by teachers and able to measure students’ knowledge in different topics.
- b. **True/False:** in this type of traditional assessment tool, students are provided with statements and required to decide whether they are true or false. True/ false tests are easy to be administered and scored, however, they are not 100% credible due to the possibility of producing a correct answer only by guessing. Two ways to reduce the chance of only guessing the answer is either requesting an explanation of the answer or requesting to correct the statement if it’s wrong so that it shows whether the student is really aware of the correct answer or not.
- c. **Matching:** Matching test formats are used to examine students' understanding of the links between words and definitions, events and dates, etc. They consist of two columns or two sides one with a word, definition, statement, ...etc., and the other with what could be the answer of the first column.
- d. **Short Answer:** short answer questions are in form of open-ended questions in which students are requested to give a brief answer in few lines. They are considered to be more effective than the previous tools because they give a chance for students to express their previous knowledge. However, short answer tests are not as easy to score as the previous tools.
- e. **Essay:** is one technique that requires students to answer a question or discuss a statement in a structured essay. Essays are considered to be very effective since

they allow teachers to assess not only students' understanding of a topic but also their creativity and originality of thoughts.

- f. **Oral:** in this assessment technique, teachers pose the question (s) orally for the students to answer orally as well in a limited amount of time. It also gives an opportunity for teachers to see how well students express their knowledge orally in the target language.

1.4.3. Issues of Traditional Assessment

Despite the fact teachers still use the traditional assessment methods, many research has identified breakdowns in traditional assessment in EFL classrooms. Barootchi & Keshavarz (2002) argue that standardized assessments, such as true/ false and multiple-choice tests, do not succeed in informing teachers about students' learning process. That is, these assessments are effective for collecting information about students' performances under specific circumstances, but they do not give information about their learning strategies. For instance, a student has a high chance of giving a correct answer in a true/false test since they present two choices, either true or false, only by guessing. This works the same with multiple-choice and matching tests as well.

Additionally, Dikle (2003) argues that traditional assessment often focuses on learner's ability of memorization and recall. Traditional assessment usually focuses on assessing and strengthening the low level of thinking skills (i.e., comprehension and knowledge) (Abdao, 2015), which are seen as advantageous in terms of ease administering and scoring. Yet, it highly fails at assessing students' higher level of cognitive skill. Broadfoot (2003) insists on its negative influence on the students' psychology since it presents the student as a "passive recipient of information" (as cited in Nasab, 2015). The issues found in traditional assessment have eventually called for a shift to a new assessment approach that can cover all the gaps left by the traditional assessment approach. Therefore, alternative

CHAPTER ONE: EFL ASSESSMENT

assessment was introduced “as a call for change in the educational world” (Wikström, 2008, p. 12).

1.5. Alternative Assessment

The questions and criticism raised regarding traditional assessment have resulted in growing interests in alternative assessment forms. Alternative assessment, in contrast to traditional assessment, focuses on skills rather than knowledge. The term alternative assessment refers to any type of assessment that differs from the traditional assessment tools (Browly, 2009; Custer 2000) (as cited in Irawan, 2017). “Alternative assessments are multiple measures that show students’ learning, achievement, motivation, and attitudes in instructional classroom activities while performing real-life tasks” (Ismael, 2017, pp. 30-31). Wiggins (1990, p. 1) adds “Assessment is authentic when we directly examine student performance on worthy intellectual tasks”. That is, it assesses the critical thinking and creativity of students. Authentic assessment, performance assessment and are terms that are commonly used to refer to alternative assessment (Worthen, 1992).

Although they are used synonymously, the terms alternative assessment, authentic assessment, and performance assessment are defined differently. Lopez adds:

The term alternative assessment applies to any and all assessments that differ from the multiple-choice, timed, one-shot approaches that characterize most standardized and classroom assessments. The term authentic assessment conveys the idea that assessments should engage students in applying knowledge and skills in the same way they are used in the world outside of school. Performance assessment is a broad term, encompassing many of the characteristics of both authentic assessment and alternative assessment. (Lopez, 2015, p. 5)

Instead of counting the number of correct answers as in traditional assessments,

CHAPTER ONE: EFL ASSESSMENT

alternative assessment directs its interest on the student's performance by assessing his/her skills and improvements (coombe, 2018). To evaluate alternative assessments, teachers design a rubric to facilitate the process of evaluating students' performance. A rubric is "a criteria-rating scale, which gives the teachers a tool that allows them to track student performance" (Abrenica, online document, as cited in Dikli, 2003). Rubrics are very effective in describing and monitoring student achievement.

Portfolio assessments are one of the major techniques used in alternative assessments. Portfolio assessments are a set of materials systematically prepared by students to prove knowledge and skills related to their area of interest/study (Belanoff and Dickson, 1991; O'Malley and Pierce, 1992; Allaei, 1992; Hamp-Lyons et al., 1992; Yancey, 1992; Markstein et al., 1992; Hamp-Lyons and Condon, 1993; Moya and O'Malley, 1994, as cited in Barootchi & Keshavarz, 2002). Portfolios require students to be fully committed and responsible due to their systematic nature. Moreover, Zhu (1997) claims that portfolios are one the most flexible and challengeable alternative assessment formats. Hence, students are given the opportunity to take control of their learning which helps to develop their knowledge and skills.

Brown and Hudson (1998) reported that portfolio might have three advantages: "strengthen student learning, enhance the teacher's role, and improve testing Processes" (p. 91). The authors stated eight ways in which a portfolio can strengthen student learning:

- Capitalize on work that would normally be done in the classroom anyway.
- Focus learners' attention on learning processes.
- Facilitate practice and revision processes.
- Help motivate students, if well-planned, because they present a series of meaningful and interesting activities.
- Increase student involvement in the learning processes.
- Foster student/teacher and student/student collaboration.

CHAPTER ONE: EFL ASSESSMENT

- Provide means for establishing minimum standards for classroom work and progress.
- Encourage students to learn the meta-language necessary for students and teachers to talk about language growth. (Brown and Hudson, 1998, p. 92)

The authors also identified three ways in which a portfolio can enhance the teacher's role:

- Provide teachers with a clearer picture of students' language growth.
- Change the role of the teacher (in the eyes of students) from that of an adversary to that of a coach.
- Provide insights into the progress of each individual student. (Brown and Hudson, 1998, p. 92)

The ways in which portfolio can improve testing processes are identified by Brown and Hudson as the following:

- enhance student and teacher involvement in assessment.
- Provide opportunities for teachers to observe students using meaningful language to accomplish various authentic tasks, in a variety of contexts and situations.
- Provide opportunities for both students and teachers to work together and reflect on what it means to assess students' language growth.
- Increase the variety of information collected on students.
- Make teachers' ways of assessing student work more systematic. Brown and Hudson (1998, p. 92)

All in all, portfolio assessment has been shown that they improve learning, teaching, and testing.

Another common technique or tool of alternative assessment is projects. Project-based assessment is a technique to test students' application of knowledge and creativity through a performance of problem-solving. Projects can be in form of presentation preparation, research proposal, a report... etc. They can be done individually or in group work. Projects require

“active student involvement”, trigger “high-level thinking skills”, and make students “responsible of their own learning” (as cited in Diaz de la Garza, 2011).

1.5.1. Benefits and Characteristics of Alternative Assessment

Alternative assessments, in general, have several benefits that make them more effective than traditional assessment tools. Zhu (1997) states that alternative assessments demonstrate higher-level thinking skills since they assess students’ performance in real-life tasks. Lopes (2015) adds that alternative assessment tools should be taken into consideration to improve EFL students’ academic performance and linguistic development. Additionally, due to the fact that alternative assessment practices are generally less formal than standardized tests, their ability to test language proficiency is indeed one of the strengths (Ismael, 2017). The following represents a set of characteristics of alternative assessment listed by Brown and Hudson:

1. Require students to perform, create, produce, or do something.
2. Use real-world contexts or simulations are used.
3. Are non-intrusive in that they extend the-day-today classroom activities.
4. Allow students to be assessed on what they normally do in class every day.
5. Use tasks that represent meaningful institutional activities.
6. Focus on processes as well as products.
7. Tap into higher-level thinking and problem-solving skills.
8. Provide information about both the strengths and weaknesses of students.
9. Are multiculturally sensitive when properly administered.
10. Ensure that people, not machines, do the scoring using human judgment

CHAPTER ONE: EFL ASSESSMENT

11. Encourage public disclosure of standards and criteria
12. Call upon teachers to perform new instructional and assessment roles. Brown and Hudson (1998 p. 80)

Considering the fact that students cannot learn everything in the classroom and standardized tests failed at fulfilling all the learning objectives, alternative assessment tools, based on statements of researchers mentioned above, are successful at assisting students and helping them in improving their cognitive skills by providing them with a chance to be responsible, as individuals or in a group, of solving real-life problems. Take-home exam, this study's research topic, can be treated as an alternative technique of assessment. It can be considered as a portfolio work, which focuses on students' evidence or information to support their work, or a project work, set as a part of the continuous assessment process. Further information will be provided in the next chapter.

Conclusion

To conclude, assessment is a vital element in the learning and teaching processes which ensures the necessity of taking into consideration that it should be developed permanently according to the needs of students and the objectives of the course. In this chapter, we had a review on assessment, its types, and principles, and clarified the difference between traditional and alternative assessment and their contribution to the effectiveness of the assessment. This chapter provided the literature needed to support our research topic and to introduce the next chapter. In the next chapter, we are going to provide the needed literature that surrounds this study's independent variable, take-home exam.

Chapter Two
Take-home Exam

Introduction

Since this study aims to investigate students' attitudes, this chapter throws light on take-home exam to cover all that is needed to back up the research fieldwork. As a type of examination, the literature on take-home exam is going to be provided. Moreover, students' attitudes towards examinations, in general, are discussed. Additionally, the benefits and drawbacks of take-home exam based on previous studies are overviewed. And finally, the take-home exam assessment of higher-order thinking skills is discussed.

2.1 Examination: Definition and Types

Assessment refers to any technique designed to monitor students' learning and application of what is learned. As a type of assessment, examinations take an integral part of education in higher educational institutions. An examination, or an exam as an abbreviation, refers to a test designed to measure or assess students' knowledge and skills. Examinations are administered at the end of an academic period (a semester or a year). They serve as a final official assessment of students' progress and performance in a particular course. Latham (1877) qualified the examination as a "powerful assessment in the hands of teachers" for the fact that "it concentrates attention, it forces the student to carry a whole book, or a whole subject in his head at once, and it acts as a powerful stimulation" (Latham, 1887, p. 4).

An examination is considered a summative assessment. Summative assessment as defined in the previous chapter aims at assessing and evaluating students' academic achievement and performance at the end of a study period (a term, a semester, or a year). The definition of summative assessment is equivalent to examination definition. Hence, examinations make an effective assessment tool for measuring students learning at a particular learning period. Iqbal (1996) has explained the examination process as the following:

CHAPTER TWO: TAKE-HOME EXAM

Examination are conducted to test the ability of the student and find out if he has reached a certain standard of academic learning and knowledge. They scrutinize and measure the student's capabilities against skill in answering a question under the condition imposed by the examiner. (as cited in Rasul, & Bukhsh, 2011, p. 2043).

Moreover, Examination can be administered in many ways: written, orally, or performed. Written examinations are tests in which the answers are required to be given written; the questions can be asked either verbally or in writing. Oral Examinations are tests that seek answers in the form of spoken words; the questions might be asked either orally or written. Performance examinations are tests that require students to apply and perform particular skills in an activity.

The purpose of examinations can be summarized in the following points:

- Examinations are designed to grade students
- Examinations motivate students to study.
- Examinations are designed to evaluate students learning and teachers' teaching
- Examinations help to identify strengths and weaknesses of learners to identify areas that need to be improved

2.1.1 In-class exams

In-class exams, or traditional examinations, are very common examinations administered inside a classroom, highly restricted, under the supervision of one teacher or more. An in-class exam can be written (paper-pencil) or oral. Students are provided a limited time in which they are required to answer the exam questions before it ends which can create a challenging atmosphere. This assessment type uses traditional assessment tools such as short-question, essays, true/false, multiple-choice, oral presentation...etc. In-class exams tend to create undue stress. Marsh (1984, p. 111) states that "Probably the major concern over classroom exams is that they cause debilitating anxiety". Students worry not only about having

CHAPTER TWO: TAKE-HOME EXAM

to memorize module-related materials for the exam but also about the limited time which might create anxiety.

2.1.1.1 Closed-book Vs Open-book Exam

One type of in-class exam is called a closed-book exam. “Closed-book tests represent the norm, especially in higher education. During a closed-book test, students take the test without the aid of their notes or textbooks, and consulting supplementary material is typically considered cheating” (Agarwal, Karpicke, Kang, Roediger, & McDermott, 2008, p. 861-862). A closed-book exam, simply, is a very traditional exam in which students are required to answer the test without having access to any source of information. So, in order for students to manage to answer the exam question(s), they are required to memorize all the lessons/information required to be acquired. The other type of in-class exam is called an open-book exam. Open-book exam, in contrast to closed-book, is an examination type in which students have access to any available and approved source of information as books, handouts, notes... etc. For this reason, students do not have to worry about memorizing information before the exam.

Open-book tests are one of the assessment techniques introduced today to assess students’ application of knowledge and skills in a less stressful setting to reduce test anxiety have a positive attitude towards examinations. As some scholars claim, closed-book tests allow students to memorize information while open-book exams encourage students to use higher-level thinking skills such as problem-solving and reasoning (as cited in Agarwal et al., 2008). Open-book exams “test skills in application, analysis and evaluation i.e., higher levels of Bloom’s taxonomy, rather than knowledge reproduction or to present students with new situations or scenarios to be addressed against a deadline” (University teaching academy, n.d.). In other words, Open-book exams assess students' ability to use available sources to a

CHAPTER TWO: TAKE-HOME EXAM

current situation rather than recall memorized information as in closed-book exams. Mohanan (n.d.) in his article “Open Book Examination” explained the following:

“In an open book examination, it is meaningless to ask questions "Define the notion 'atom'", since all that the student has to do is copy the relevant information from the textbook directly into the answer book. In a closed book examination, the student first copies the information from the textbook to his memory and then copies it into the answer book. This intermediate stage of memorization is what open book examinations attempt to eliminate. Given the availability of textbooks in the examination room, teachers will not ask questions that require the mere transfer of information from the textbook to the examination book.” (Mohanan, n.d., p. 2)

Additionally, open-book exams tend to be less stressful than closed-book exams. A study conducted by Theophilides & Dionysiou (1996) reports that students in preparing for open-book exams experience less stress than closed-book exams (as cited in Agarwal et al., 2008). Gurjal (2015, p. 6034) adds “An important reason for using open book examination is to promote the right mental sets in both learning and teaching”. Furthermore, some scholars claim that open-book exams promote the effective assessment of learning more than closed-book exams. According to Elertsen and Valdermo (2000), an open book exam promotes greater participation and enhances comprehension of course content. Similarly, Feller (1994) argues that an open-book exam is superior to a closed-book exam because it is more practical and realistic to a problem-solving scenario in which students might face in real life (as cited in Gurjal, 2015). Agarwal et al. (2008) argue that open-book exams promote students’ higher-level thinking more than the closed-book exam.

On the other side, other researchers have acknowledged the fact that closed-book exams can be more effective in enhancing student’s learning than open-book exams. Karpicke and Roediger (2007) claim that they do not only assess memory content but also enhance “long-term retention”. The unavailability of sources during the exam creates a sense of

CHAPTER TWO: TAKE-HOME EXAM

challenge for students to accomplish the test. This fact is referred to as the “testing effect” and according to Karpicke and Roediger (2007), they yield higher long-term retention gains. Other studies have supported the previous statement that states that recall tests (closed-book exams) promote long-term retention are: (Butler & Roediger, 2007; Glover, 1989; Kang, McDermott, & Roediger, 2007; McDaniel, Anderson, Derbish, & Morrisette, 2007) (as cited in Agarwal et al., 2008, p. 262). However, a study done by Agarwal et al. (2008) has reported that both open-book and closed-book exams produce equal levels of long-term retention.

As summarized by Boniface (1985), open-book characteristics are stated as the following:

- Open-book exams reduce counterproductive anxiety in some candidates and thus provide a more equitable and fair examination.
- Open-book examinations help candidates to prepare themselves more effectively by removing the need for rote memorization. However, Candidates' struggles in choosing what must be learnt and how much of the valuable examination time to dedicate to retrieving content from notes must be balanced against this apparent benefit.
- Open-book exams are more similar to real-world application of information, and so should be better indicators of applicants' future skills.
- Because open-book exams are thought to be simpler than traditional exams, they may be assigned a lower value.

2.1.2 Take-Home Exam

Take-home exam, simply, is an exam taken off-campus in contrast to the traditional in-class exam. This type of examination is similar to the open-book exam, but instead of it being administered in class under the supervision of teachers, it is done at home with the

CHAPTER TWO: TAKE-HOME EXAM

authorization of having access to all the materials (books, handouts, online sources, ...etc.). The due date is also longer than the traditional in-class exam. It can be hours as well as days, depending on the task complexity. In sum, students in take-home exams are provided with extended exam duration and unlimited resources access. These help reduce stress and test anxiety which, eventually, results in enhancing student's performance in the exam.

In in-class exams, students are put in a stressful situation in which time is shortly limited, and the resources are either what they have memorized or limited as in open-book exams. Their energy is dedicated to completing the exam with fewer wrong answers instead of learning "since assessment derives learning" (López, Cruz, Sánchez, & Fernández, 2011, p. 2). Preparation for in-class exams forces students to surface learning and does not have much influence on deep learning (López et al., 2011). Williams and Wong (2009) also ensure that traditional exams restrict students to surface learning (as cited in Bengtsson, 2019), resulting in washback effect (explained in the previous chapter). Furthermore, the level of competence achieved by students, according to Bloom's taxonomy, is hard to capture and assess (Huitt, 2011; López et al., 2011).

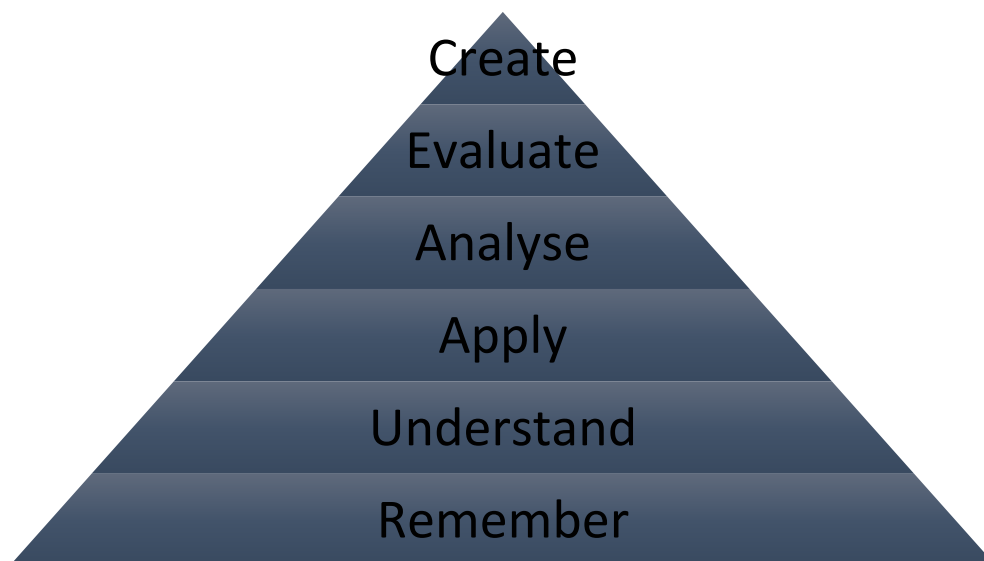


Figure 2.1: Bloom's taxonomy (Krathwohl, 2002)

CHAPTER TWO: TAKE-HOME EXAM

Bloom's taxonomy is a description of what students are supposed to achieve as a result of learning (Krathwohl, 2002). This taxonomy encompasses all learning dimensions (cognitive, affective, and sensory). The figure above represents the cognitive dimension. The very basic stage is "remembering," which refers to the process of recalling relevant information. Next, "understanding" is determining the meaning of the message. "Applying" refers to the act of implementing the knowledge in a situation. "Analyzing" is breaking information into component parts. "Evaluating" the act of giving an opinion and making a judgment. The last stage, "creating", is combining elements together to create an original element. "Students move from rote learners to true scholars where they create new knowledge" (Bengtsson, 2019, p. 1). Bloom's taxonomy explains the stages of learning because, for teachers, it is important to consider where the current students are, and this has clear implications for the design of the course and, most importantly, for the design of the exam.

An in-class exam formula, such as multiple-choice, can be appropriate at the lowest levels of Bloom taxonomy but not at the highest levels because the latter requires students to use more than the memory ability; Students at the higher levels have to be able to identify questions, anticipate, hypothesize, experiment, interpret, and conclude, as well as be capable of critical thinking (Svoboda, 2003, as cited in Bengtsson, 2019). Zoller (2001) asserts that the assessment of these skills is possible only by using higher-order cognitive skills (HOCS) questions. Traditional in-class exams fail at assessing these professional skills due to the limited time that is given to students to answer.

Undoubtedly, it appears that a take-home exam provides the necessary amount of time for students to complete the exam that requires using such skills. In addition to the amount of time given, the availability of unlimited resources allowed in take-home exams also is devoted for the students to perform deep learning while answering. From this, it could be concluded

CHAPTER TWO: TAKE-HOME EXAM

that the traditional examination works as a summative assessment in which the main target is grading students, whereas take-home exams can work as both, a summative and a formative assessment since it targets both grading and using assessment for learning (López et al., 2011) if the exam is designed as it should be to assess professional skills.

2.2 Attitude and Examination

An examination is an essential part of the assessment process because it gathers information about a student's achievement. It is the method of assessing a student's skills or accomplishments in some aspect of an academic program. However, the accurate assessment of students' achievement can be affected by some factors. In this attempt, Rasul and Buksh (2011) have investigated the factors that may affect students' performances in examinations. They categorized these factors into the following: 1) Extrinsic factors: refer to the setting in which the examination is taken. 2) Intrinsic factors: refer to the format and nature of questions of the examination and the strict marking. 3) Personal factors: refer to the student's personal problems or mental state during the exam, such as stress and confidence. 4) Miscellaneous factors: they refer to other factors that can affect the performance, such as handwriting and presentation of material. The factors mentioned make it hard for teachers to assess and determine students' true performance.

Other researchers have also investigated the factors that influence students' performance in examinations. Cassady and Johnson (2001) examined the impact of cognitive test anxiety on test performance that cognitive test anxiety has the strongest link with performance. They describe cognitive test anxiety as the following: "Cognitive test anxiety is composed of individuals' cognitive reactions to evaluative situations, or internal dialogue regarding evaluative situations, in the times prior to, during, and after evaluative tasks" (Cassady & Johnson, 2011, p. 272). Besides, the cognitive aspect of test anxiety has been shown to be the factor most consistently correlated with decreases in test performance

CHAPTER TWO: TAKE-HOME EXAM

(Hembree, 1988, as cited in Cassady & Johnson, 2001). According to studies on test anxiety, students with higher test anxiety have low performance on exams under stressful, controlled situations than their peers with low test anxiety because anxiety reduces their memory capacities and attention during the exam (Driscoll, 2007).

Additionally, students' confidence plays a part in their academic and test performance as well." Academic self-confidence has been demonstrated to improve academic performance in college" (Martin et al., 2013, as cited in Ballane, 2019, p. 3). Academic self-confidence refers to when students believe in themselves and their ability to perform well during examinations. Komarraju & Nadler (2013) states that students who believe that they are able to perform well are to be expected to perform well, and students with low self-confidence experience unwell academic performance (as cited in Ballane, 2019).

On the other hand, previous research has verified that test administration has an influence on students' performance. Overton, Pihlsgård, and Elmståhl (2016) state that "Testing procedures contain a component of interaction between the test administrator and the participant" (p. 2). The strict test administration and the number of administrators affect students' cognitive performance. Overton et al. (2016) 's research findings confirm that the test administration's effects on the test performance are notable. The authors indicated four sources of test administrating influence: timing of the test, the place in which the exam takes place, serial testing, and different versions of the same test can all have an impact on test score perception.

Examinations are a very important aspect of the student's academic experience as it is used to grade and monitor their performance. For this reason, the term examination appears to be frightening for most students regardless of their level of competence. A student may have different attitudes toward examination, which may affect their performance positively and negatively. Thus, these attitudes should be taken into consideration. According to a study

CHAPTER TWO: TAKE-HOME EXAM

finding, students' attitudes towards assessment reflect their learning approach (Struyven, Dochy, & Janssens, 2005, as cited in Miron, 2014). Murchan (1989) also states that the format of assessment has a significant effect on teachers' teaching and students' learning (as cited in, Miron, 2014). Understanding the learners' rationale, on the other hand, seems to be important. As Strevens (1980) said: "The best teachers know their pupils, encourage them, show concern for them, find out their interests, discover their learning preferences, and monitor their progress with a sympathetic eye" (p. 28, as cited in Neemati, Hooshangi, & Shurideh, 2014).

2.3 Take-Home Exam Pros and Cons

Take-home exams, similar to traditional in-class exams, have their advantages and disadvantages. One of the major advantages that can be highlighted is that the take-home exam reduces test anxiety since it is mostly triggered by the environment and the presence of the teacher administration during the exam. Fernald and Webster (1991) report that take-home exams "Minimize stress and time pressures associated with most in-class exams". Furthermore, a take-home exam tests and promotes higher-order thinking skills. Bengtsson (2019, p.10) states that take-home exams are an "excellent tool when it comes to testing students' higher-order thinking skills". Questions designed for take-home exams need a long time to "hypothesize, analyze, synthesize..." which influences the higher levels of bloom taxonomy (analyze, create, and evaluate). As a result, take-home exams promote deeper learning and give students an opportunity to connect with existing real-world situations, which boosts the authenticity of course contents. Many scholars conducted research on take-home exams and highlighted their advantages. Take-home advantages are summarised as the following:

- Reduce students' anxiety.
- Can be designed to test HOCS.
- Provide a good learning experience.

CHAPTER TWO: TAKE-HOME EXAM

- Places responsibility for learning on the student.
- Promote learning by testing.
- Students have time to accomplish tasks that take time.
- Promote a more realistic student study.
- Less burdensome for teachers.
- Engage students rather than alienate them.
- Foster the educational process beyond that of memorization.
- Offer flexibility regarding location and time.
- Enforce students to consult other texts apart from the course textbook.
- Can assess also the highest Bloom levels.
- More sophisticated questions can be asked.
- Questions can be asked about all the content of the syllabus.
- Improve retention. Bengtsson (2019, p. 8)

On the other hand, while there are many advantages, a take-home exam can display many disadvantages. One thing that comes into mind when mentioning “take-home exam” is the possibility of students engaging in unethical behavior, in other words, cheating and plagiarism. Weber, McBee, and Krebs (1983, p. 479) state that take-home exam “provides a greater opportunity for students to cheat”. Another drawback of take-home exams was illustrated by Haynie (2003). His study has revealed that students used take-home test questions as “a “road map” and hunted only for the exact information needed to answer the specific questions on the take-home test” (Haynie, 2003, p. 15). That is to say, students solely concentrate on the material required to answer the take-home exam leaving aside other learning materials. As it could be understood from Bengtsson (2019), students seem to study less for take-home exams than for in-class tests. Some other drawbacks of take-home exams highlighted by Bengtsson (2019, p. 9):

CHAPTER TWO: TAKE-HOME EXAM

- Writing and marking are time-consuming.
- Items used on THEs are forfeit.

2.4 Academic Integrity

Academic integrity concerns are shared among all educational institutions all around the world. It is defined as “a commitment, even in the face of adversity, to six fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage” (International Center for Academic Integrity, 2020, as cited in Gamage, Silva, & Gunawardhana, 2020). The word “integrity” is considered as a synonym of “honesty” in the Cambridge dictionary and it refers to “the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles that you refuse to change” (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.). Therefore, at the academic level, academic integrity is the representation and the contribution of both students and teachers to being honest in the academic setting. Universities administer examinations under highly restricted measures in order to maintain academic integrity and prevent academic dishonesty by ensuring that students are graded in accordance with their actual level of performance.

Cheating and Plagiarism are considered forms of academic dishonesty. This latter exists in both in-class exams and off-class exams (online exams, take-home exams). According to McCabe & Trevino (2006), 65% of students questioned confessed to engaging in some kind of cheating behavior (as cited in Adebayo, Akinola, & Eze, 2019). In some cases, rooms in which the exam is administered are crowded with a large number of exam takers affecting academic integrity and leading to cheating and plagiarism. However, research has shown that off-class exams demonstrate higher cheating rates (as cited in D'Souza, & Siegfeldt, 2017). Many research has reported that some students, instead of making an effort to answer a take-home assignment, prefer to copy from their peers' work (Webar et al., 2007, as cited in Adebayso, Akinola, & Eze, 2019). Take-home exams arise concerns about

CHAPTER TWO: TAKE-HOME EXAM

academic integrity since they are unsupervised exams that allow students to use different sources and collaborate with their peers which might lead to plagiarism and cheating.

Take-home exams are questionable in terms of academic integrity because of the fact that they provide students with more opportunities and encouragement to cheat, get help from an assistant, or plagiarizing someone else's work. Cheating affects the students' actual level of performance and other students who did not cheat but got less grades than cheater students which gives a sense of unfairness. As they are responsible for assessment, teachers should consider how to prevent academic dishonesty in their assessment. "Making Your Exam work as Take-Home Assessment" article published by Heriot-Watt University describes different ways to guard take-home exams from plagiarism:

- Specific questions – and particularly context-specific questions – are less vulnerable than general questions to students being able to source off-the-shelf answers from the internet.
- Topical questions are also more challenging to plagiarise, so assessment tasks tied to recent events or material (such as questions related to a recent journal article) may be helpful.
- Blackboard offers the ability to create a large question bank, allowing students to receive randomised sets of questions. This limits the scope for collaboration between students, as it reduces the possibility that they will be attempting the same questions.
- Questions will be less vulnerable to plagiarism if what is being assessed is the route to a judgement, not just the judgement itself. Where there is no single right answer, it is harder for students to lift material from the internet; where there is more scope for individual expression, students will find it harder to disguise collaboration.
- Turnitin is useful as a tool to help staff identify plagiarism, and scripts can be passed through Turnitin even if they are submitted via a different mechanism.

CHAPTER TWO: TAKE-HOME EXAM

- The main take-home exam – focused on assessing more complex knowledge and abilities, but more vulnerable to academic dishonesty – could be supplemented with a short timed online test (e.g., a multiple choice questionnaire). This test could have a binary pass/fail mark, and be designed to check that students have a baseline knowledge of content.
- It may be possible to modify the assessment scheme to introduce vivas for a sample of the submissions. A small group of students could be selected at random to participate in video interviews after the exam, discussing their exam script. The knowledge that they may have to talk about their script may dissuade students from engaging in plagiarism. (Heriot-Watt University, n.d., p. 4)

2.5 Higher-Order Thinking Skill

In this work, higher-order thinking skills and higher-order cognitive skills are used synonymously. McDade (1995, p. 10) defines higher-order thinking skill as “The intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/ or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication as a rubric to belief and action” (as cited in Seif, 2012). Lewis and Smith (1993) add that higher-order thinking is a process that occurs when a person acquires new information or reorganizes it to achieve a purpose or find answers in a perplexing situation. The capacity to identify, validate, choose, integrate, synthesize, interpret, analyze, and present knowledge, operate in teams, critical thinking, ethical responsibility, sustainability, and commitments, and the capacity to deliver a comprehensive view are all referred to as higher-order thinking skill (Bengtsson, 2019).

Critical thinking, problem-solving, and reasoning are higher-order thinking skills. Critical thinking refers to “the development and evaluation of argument” (Facione, 1984, p. 259, as cited in Lewis and Smith, 1993). Problem-solving refers to the act of defining the

CHAPTER TWO: TAKE-HOME EXAM

problem and solving it through a developed plan. Reasoning is defined by Merriam-Webster as the process of logically thinking in order to draw a decision or a judgment.

Based on the definitions listed above, higher-order thinking skill is a cognitive process wherein students use their minds to interpret and comprehend the hidden meaning and the relationship between ideas, analyze and organize available ideas, evaluate and produce new ideas, and conclude. This concluded definition summarizes Bloom's taxonomy explained earlier in this chapter. We conclude that if a take-home exam is designed properly to assess the higher levels of Bloom's taxonomy, it can assess and promote higher levels of thinking skills, such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and reasoning.

Conclusion

To conclude, this chapter focused on take-home exams as a type of examination. Traditional in-class examinations are declared as summative assessments. However, a take-home exam could be summative and formative since it promotes learning by tasting and is more appropriate for deep learning. One major drawback of take-home exams is that they can affect integrity due to the high chance of students engaging in unethical behavior (cheating and plagiarism). However, this drawback can be reduced if the exam questions are designed to test higher-order thinking skills and not the memorizing ability as in traditional in-class examinations. This chapter has drawn a road trip to work on the next chapter accurately and move our work from its theoretical level to its practical level.

Chapter Three

Field work And Data

Analysis

Introduction

The current chapter is devoted to the practical part of the research study. It presents the findings obtained from the process of gathering data from both student's and teachers' attitudes and points of view towards the take-home exam (THE) and the analysis of data. The latter presented are based on data acquired from a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview arranged in accordance with the topic and the objectives of the research and the research questions. The findings are followed by a discussion in order to interpret the findings.

3.1. Research Approach

A research approach is a plan that outlines the steps involved in conducting a study. Since the aim of this study is to investigate students' attitudes towards take-home exam, a qualitative research approach has been selected to guide our exploratory study. Qualitative research, according to Flick (2004), describes a real-life phenomenon through the participants' perspective. In other words, this research approach is used to gain insights into a phenomenon by exploring the attitudes and perceptions of participants who have experienced it. Therefore, an exploratory research design has been utilized to gather data about a newly existing phenomenon in a specific setting. Exploratory research is a type of study that investigates a problem that is not yet defined. It uses a general idea to identify issues that can be addressed through future research. By using two data collection tools, a questionnaire for students and a semi-structured interview for teachers, it is assumed that both together help get clear information in order to answer this study's research questions.

3.2. Students' Questionnaire

3.2.1. The Sample

This study's targeted population is third-year LMD students of the English Division at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra. The reason behind choosing third-year LMD students is that we believe that they have enough experience with exams in general and have experienced take-home exam at least once. A purposive sampling technique has been chosen in which only students who have experienced take-home exam are chosen to take a part in our study. Thus, the researcher was able to collect responses from 30 students who have experienced a take-home exam.

3.3.2 Aim of The Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a research tool that consists of a series of detailed questions designed to gather information from respondents. The aim of questionnaires, according to Lydeard (1991), is to measure attributes, behavior, attitudes, and beliefs. Therefore, the aim behind the use of this data collection tool is to collect the necessary data about third-year LMD students' opinions and attitudes towards take-home exams based on their experiences.

3.3.3 Description of Student's Questionnaire

The questionnaire designed in this study comprises various types of questions. The questions encompass close-ended and open-ended questions, multiple-choice, yes/ no questions, Likert scale, and checkboxes. However, the motive behind including open-ended options is to give the participants the freedom to interact with the question posed. The questionnaire consists of 18 questions that we believe have covered all the aspects needed in this research. The study's questionnaire can be categorized into three types: 1 Classification question, 6 behavioral questions, and 10 attitudinal questions. The classification questions aim at classifying our respondents based on their gender. The behavioral questions serve our

CHAPTER THREE: FIELD WORK AND DATA ANALYSIS

variable “take-home exam” whereas the attitudinal questions serve the second variable “students’ attitudes”.

3.3.4 Validating and Piloting the Students’ Questionnaire

Validating and piloting stage refers to the processes of assessing the data collection tool used in research to ensure its effectiveness. The first draft of the questionnaire designed was sent to the supervisor via email to check if the questions serve the objectives of the study. After receiving and taking into consideration the feedback received from the supervisor, the questionnaire was edited and distributed by hand to 10 students in order to be piloted. The piloting participants seemed that they had a problem with the frequency of justification questions under almost every question. We have noticed that most of the justification blanks were left blank and we realized they do not serve our research much. This note was taken into consideration in designing and addressing the last draft of the questionnaire.

3.3.5 Administration of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was administered to the participants online and was distributed via social media (namely Facebook and Instagram). However, some questionnaire copies were handed to the participants at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra because some participants do not use social media. The online form of the questionnaire was created by Google Form service and both forms were administered at the end of May 2021.

3.3.6 Analysis of Students’ Questionnaire

This section is devoted to the analysis of the students' responses to the questionnaire. The process of analyzing was done within 4 days using Excel sheet to create the charts, figures, and tables.

Item 1: students' gender classification

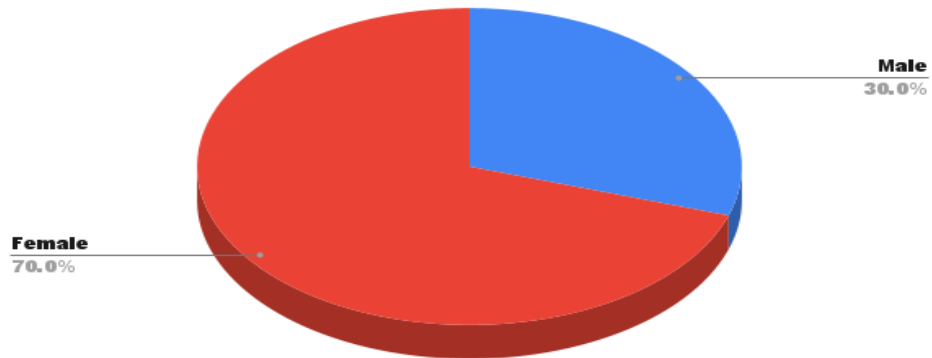


Figure 3.1: Student's Gender

The first question seeks to classify our participants' gender. The results from the figure above show that females make 70% of our sample while males represent only 30%. This demonstrates females' significant interest in language studies.

Item 2: Are you familiar with the concept "Take-home exam"?

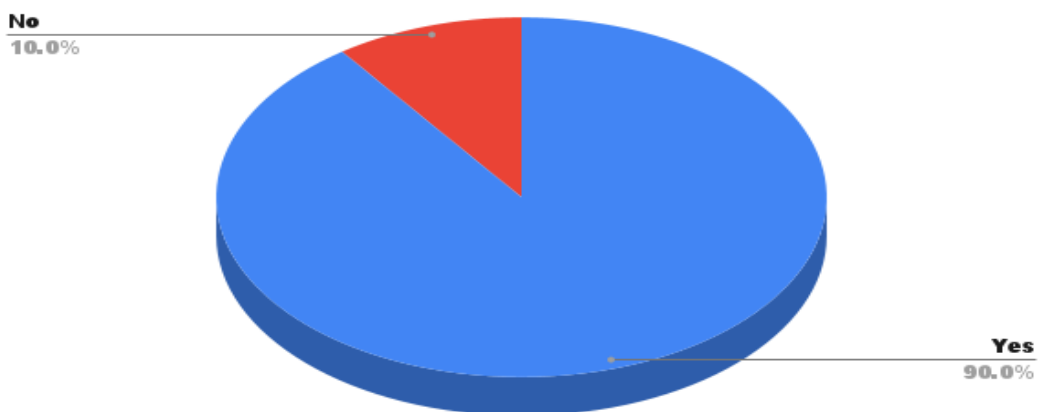


Figure 3.2: Student's Familiarity with the concept "Take-home exam"

This question aims at checking if students are familiar with this term. The result shows that 90% of the participants are familiar with the term “take-home exam” while only 10% are not. This leads us to say that although take-home exams were newly introduced in the context of Mohamed Khider University of Biskra, “take-home exam” is not a strange term for students.

Item 3: Have you taken take-home exam(s)

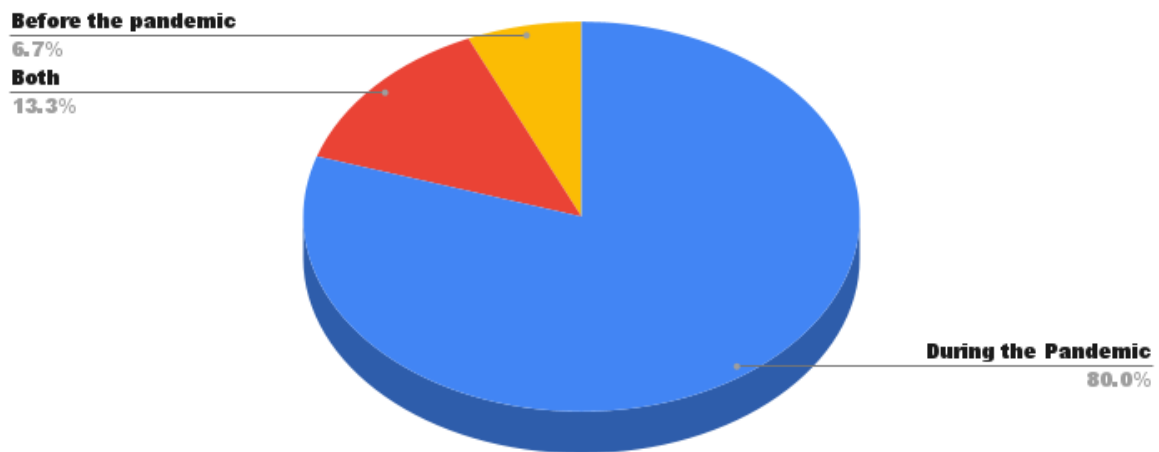


Figure 3.3: The period when students have taken THEs

The results show that 80% of participants have experienced a take-home exam during the time of the Covid-19 pandemic. Only 6.7% of the participants have taken a take-home exam before the pandemic, and 13.3% said that they have experience take-home exams before and during the pandemic. This highlights the fact that the pandemic was the underlying reason behind the teacher’s choice of conducting take-home exams.

Item 4: What was your first impression when you first heard about this assessment method?

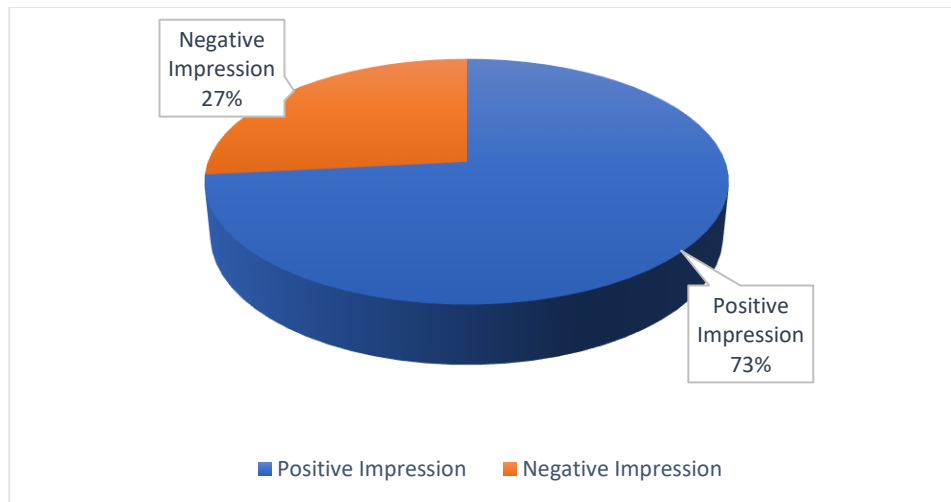


Figure 3.4: Students’ perception of THE

This question aims to know how students perceived the idea of having an exam at home. The results demonstrate that the majority of students have a positive impression (73%). The participants said that they liked the idea of having an exam at home “*I liked the idea of having an exam at home where I can concentrate more*”, another student has stated that “*it felt better than stressing over an exam in the classroom*”, “*Was glad to have this type of assessment, because it gives us more time to accomplish our exam*”. However, 27% of participants had a negative feeling towards having a take-home exam. Some were questioning the validity of this assessment method “*I thought it was not the best method to evaluate students because they can easily cheat*”, “*Worried because I don't know whether it is a valid way of assessment or not*” Other students felt that it is going to be harder than the traditional in-class exam “*I had a feeling that it going to be harder than class exams*”. It has been noticed from the data we have gathered that students’ opinions about their perception toward take-home exam varied from some who seems to be in favor with such assessment, while others

CHAPTER THREE: FIELD WORK AND DATA ANALYSIS

were in total disagreement with this type of assessment. Their main pretext is that they think it is not a valid and reliable type of assessment.

Item 5: Did you study/revise before the take-home exam?

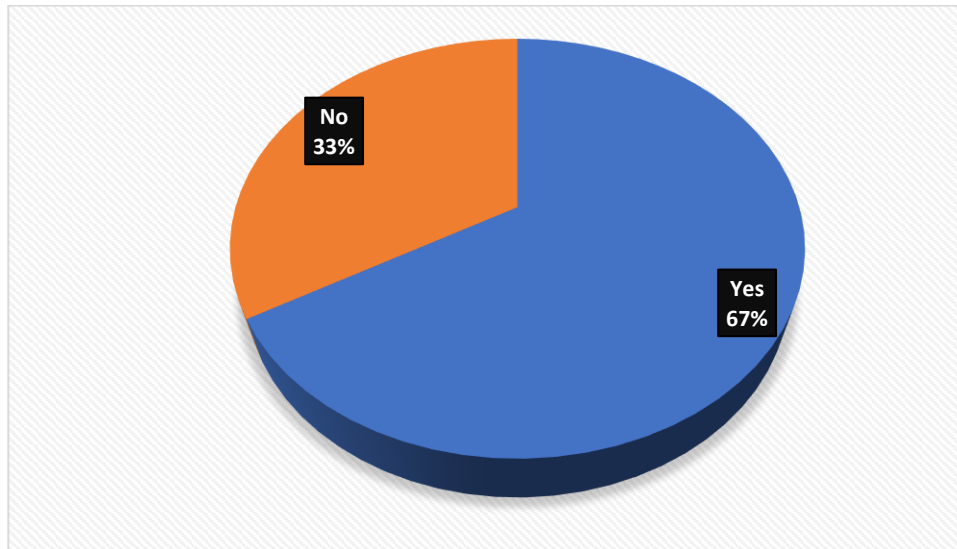


Figure 3.5: Students' studying before THE

Results obtained from the item above aimed at seeing if students treated the take-home exam as a traditional exam or not. The results, surprisingly, show that 67% of students studied/ revised before the take-home exam. However, 33% of the participants have responded with "no". Their justification was that the availability and the accessibility to sources during the exam was a reason not to study before the take-home exam. Some students have written the following: Student 1: *"I thought having access to copybooks and the internet would be sufficient"*, students 2: *"I did not feel like there is a need to prepare before THE since I will have access to the sources"*, student 3 added: *"Because we see the questions then check for answers"*.

Item 6: The take-home exam(s) where in form of:

CHAPTER THREE: FIELD WORK AND DATA ANALYSIS

- a- True/false
- b- Multiple-choice
- c- Essay
- d- Short answer
- e- Other

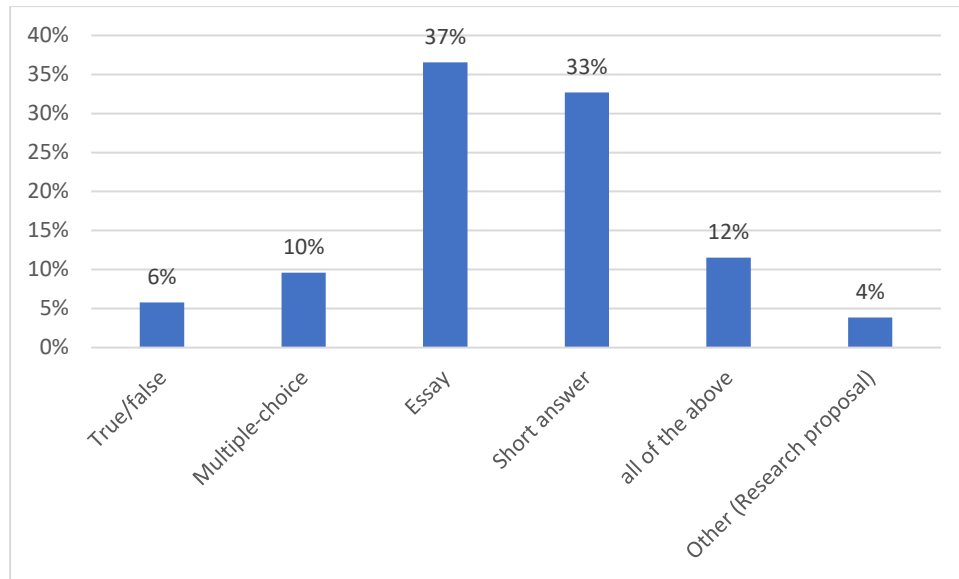


Figure 3.6: Types of question forms used in THEs

The sixth question is about the forms of questions used in take-home exams. The figure above demonstrates higher percentages of use of essays (37%) and short answer questions (33%) in take-home exams. While the lower percentages are demonstrated in the forms of questions that require memory skills i.e., true/false (6%) and multiple-choice questions (10%), and all of the above represents 12%. Two students added a similar other form of take-home exam question which is “research proposal”. We can conclude that teachers choose indirect questions so that students do not copy past answers from their handouts or other references.

Item 7: Where take-home exam questions googleable?

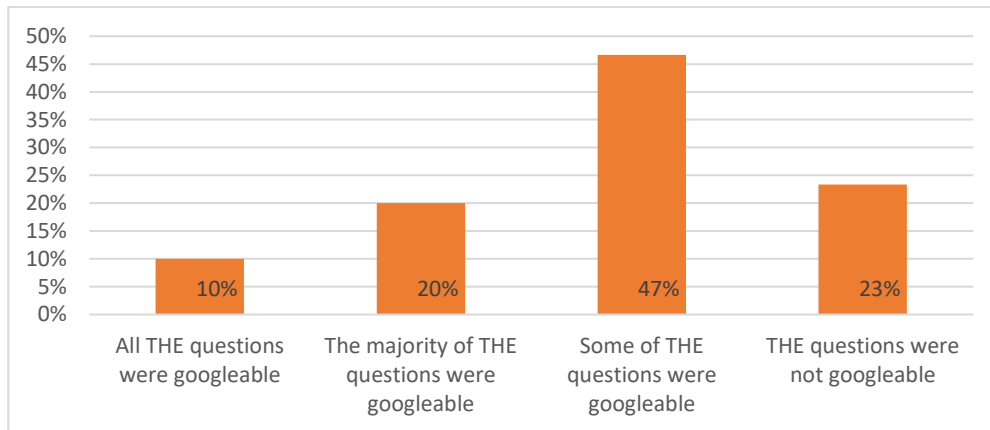


Figure 3.7: The Googleability of THE Questions

This figure above reveals whether the take-home exam questions were googleable or not, i.e., if the question’s answers were likely to be found on the internet or not. 47% of students said that some questions were googleable and 23% said that take-home exam questions were not googleable at all, while 20% and 10% of students said that the majority of all take-home exam questions were googleable. It could be concluded that, according to students’ responses, some THE questions were easy to be copied from the internet which affects the integrity.

Item 8: Have you plagiarized an answer?

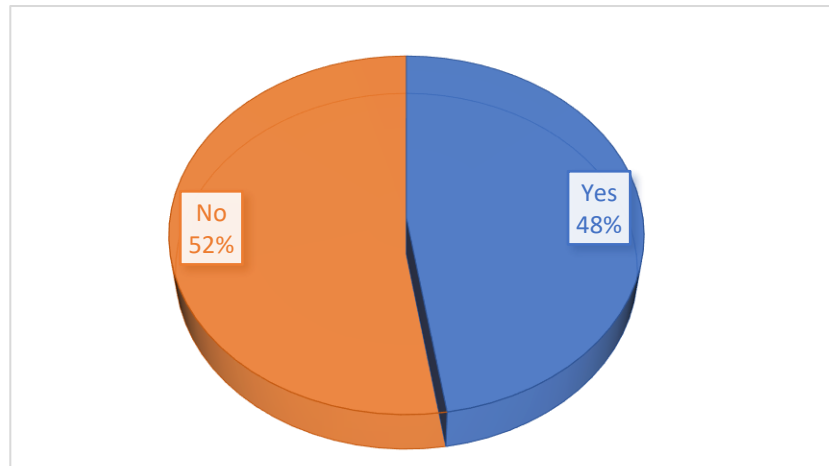


Figure 3.8: Plagiarism in THE

We wanted to know if students have plagiarized answers in take-home exams or not. 52% of participants said that they did not plagiarize while 48% of them admitted that they did plagiarize. While 52% is the higher percentage, 48% cannot be unconsidered which confirms the one drawback of take-home exam, which is, academic dishonesty in THEs. Students' justification for not plagiarizing in take-home exam indicates their awareness of academic integrity and the importance of being academically honest. Some students have noted that: Student 1: *"I did not do that because we already know plagiarism is illegal and we would not take the mark for other's works"*, student 2: *"I do not answer with what is not mine because it is stealing other's ideas and words and I will not be satisfied on myself"*. On the other hand, students who admitted that they have plagiarized justified their behavior with the difficulty of the exam. Student 1 have stated that *"Since they were difficult to the point, I just want to write anything"*. Some students have claimed that since it is an exam taken at home and they have full accessibility to sources, and the supervision of teachers is absent, they simply can indulge in appropriating other researchers' ideas, thoughts, and words without giving due credits. Another student added, *"That's the issue with THE, Plagiarism would always take place, so it's very important to think of a way to counter that"*. We conclude that all students are aware

CHAPTER THREE: FIELD WORK AND DATA ANALYSIS

of what plagiarism is and the importance of being academically honest, however, some choose to do this unethical behavior for the sake of getting high marks.

Item 9: How did you manage to complete the exam?

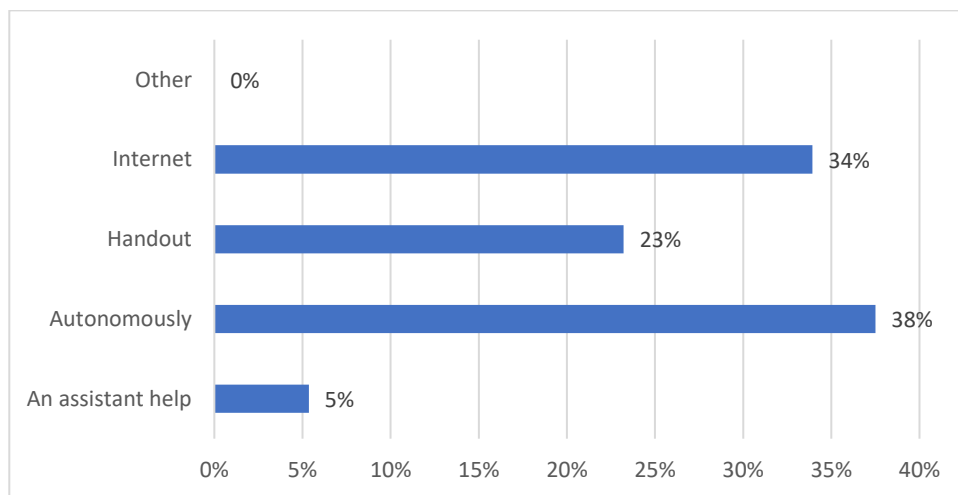


Figure 3.9: Tools of completing take-home exam

In the above question, we have asked participants what tools have they used in order to complete their THE. This question aims at clearing up the difference between plagiarizing and using different resources of information to help answer the examination questions. We have given the freedom for students to choose multiple choices. First, we notice that the choice “autonomously” ranks the first (38%), and it means that students rely on themselves in answering the exam. Internet ranks second with the percentage of 34% and handouts the third (23%). However, only 3 students said that they used an assistant help (5%). Take-home exam

CHAPTER THREE: FIELD WORK AND DATA ANALYSIS

provides students with the freedom of accessing a variety of sources such as (Books, academic journals, websites, videos, handouts, lectures, etc.). However, we notice that students tend to use the internet more than their handouts. To put it in a nutshell way, take-home exam boosts students to foster their researching skills.

Item 10: Did you waste time looking for answers?

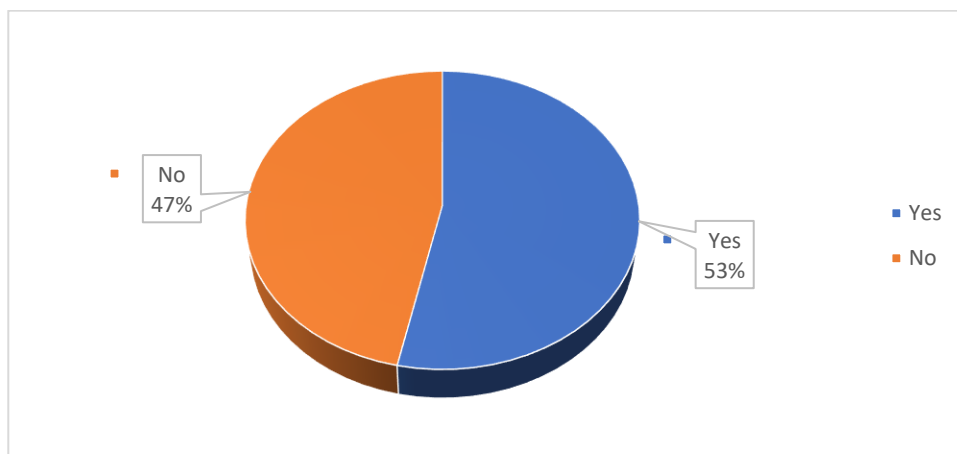


Figure 3.10: Students wasting of time during THE

Another drawback of take-home exams needed to be tested is that students waste time looking for answers during take-home exams. The displayed results in the figure above demonstrate approximate percentages. The figure shows that 53% of participants did waste time looking for answers while 47% said that they did not waste time looking for answers. Therefore, the results analyzed could confirm that students are likely to waste time during THEs searching for answers.

Item 11: How was your experience?

a-negative

b-positive

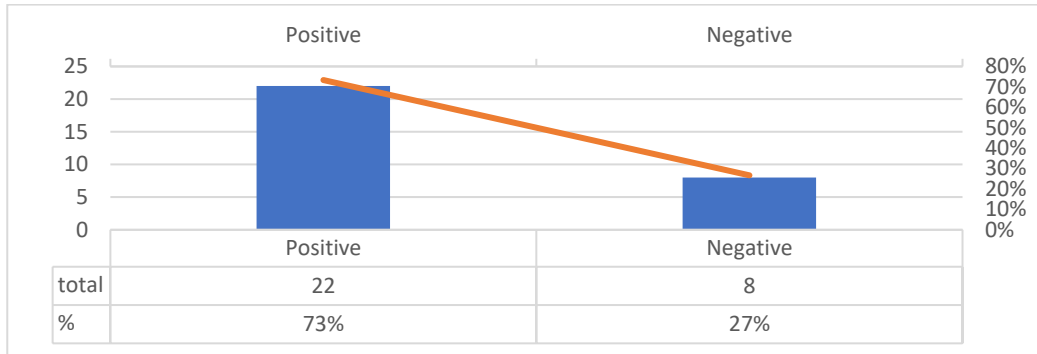


Figure 3.11: Students’ experience with take-home exam

The question above aimed at exploring students’ experience with the take-home exam(s) they have experienced. The figure presents the following results: a higher percentage of participants had a positive experience with the take home exam (73%) while 27% had a negative experience.

Students who had a positive experience justified their answer as follows:

- They had a good mark
- THEs allowed them to have more time to think and express their ideas and eventually, perform well
- There was lesser stress and pressure than in class exams

Students who had a negative attitude justified their answers as follows:

- They did not perceive the take-home exam as a serious examination
- Students had no idea how the take-home exams were graded.
- Take-home exams are harder than the in-class exams
- THE do not provide accurate estimation of student's competences

CHAPTER THREE: FIELD WORK AND DATA ANALYSIS

Item 12: What is the factor(s) that had a positive role during the take-home exam?

- a- Much longer period of time given before deadline
- b- Absence of teacher
- c- Comfortable place
- d- Availability of sources
- e- All the above
- f- Other

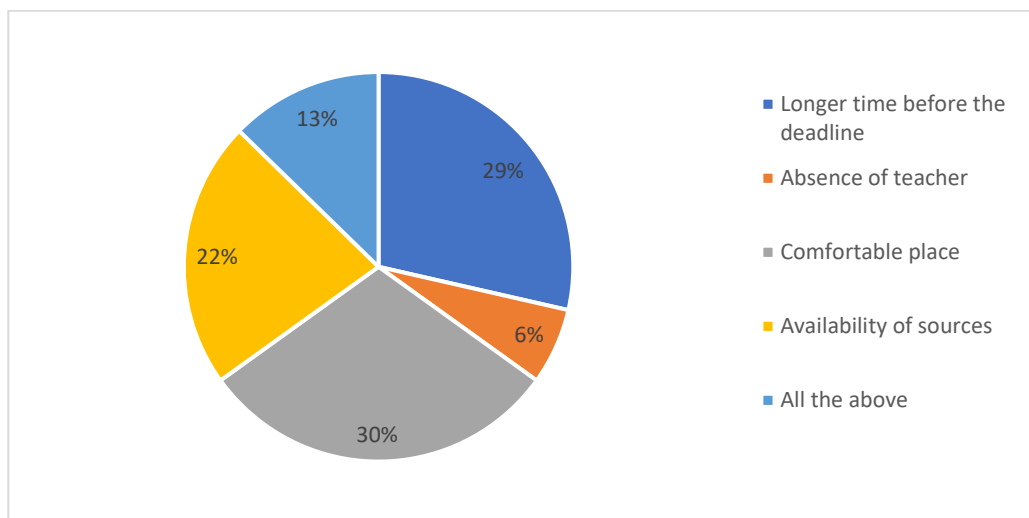


Figure 3.12: Factors that had a positive impact during the THEs

The question above seeks to explore the different factors that have a positive impact on the students' experience of take-home exam. The results demonstrate that a comfortable place has the highest positive impact on the students' experience with take-home exam (30%), followed by longer time before the deadline (29%), availability of sources (22%), absence of teacher (6%), and 13% for all the above. A participant added another factor in addition to the provided choices: “*Internet that offer you explanation and taught us what teachers did not*”

Item 13: Based on your experience, did THE activate your higher order of thinking skills (i.e., critical thinking, problem solving and reasoning skills)?

CHAPTER THREE: FIELD WORK AND DATA ANALYSIS

This question aims at answering one of our research questions “Do take-home exams promote students’ higher-order thinking skills?” we wanted to explore the answer from students’ preceptive.

THE activate higher order thinking skills	Yes	No
Frequency	25	5
Percentage	83%	17%

Table 3.1: THE activate higher-order thinking skill

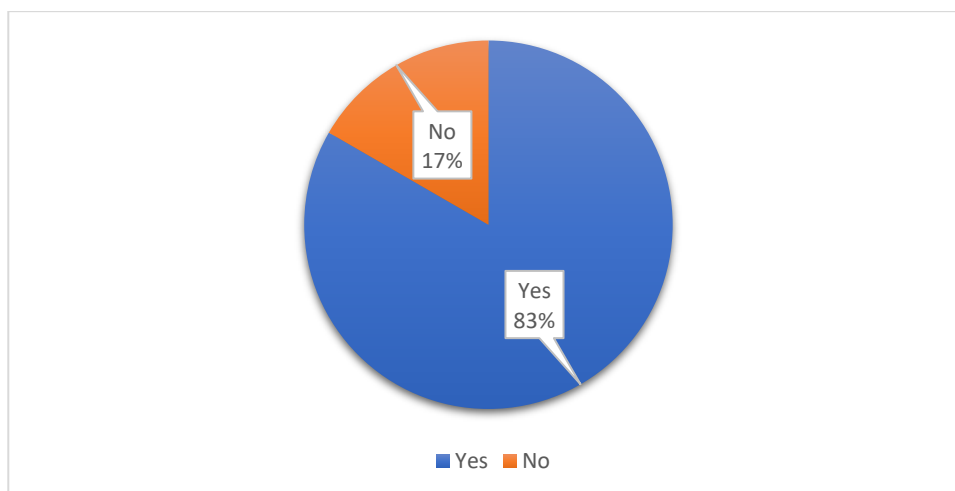


Figure 3.13: Take-home exams activate higher-order thinking skills

The figure above illustrates that 83% of participants agreed that take-home exams activate higher-order thinking skills while 17% saw the opposite. We can conclude, based on students experience with take-home exam, take-home exams promote students’ higher-order thinking skills, however, some take-home exams have failed which have reflected on the opinion of 17% of participants.

Item 14: How did you feel while taking THE compared to the traditional in-class exam?

CHAPTER THREE: FIELD WORK AND DATA ANALYSIS

This question seeks to explore and compare students' attitudes towards take-home exams with the traditional in-class exams according to five aspects: confidence, anxiety, challenge, confusion, and comfort.

1. Confidence:

- More confidence
- Less confidence
- No difference

Confidence:	More confident	Less confident	No difference
Frequency	20	3	7
Percentage	67%	10%	23%

Table 3.2: Students' level of confidence during THEs compared to ICE

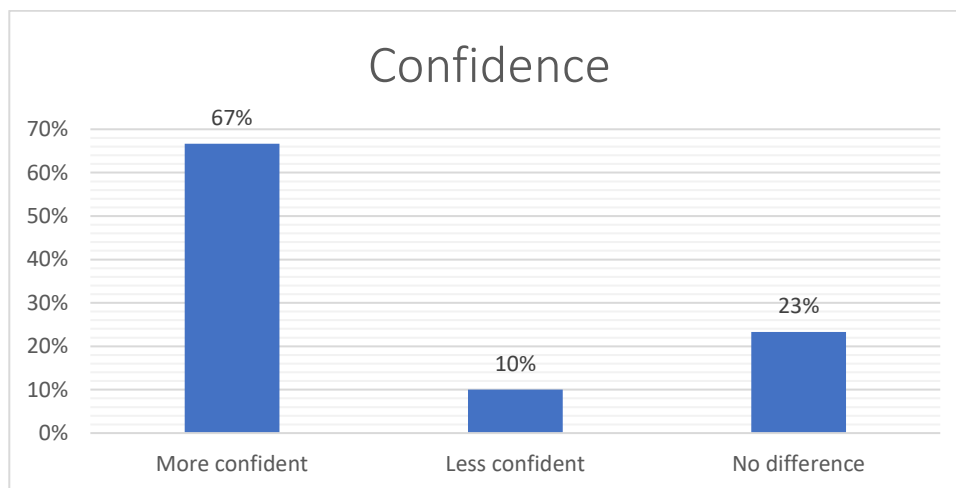


Figure 3.14: Students' level of confidence During THEs compared to ICEs

The results demonstrated on both the figure and the table above presents students' level of confidence during take-home exam in comparison with in-class exams. 67% of the participants said that they felt more confident while doing the take-home exam than they are in in-class exams. 10% of participants, which equals 3 students as indicated in table 3.2., said

CHAPTER THREE: FIELD WORK AND DATA ANALYSIS

that they felt less confident during take-home exam compared to in-class exams. 23% of the participants have felt no difference between the two types of exams. The results indicate that the majority of our participants felt more confident while doing their take-home exams.

2. Anxiety

- More anxious
- Less anxious
- No difference

Anxiety	More anxious	Less anxious	No difference
Frequency	0	24	6
Percentage	0%	80%	20%

Table 3.3: Students' level of anxiety during THEs compared of ICEs

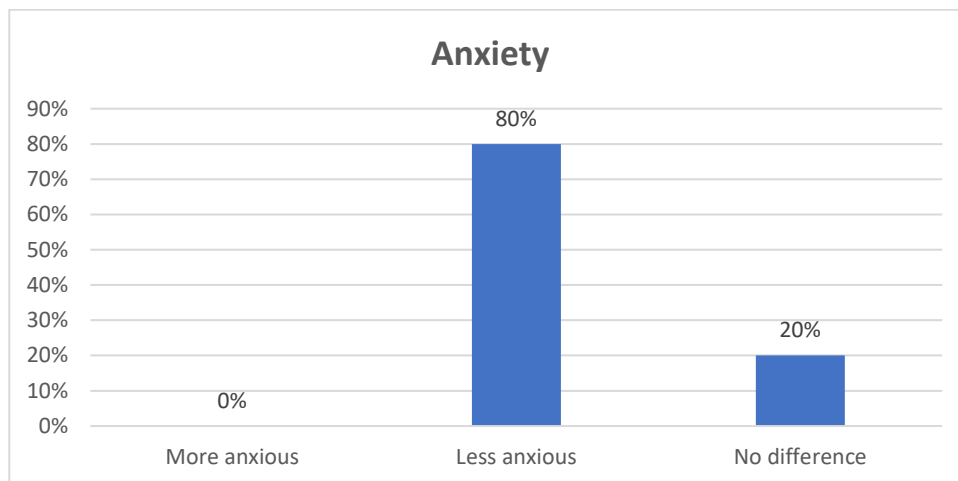


Figure 3.15: Students' level of anxiety during THEs compared of ICEs

The data shown in the figure and table above compares students' levels of anxiety during take-home exams to in-class exams. While 0% of participants said that they felt more anxious, 80% of them have indicated that they felt less anxious while taking take-home exam

CHAPTER THREE: FIELD WORK AND DATA ANALYSIS

compared to the traditional in-class exam. However, 20% of participants did not feel any difference between the two types of examinations. The results ensure that take-home exams reduce student's test anxiety according to our sample's experiences.

3. Challenge:

- More challenging
- Less challenging
- No difference

Challenge	More challenging	Less challenging	No difference
Frequency	7	14	8
Percentage	24%	48%	28%

Table 3.4: THE's level of challenge compared to ICEs

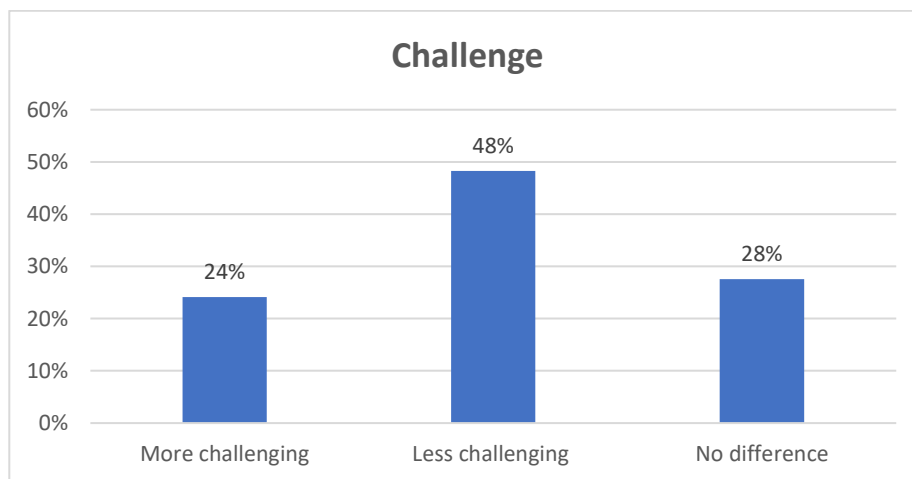


Figure 3.16: THE's level of challenge compared to ICEs

We wanted to know whether take-home exam's level of challenging compared to in-class exam from students' experiences. The figure and the table above demonstrate higher percentage of student who felt that take-home exam was less challenging than in-class exams (84%). 24% of participants opted for the first choice which is more challenging while 28% of

CHAPTER THREE: FIELD WORK AND DATA ANALYSIS

participants said that they felt no difference between the two types of exams. We can conclude that the majority of our participants perceived take-home exams as less challenging than in-class exams.

4. Confusion:

- More confusing
- Less confusing
- No difference

Confusion	More confusing	Less confusing	No difference
Frequency	7	13	10
Percentage	23%	43%	33%

Table 3.5: THEs level of confusion compared to ICEs

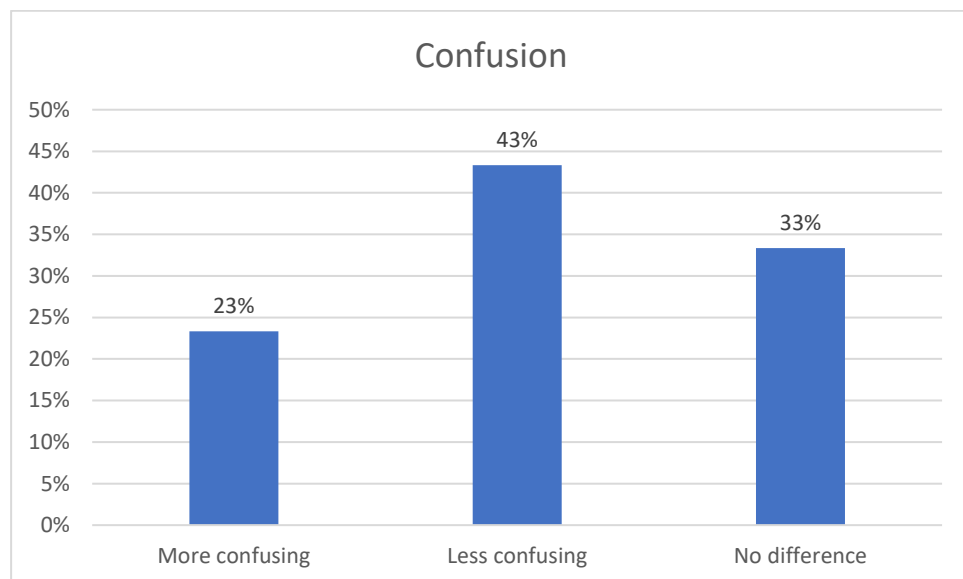


Figure 3.17: Table 3.5. THEs level of confusion compared to ICEs

This part aims at questioning whether the take-home exams felt confusing for students or not. The figure and table presented above demonstrate that 43% of our participants felt that take-home exam was less confusing than in-class exams, 23% said that take-home exams are

CHAPTER THREE: FIELD WORK AND DATA ANALYSIS

more confusing, and 33% opted for the third choice, which is no difference between the two types of examinations.

5. Comfort:

- More comfortable
- Less comfortable
- No difference

Comfort	More comfortable	Less comfortable	No difference
Frequency	24	2	4
Percentage	80%	7%	13%

Table 3.6 : Students' level of comfort during THEs compared to ICEs

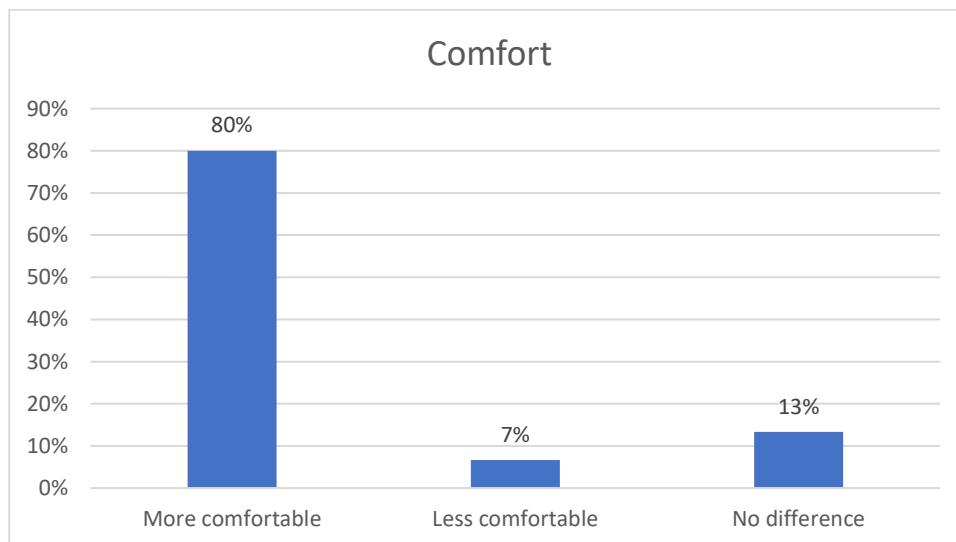


Figure 3.18: Students' level of comfort during THEs compared to ICEs

This part seeks to know whether exams at home are more comfortable than in-class examinations or the opposite. The results presented in the figure and the table above show a

CHAPTER THREE: FIELD WORK AND DATA ANALYSIS

higher percentage of participants who felt more comfortable during take-home exams. 7% of participants, however, opted for the opposite while 13% said that they felt no difference between the two types of examinations. We conduct that our sample, almost all, agreed that take-home exams are more comfortable based on their experiences.

Item 15: Based on your experience, do you think that THE is better than the traditional in-class exam?

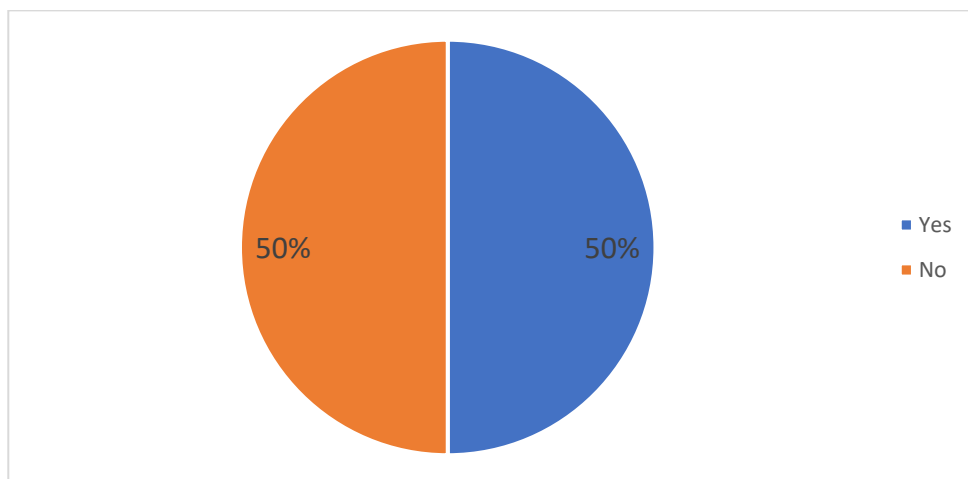


Figure 3.19: Students' preference between THEs and ICEs

This question targets students' opinions on whether take-home exams are better than in-class exams or not. The figure above displays the evenness of percentages. 50% of participants think that take-home exams are better than in-class exams and the other 50% opted for the opposite.

Students' justification:

Some students who answered with 'yes' justified their answer as follows:

- No anxiety no pressure no attending. Just an awesome experience especially for working students like myself.

CHAPTER THREE: FIELD WORK AND DATA ANALYSIS

- If it was done with an honest way without cheating because the students are more comfortable.
- Because in THEs I'm not limited with time so my attention will be all about how to make accurate answers.
- Most modules do not require memorizing but a deep understand on the topic which necessitates more searches on the internet.
- Because home is a very comfortable environment, we can direct our full attention towards the tasks and have enough time to make a clear and well revised and edited answer.

Some students who answered with “no” justified their answer as follows:

- All of the THEs were difficult however the traditional ones were fine.
- Yes, it is beneficial but it may not reflect the learner's real level.
- Despite being more comfortable, THE allows students to easily cheat and that makes for false evaluation.
- I prefer the traditional method solely because it is more transparent and organized.
- There is no difference. Both of the exams are going to be correct on the same methodology by the same teacher.

Item 16: Students’ consideration of take-home exams

Table 3.7. Students’ consideration of take-home exam

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
THEs need to be well prepared	57%	40%	0%	3%	0%
THEs tend to be difficult	17%	47%	17%	20%	0%

CHAPTER THREE: FIELD WORK AND DATA ANALYSIS

THEs require less memorizing	27%	50%	3%	13%	7%
THEs opens room for critical thinking	37%	30%	27%	7%	0%
THEs assess students' ability to apply knowledge	33%	47%	7%	13%	0%
THEs are fair and objective	17%	23%	20%	23%	17%
Cheating is hard in THE	3%	23%	13%	23%	37%
THE improved the quality of my work	30%	40%	23%	7%	0%
I would prefer to have more THE than class room exams	27%	27%	27%	20%	0%
THE is not an efficient assessment method	10%	30%	27%	20%	13%

The above figure illustrates the degree of agreement or disagreement of the respondents about some characteristics of take-home exam. Concerning the first statement, all most all the respondents agreed (40%) and strongly agreed (57%) that take-home exams need to be well prepared. Whereas, 3% disagreed and none of the respondents strongly disagreed. For the second statement, 47% agreed and 17% strongly agreed that take-home exams tend to be difficult while 20% disagreed and 17% were neutral. For the third statement, Almost the majority of participants agreed (50%) and strongly agreed (27%) that take-home exams

CHAPTER THREE: FIELD WORK AND DATA ANALYSIS

require less memorization. Meanwhile, 13% disagreed and 7% strongly disagreed with the statement and 3% opted for the “undecided” option. For the fourth statement, 30% and 37% agreed and strongly agreed that take-home exam assess critical thinking while 7% disagreed and 27% were neutral and opted for the “undecided” option. For the fifth statement, the majority of respondents either agreed (47%) or strongly agreed (33%) that take-home exams assess students’ ability to apply knowledge. However, 13% disagreed and 7% opted for the “undecided” option. For the sixth statement, we notice equivalence between both sides. 23% and 17% agreed and strongly agreed that take-home exams are fair and objective while 23% and 17% disagree and strongly disagreed. Only 2% were neutral and opted for the “undecided” option. Concerning the seventh statement, 37% and 23% of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed that cheating is hard in take-home exams. On the other hand, 23% agreed and 3% strongly agreed that cheating is hard while 13% opted for the “undecided” option. For the eighth statement, the majority of the respondents either agreed (30%) or strongly agreed (40%) that take-home exams improved the quality of their work. 7% of respondents disagreed with the statement while 23% opted for the “undecided” option. For the ninth statement, 27% agreed and 27% strongly agreed that they would prefer to have more take-home exams than in-class exams while 20% disagreed and 27% opted for the “undecided” option. For the last statement, 30% agreed and 10% strongly agreed that take-home exam is not an efficient assessment method while 20% and 13% disagreed and strongly disagreed. However, 27% of the participants were neutral and opted for the “undecided” option.

Item 17: Do you think teachers should consider using THEs more often?

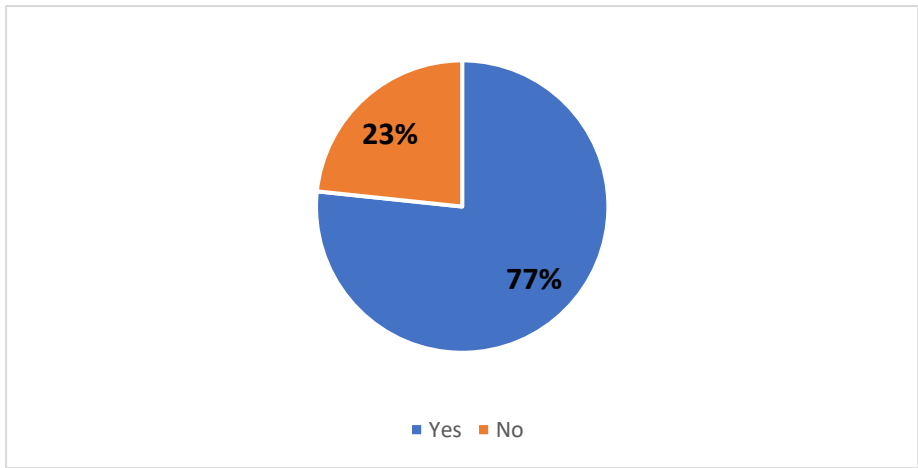


Figure 3.20: Students' opinions on teachers' use of THEs

The aim of this question is to see students' opinions on teachers' consideration of using take-home exams more often. It is noticeable in the figure above that the majority of the respondents do think that teachers should consider using take-home exams more often. However, 23% of the respondents went for the opposite, that is, they do not think that teachers should consider using take-home exams for often.

Item 18: Why do you think teachers would consider using THEs?

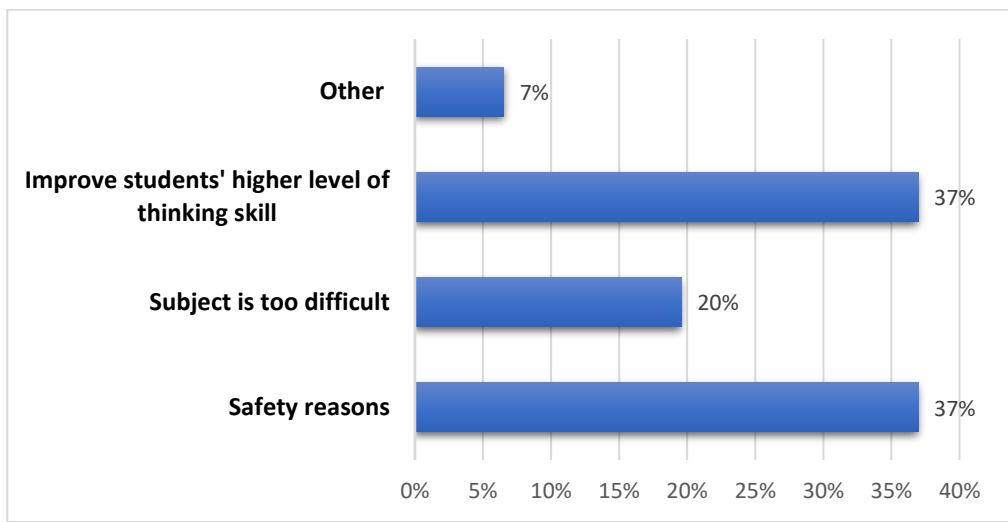


Figure 3.21: Reasons why teachers would use THEs

CHAPTER THREE: FIELD WORK AND DATA ANALYSIS

This question seeks to see what students think as reasons behind the use of take-home exams. The results on the figure above demonstrate similar percentages for two reasons: safety reasons and improve students' higher-order thinking skills (37%) while 20% think that teachers would use take-home exams because the subject is too difficult. 7% of students added other reasons:

- Because they are obliged to.
- To change the pace and make examining more interesting.
- To reduce test anxiety.

It could be summarized that students could think of a variety of reasons in which their teachers choose to use THEs. Safety of reasons and improving HOTS ranks the top of reasons they could think of.

3.3. Teachers' Interview

3.3.1. The Sample

The sample used for this study is 4 teachers at the English division at Mohammed Khider University who teach different modules. A purposive sampling technique was used in which, two teachers who have conducted a take-home exam were selected to participate in the first interview and two other teachers who have never conducted any take-home exam were chosen to participate in the second interview. The reason behind choosing this sample is because the researcher aimed at investigating teachers' opinions and attitudes towards the take-home exam from different perspectives.

3.3.2 Description of The Interview

For the aim of fulfilling the research requirement and objectives, the researcher obtained more data by using two semi-structured interviews for teachers using a tape recorder.

CHAPTER THREE: FIELD WORK AND DATA ANALYSIS

A semi-structured interview usually consists of a series of open-ended questions. Instead of only strictly following predetermined interview questions, the interviewer will ask a predetermined question and then might ask a more detailed question based on the interviewee's response. One interview consisted of (6) questions for teachers who have conducted a take-home exam and a second interview for teachers who have not conducted a take-home exam which consisted of (5) questions.

3.3.3 Aim of The Interview

In general, an interview is the elicitation of data from another individual by one person through a face-to-face conversation. The main purpose of interviews in qualitative research is that they aid in the explanation, better understanding, and exploration of opinions, attitudes, behavior, experiences, and so on. Hence, the teachers' interview we have used aimed at collecting their opinions and perceptions of take-home exams from two different sides: teachers who already experienced a take-home exam, and teachers who have never used this assessment method before.

3.3.4 Administration of Teachers' Interview

The interview has been specifically designed for teachers who have conducted take-home exam(s). As far as it has been investigated, only a small number of teachers at the English Division have conducted THEs. Six (6) teachers who have used this assessment method at least once were contacted and emailed by the researcher. However, only two of them approved to participate in the interview. One participant was interviewed face-to-face in CEIL, staff room, whereas the second participant was interviewed online using google meet. For the validity of the research, this researcher has adapted this research challenge and designed another interview that targets teachers who have not conducted a take-home exam seeking their perceptions of the use of THEs. The interview was conducted with two other

teachers at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra to establish the balance between the two interviews.

3.3.5 Analysis of Teachers' Interview

In this section, a thematic analysis of the interview transcripts is going to be analyzed. Thematic analysis is a qualitative data analysis technique. It is generally used to describe a group of writings, such as interview transcripts. The researcher carefully analyses the data to discover common themes that appear frequently.

3.3.5.1 Interview 1: Teachers Who Have Conducted THE

Question 1: Why did you choose to conduct a take-home exam?

This question aims at discovering the underlying reason behind teachers opting for the take-home exam assessment method. Two teachers have been asked and their responses are illustrated in the following table:

Reason	Teacher
Covid 19 Pandemic	T1; T2
Difficult Module	T2

Table 3.8: Teachers' justification for the use of THE

As it could be noticed, from the table above, the interviewed teachers shared the same reason behind choosing to use a take-home exam. The Covid-19 pandemic was a special circumstance in which a new assessment method had to be introduced for teachers. T1, a male teacher, further added, *“all my examinations are in class examination. So, it was just a requirement of a period because of the Covid-19 pandemic that we were asked to manage to have some take home exams in order to finish the academic year”*. T2, a female teacher, stated another reason, which was, the difficulty of the module that she had assessed. T2 noted that *“Students did not have much face-to-face sessions so the module was not easy for students to*

CHAPTER THREE: FIELD WORK AND DATA ANALYSIS

get and even for me, so the take-home exam was the option". It could be concluded that the choice of conducting THE was due to the critical situation at which teachers had found themselves and had no other option but THE.

Question 2: In designing your exam, what did you try to assess/ trigger exactly?

It is important for teachers to have clear assessment objective(s) in the designing of any test which is a part of assessment literacy. Due to the fact that take-home exams are different from traditional exams, the assessment objectives must be different. THEs offer students unlimited access to materials and time. For this reason, we wanted to see what have teachers tried to assess in adapting to this new assessment method.

T1: *"when students sit for a take-home exam, the material is in hand. So, I'm looking forward to assess other skills than memory or retention or definitions. I'm trying to target other skills like reflection, like just synthesis, analysis, discussion, more cognitive skills, rather than retention and recognition skills"*.

T2: *"I tried to assess what I have given them in the couples of lectures I gave. I can say that I have tried to assess students' ability to do practical things"*

We can notice that both teaches have tried to assess other skills than what traditional exams assess. i.e., the memory skills. Teachers opted for the hard skills assessment. Teacher 1, in designing THE, has tried to assess the higher levels of bloom's taxonomy and higher order of thinking skills (critical thinking). Teacher 2 went for the problem-solving skills (which is a higher-order thinking skill as well).

Question 3: Exam questions can take many forms, in what form were the questions of the take-home exam(s) you have designed?

CHAPTER THREE: FIELD WORK AND DATA ANALYSIS

This question addresses the question forms take-home exams use. Question forms can be divided into two types: traditional and alternative. We have asked the interviewed teachers about what type of question form they opted in designing the take-home exam(s) they have conducted.

T1: *“The one I designed was in the form of an essay writing based on watching a video. Students were asked to watch a YouTube clip on a given subject, and I asked them certain reflection questions on that video. And the next question is to develop an essay an essay expressing their impression on the on the content of the video. This is the design of examination. Another one was in a form of a comprehensive, like a summary of all where they've started during a semester”.*

T2: *“I have a difficulty in giving questions for such a module which is not a module in which you write an essay but to calculate. ... The questions were about calculating Chi Square Tests and nominal variable. ... other question, I suggested a hypothesis and asked them to test it”.*

Based on the teachers’ statements, we conclude that they both opted for the alternative type of questions which confirms what teachers have stated about what they have tried to assess in designing the take-home exam. T1 used a written form of questions in which students are asked to write full sentences and compositions based on their understanding, while T1 used critical questions in which students calculate and solve problems.

Question 4: Were you satisfied by the exam you designed?

Satisfaction by THE	Yes	No
Teachers	T2	T1

Table 3.9: Teachers’ satisfaction with THE they have designed

CHAPTER THREE: FIELD WORK AND DATA ANALYSIS

Based on the result shown in the table, we see that the two teachers have opposite attitudes towards THE. T1 said that he is not satisfied with the take-home exam they have designed and stated the following:

No, frankly speaking, I'm not satisfied because I found some similar answers. So, students copied from each other. I found also some plagiarized works. I mean, instead of expressing the idea, using their own words, they resorting to the internet and eight and they copied passages from it, pretending or claiming that they are their own production.

T1 acknowledged the presence of cheating and plagiarism in THEs as a reason behind his dissatisfaction with THE he has designed. Meanwhile, T2 expressed her satisfaction with THE as follows:

Yes, I was really satisfied, even to the tone my contacts, it said that the questions were well traced chosen. ... I was astonished to see that most of the students were able to answers to answer.... I was really satisfied that tell you why. First of all, I know that students worked in groups. Sure. And rarely, there were just very few students who worked alone. But most of them worked in groups. And you know, that group work and collaboration, cooperation, very useful techniques. Even those students who have a new level, well, not if it was a face-to-face presumption, exam, they couldn't have the average they would surely have got the minimum. But thanks to group where can collaboration, etc. Most of the students, and let me say, maybe 85%? Yeah, I really did the percentage, but there were just five students who got under.

CHAPTER THREE: FIELD WORK AND DATA ANALYSIS

T2, on the other hand, addressed group work and students' collaboration in answering the exam questions as a positive factor that allowed students to perform better in her module. She also added that students' collaborations "*is an achievement*". However, T2 mentioned that there were some students who have copy-pasted from their colleagues' works "*some of them got just copied and pasted, shortly, copied and pasted their classmates*". We can conclude that both teachers have opposite opinions towards THE based on their experiences, however, both agreed on the entity of unethical behaviors, i.e., cheating and plagiarism, in THEs they have conducted.

Question 5: Who do you think is responsible for students' participation in unethical behavior in THEs, i.e., plagiarism and cheating?

T1: "*I think it's a shared responsibility. I share the responsibility in the sense that I should have been more cautious and wiser in designing questions that cannot be copied or cannot be plagiarized. Students also should take a share in this as academic honesty must be a practice and behavior that any college student should possess, so I think both of us are responsible*"

T1: "*It is the students who just look for getting a mark, there are students who just look for getting a mark in order to get that diploma*"

As mentioned above, teachers reported two people who are responsible of the presence of plagiarism and cheating in THE. T1 stated that both, teachers and students, share the responsibility. A teacher should be more careful in designing THE questions that are hard to be cheated or plagiarized and college students who must have an awareness of the importance of being academically honest. T2 added that some students only care about getting high marks neglecting academic honesty's importance.

Question 6: Based on your experience, what do you consider as benefits and drawbacks of take-home exam?

CHAPTER THREE: FIELD WORK AND DATA ANALYSIS

1. Benefits of THE

Intuitively, every assessment method has its upsides and downsides aspects. Obviously, THE must have their own benefits. In the following section, two teachers are quoted in favor of THE as illustrated below.

T1: *“The benefits could be related to the stress-free environment, okay, so students could answer the questions with no stress and accessibility of materials and references besides the probably the pace of the answer. In other words, unlike regular examinations students are given a due time, a precise due time. So, if they don’t have to finish in that period in take home examinations, the period could be could be managed. Home examinations that extend the skills that we teach you want to assess. So, besides the traditional examinations, the teacher now is obliged to think out of the box and come So, with as I said more require more reflective questions, more analytical questions, so, he or she needs to make or to break these traditional ways of asking questions in examinations”*

T2: *“students were obliged to be creative referring to exam they are trying to solve, it was a kind of task in which you have to solve a problem. and problem solving is one of the best tasks, which we can give to student”*

2. Drawbacks of THE

T1: *“When it comes down to the to the cons, which are the drawbacks, I already mentioned, one, which is the lack of honesty, lack of originality also. While correcting the exams, I can't know exactly if it is a pure work of the student or not. So, for me, this is the only drawback of the take home examination. One may think of for example, the delays case because many students do not respect the due time when it comes to a take home examination. They send their assignments or exams later, which affects the process of correction”*

CHAPTER THREE: FIELD WORK AND DATA ANALYSIS

T2: *“The one drawback I can think of is students cheating and copying their peers’ work. They just copy-pasted the answers. In the future, it would be better if we had both, I mean class exam and take an evaluation of a home exam to be fair, so that we have marks which really show students abilities in solving problems with such tasks”*

From what the interviewed teachers stated, four (4) benefits and two (2) drawbacks of THEs could be outlined. For the benefits, T1 stated that THEs allow teachers to assess other skills that can be assessed with traditional class exams which breaks the traditional way of assessing students. T2 mentioned one skill that THE assess which is problem-solving. She also stated that THEs promote students’ creativity. T1 considered two more benefits of THE which are stress-free and the long due time. For the drawbacks, both T1 and T2 mentioned the lack of academic honesty students can show in THEs. Students engage in unethical behavior (i.e., cheating and plagiarism) in answering the exam questions which affects the academic integrity of this assessment method. Moreover, T1 added that is not easy to declare if a student is using his purely own work or not. This creates some kind of ethical issues, especially related to the fairness of evaluation.

As a final comment, one experienced teacher insisted on offering his comments concerning the use of THE as an assessment method in EFL classes. His comments have been transcribed in the following section. The teacher in question expressed in a lengthy paragraph three main ideas about his experience in the use of THE in the English Division.

The Teacher’s Comment

Frankly speaking, I can't tell because as I said, I don't have enough experience in taking home exam. So, one or two times cannot really evaluate the experience. So, I don't know till now, what are the features that should be considered what are the things that should be avoided, but my concept of a take home exam is that it needs to target skills beyond

CHAPTER THREE: FIELD WORK AND DATA ANALYSIS

identification of items, definition of concepts, direct questions. The questions that the take home exam needs to target other metacognitive skills, they need to target discussion and analysis skills. Because when you do so, you receive answers, which are completely personal, different from one person to another, and they reflect the real level of the students. And finally, I can say that a take home exam could be an alternative in cases of emergencies or in cases of necessity, but the traditional the conventional exams, for me are more reliable, and they have better validity, then the take home examinations.

The teacher has highlighted very interesting points. First, the teacher does not have enough experience with take-home exams, so his experience cannot be 100% adequate. Second, he believes that THEs should target higher levels of thinking skills such as discussion and analysis rather than the lower levels of thinking skills which represent memory skills. Lastly, he stated that he prefers classroom exams more than take-home exams in the sense that they are more reliable, valid, and fair than the take-home exams.

3.3.5.2. Interview 2: Teachers Who Have Not Conducted THE

Question 1: Do you feel obliged to agree that Take-home exams might be a good option during the global pandemic?

The findings of the interview that have been done with teachers who have conducted THE indicates that teachers, due to the Covid-19 pandemic situation, were obliged to conduct THE as the best assessment option to finish the academic year. This question aims to see what do teachers who have never conducted THE think concerning this matter. The following is the teachers transcribed responses:

T1, an experienced male teacher, states: *“Yes, I do strongly believe that the ways students are evaluated to me be more flexible and manageable. Indeed, Take-home exams can be one of the emerging ways to assess students during the pandemic as it enlarges*

CHAPTER THREE: FIELD WORK AND DATA ANALYSIS

spatiotemporal possibilities for both students and teachers and reduces the rate of the transmission of the virus". T1, an experienced male teacher who is interested in assessment, has said *"Yes, THE is absolutely recommended during the global pandemic as a plan B to finish the academic year"*. T1 and T2 has agreed that THEs might be a good option during the global pandemic for two connected reasons, which are, to prevent the transmission of the virus and to finish the academic year.

Question 2: In what way/s does incorporating Take-home exams challenge the existing rules of traditional assessment?

This question aims to discover THE exam characteristics that teachers think they challenge the rules of traditional in-class examinations. T1 has stated the following: *"Incorporating Take-home exams gradually questions the reliability on traditional types of assessment in myriad of ways including: The ways exams are built, the pedagogical objectives of exams, and time & space"*. The teacher has acknowledged three ways that could affect the reliability of assessment using THE: The ways exams are built, the pedagogical objectives of exams, and time & space. However, T2 has talked about the accessibility of sources: *"Students have open access to numerous sources, can consult books and resources or the net"*. The main difference between THEs and traditional assessments is the unlimited sources students could have in their hands that possibly could facilitate the task they are required to answer.

Question 3: One of the biggest concerns with take-home exams is that integrity will be reduced. In your view, how can teachers raise students' integrity while using take-home exam?

Interviewed teachers, whom have conducted a THE, have stated that they have faced an issue with integrity in their THEs. For this reason, this question aims to consult what other

CHAPTER THREE: FIELD WORK AND DATA ANALYSIS

teachers do think as solutions for this concern. T1 has stated the following: *“Students’ integrity has historically been a pedagogical challenge. Students’ integrity must be given special attention in take-home. Teachers are invited to change the exams’ questions to test other areas in students understanding; they have to ask questions to: Respond to a situation, think critically, Contrast & compare”*. While T2 has suggested the following: *“Through adding extra marks for honest students”*. T1 have emphasized on the importance of giving attention to student’s integrity, especially in THEs as they are very questionable concerning this matter. He has suggested to design question that requires students to use their own understanding and perceptions. Meanwhile, T2 have recommended using marks to encourage students to be academically honest. Both teachers’ suggested solutions for the students’ academic dishonesty concern could be very helpful to boost the integrity in THEs.

Question 4: It is imperative that teachers design their take-home exam in a way that maintains students’ individual responses to the questions being asked. According to you, are teachers at our department well equipped with materials and trainings to design an effective take-home exam? If No, what should be done to help them overcome this kind of problem?

This item targets teachers’ assessment literacy in the English Division concerning designing effective THE papers based on the interviewed teachers’ opinions.

T1: *“In our department, teachers don’t have the means to run a take home (no texts to govern this kind in Algeria, no internet, facilities are sufficient, ...). Authorities are invited to make it easier for teacher to feel free in assessing students the way they think possible and effective”*

T2: *“I do not think that teachers in our department, even myself, are qualified enough to design an effective THE paper. We lack experience and literacy. However, the problem could be overcome if each student is provided with solo designed exam, but it is time- consuming”*

CHAPTER THREE: FIELD WORK AND DATA ANALYSIS

Both teachers have agreed that teachers at the English Division might lack the assessment qualification, freedom, and equipment needed in order to create a valid THE paper. T1 has called out the authorities to simpler for teachers to feel free to assess their students in any method they believe is more efficient. T2, however, has suggested for teachers to design solo exam paper for each student so they could maintain individual answers although it might be time-consuming.

Question 5: Away of being solvable using knowledge taught in class or got from online sources, Take-Home exam questions have to meet certain pedagogical purposes. In your opinion, what are the pedagogical purposes expected to be fulfilled through Take-Home exam?

Similar to the traditional examinations, teachers in designing THEs should give attention to the pedagogical goals they need to fulfill by the exam. This question aims to discover these pedagogical purposes from the interviewed teachers' perspectives.

T1: *“Take-Home exam’s pedagogical purposes help students to be: Creative: by giving students space to express, create and think critically, ambitious enough to pursue their studies, and participate actively in the learning process”*

T2: *“Obviously it should reach the stated objectives of the lesson and the course”*

The two interviewed teachers have expressed different pedagogical purposes which indicates the variation of teachers' assessment literacy from a teacher to another. T1 has stated three purposes he believes that they should be achieved by THEs: promoting students' creativity and critical thinking skill, help them be ambitious about their studies, and be active learners. Meanwhile, T2 has reported that what is most importantly needs to be fulfilled is the objectives of the course being assessed. Although both teachers have not experienced

designing or conducting THE, each of them could think of his own pedagogical purposes he would aim to achieve by using a THE.

3.4. Discussion and Interpretation of Findings

The present study's objective is to investigate third-year LMD students' attitudes towards take-home exam. In order to obtain reliable information, the researcher has gathered data using two research tools: a questionnaire and two interviews. The previous section has provided interesting data concerning students' perceptions, opinions, and attitudes toward THEs at the English Division. In addition, the present research work had also revealed interesting attitudes towards the THEs from teachers who have conducted a THE and teachers who have never had experience with it. Hence, the current section is devoted to the discussion and interpretation of the findings.

As stated above concerning this study's aim, this research's focus is students' attitudes towards THE based on their experience. The researcher only wants to collect the participants' opinions, so she does not judge the students' and teachers' performances in handling take-home exams. In the background, the interviewed teachers have different specialties and backgrounds, but they are experienced teachers.

Explicitly, the results obtained from the questionnaire have indicated that the majority of students had positive perceptions of THEs before sitting on an actual THE. Most students indicated that the main factor behind their positive perception is that having an exam at home reduces their test anxiety and helps them perform at their best. Previous studies have confirmed that the environment in which students sit for an examination affects their performance. In the case of THE, home is considered a comfortable environment for most students in which they are at their ease. However, other students have expressed a negative attitude. Some have justified their attitude with that THE is less fair saying that it does not

CHAPTER THREE: FIELD WORK AND DATA ANALYSIS

assess students' true level accurately and some students who usually perform well in traditional exams have got bad marks in THE.

Unexpectedly, the findings have revealed that most students study before THE paper is handed. Some students have said that they have treated THE as a traditional in-class exam and have prepared themselves for it before the exam paper is in their hands. This contradicts with a study done by Haynie (2003) that indicates that students treat take-home exam paper as a road map to hunt only the information they need to answer the questions. On the other hand, the findings report that students have wasted time looking for answers during THEs the majority of them have illustrated that they study before THE. We can assume that This discrepancy can be attributed to the small sample size.

Academic integrity is a sensitive aspect when it comes to take-home exams. Previous research has confirmed that THEs are easy to be exposed to unethical student behavior. The present study's questionnaire findings indicate that almost half of the participants have committed unethical behavior during THE, i.e., have cheated and plagiarized answers. The interviewed teachers (who have conducted THE) have confirmed the questionnaire findings as they reported that they have caught plagiarized work and similar answers in their students' exam papers. While students justified their behavior with the nature of THEs, i.e., open book and administered at home, teachers interpreted this behavior as a lack of integrity literacy that should be obtained by all college students.

To reduce students' dishonesty, teachers who have not conducted THE have suggested few ways that could work as a solution. The solution could be though designing real-life question that uses students critical thinking skills. The solution given here is actually how THE questions are supposed to be designed but plagiarism and collaborative work still appear in the exam. Another suggested solution for students' dishonesty is designing solo exam papers for each student to confirm individual answers, however, a teacher who has conducted

CHAPTER THREE: FIELD WORK AND DATA ANALYSIS

THE has expressed a positive attitude towards students' collaborative work in answering her THE. A third suggested solution was encouraging students to be academically honest by rewarding honest students with extra marks.

Previous research has insisted on the importance of appropriately designing exam paper questions for THEs in reducing the chances of cheating. The findings indicate that questions that require students to describe their understanding using their words were the most used in THEs. Teachers, as well, have reported that they have avoided using traditional exams question. They have also taken into consideration changing the assessment objectives of THEs they have designed. To confirm previous research works that indicate that take-home exams assess professional and higher-order thinking skills (López et al. 2011; Bengtsson 2019), teachers have asserted that their THEs papers were meant to assess these skills. Additionally, students have indicated that the THEs they have sat for have activated their HOTSs such as critical thinking and problem-solving.

Undoubtedly, incorporating THEs challenges the existing rules of traditional assessment due to many reasons that are already addressed. Among the pedagogical purposes teachers who have not conducted THE have illustrated, promoting students' creativity is highlighted. THEs have been proven that they promote students' higher-order thinking skills and creative thinking is one of the skills that demand the ability to synthesize, analyze and create. They have highlighted a very important point which is concerned with assessment literacy. A teacher has illustrated that teachers at English Division lack professional formation on assessment that the government should provide, which qualifies them to design an efficient and effective THE.

The findings appear to concur on two main benefits associated with THEs: they minimize test anxiety for students and are an effective tool for assessing students' higher-order thinking skills. The issue of test anxiety for students has been addressed by researchers

CHAPTER THREE: FIELD WORK AND DATA ANALYSIS

(Driscoll, 2007; Cassady & Johnson, 200; & other studies), and it has been argued that certain stress affects students' performance on the test. Students who have participated in the present study have reported that the stress-free environment that THE has created has improved the quality of their works and performances. Additionally, the findings illustrate that, compared to traditional ICEs, THEs are more comfortable and students have felt more confident in answering the exam question. However, the findings demonstrate a higher percentage of students who felt less challenging and confusing than traditional ICE. The level of challenge does not necessarily refer to the difficulty of the exam, but it could refer to the competitiveness as well.

The result of this study indicates that students have positive and negative attitudes towards THE similarly to teachers. The findings identify (4) themes: academic integrity, test anxiety, higher-order thinking skill, and assessment literacy. The first theme results indicate that THE are likely to lack academic integrity which affects the reliability, validity, and fairness in assessing students. The second theme highlights one of the benefits of THE. It reduces students' test anxiety due to time and place, making it comfortable for students to answer the exam questions at their pace and eventually perform well. The third theme is another major benefit of THE and one of the pedagogical purposes in using THE to assess other skills that could not be assessed with traditional ICEs. The last theme, academic literacy, illustrates the importance of teachers being aware of how to accurately design an effective THE to reach the pedagogical objectives and reduce academic dishonesty.

Conclusion

This final chapter is dedicated to the fieldwork of the study in which two data collection tools were used, namely, students' questionnaire and teachers' interviews. The questionnaire was administered to 30 third-year EFL students at the English Division at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra. At the same time, the interviews were conducted with

CHAPTER THREE: FIELD WORK AND DATA ANALYSIS

(4) EFL teachers at the English Division at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra. It is important to note that these tools have allowed us to investigate the attitudes and opinions of the participants concerning take-home exams. To sum up, both students and teachers had positive and negative attitudes towards THEs. In addition, some major themes were discussed and interpreted by the researchers that. As a whole, the study's findings meet the objectives and provide answers to the research questions.

General Conclusion and Recommendations

GENERAL CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

General conclusion

This study investigates students' attitudes towards take-home exams. One of the major concerns in higher education is improving students' assessment to ensure its effectiveness since assessment is a fundamental element in the teaching and learning process as it indicates whether the educational goals are achieved. Take-home exams are one of the increasingly given strategies to assist students in reducing test anxiety, developing good attitudes toward tests, and, ultimately, improving their knowledge and ability performance. In the Algerian setting, specifically at Mohamed University of Biskra, take-home exam has been introduced during the Covid-19 pandemic to replace regular in-class examinations of some modules. The rationale behind investigating the attitudes towards take-home exams is to explore the effectiveness and efficiency of this newly used assessment method.

It is essential to review the theoretical chapters of this dissertation. The theoretical part was divided into two major chapters, EFL assessment and take-home exam. The first one aimed to examine assessment, its types, and principles in order to understand its importance in the EFL classroom setting. It has also shed light on traditional assessment and making the transition to alternative assessment. While the second chapter has dealt with the literature review on take-home exams. Different benefits and drawbacks of take-home exams were reported. In addition, students' attitudes towards examinations were discussed to understand how to base the study. Finally, assessment of higher-order thinking skills was addressed in relation to take-home exams.

GENERAL CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Therefore, to reach the research objectives and answer the research questions, a semi-structured questionnaire and two interviews were used to gather the data needed from third-year EFL students and EFL teachers at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra. The purpose of utilizing these tools was to get factual data from the participants. Furthermore, they sought to collect data to investigate students' and teachers' attitudes, opinions, and perceptions regarding the use of take-home exams.

Based on the results obtained from the students' questionnaire and the teachers' two interviews, the participants have expressed positive and negative attitudes towards take-home exams. In detail, the findings have indicated that take-home exams create a comfortable atmosphere and reduce students' test anxiety due to the setting in which they take place and the extended time limitation. In addition, take-home exams are most effective at assessing and promoting students' higher-order thinking skills if the exam is accurately designed to meet this objective. Hence, teachers should use real-life questions that require students to analyze and implement their understanding of the topic. The findings have also put the spotlight on the issue of academic dishonesty in take-home exams. It has been confirmed by both teachers and students that plagiarism and cheating frequently occur in take-home exams which affect its reliability and fairness. Hence, the hypothesis was confirmed, third-year LMD students at Mohamed Khider University have positive and negative attitudes towards take-home exams.

GENERAL CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

To sum up, based on the research findings, take-home exams endure two benefits and one drawback. Take-home exam reduces students test-anxiety and eventually enhances the quality of their work. Moreover, they enable teachers to think out of the box to design questions that trigger students' higher-order thinking skills, which are hard to be assessed by traditional in-class exams. However, academic dishonesty is proven to be affected as students have unrestricted accessibility to different sources, which provides them with a background to engage in unethical behavior. All in all, teachers and students do not have enough experiences with take-home examination since it was lately introduced. Hence, the findings of this study cannot be generalized.

This study has investigated students' attitudes towards take-home exam and has revealed different attitudes and opinions towards this type of examination. The findings suggest that students' opinions have shown more positive attitudes than negative attitudes towards take-home exam. Despite the fact that the findings indicate different attitudes, the author feels that documenting the findings of this study benefits and contributes to our knowledge, opening the door to do more for future research.

Limitation of Study and Suggestions for Future Research

During the process of every research project, researchers encounter a variety of barriers and obstacles that impede the development of the research process. This study's findings have to be seen in the light of several limitations. First, the lack of previous research studies on take-home exams generally and in the Algerian setting specifically was the main obstacle that affected our research progress. Second, due to the small number of teachers who have conducted take-home exams and the unfamiliarity of other teachers with this type of examination, the number of interview participants was smaller than predicted. Moreover, teachers have little experience with take-home examination since it was newly introduced. Therefore, the findings of this study cannot be generalized. However, the research could have

GENERAL CONCLUSION AND RECOMMONDATIONS

benefited from using another tool such as non-participant observation to compare students' performances in take-home exams and traditional in-class exams. But, eventually, the researcher did not enough time to extend her research.

This study has investigated students' and teachers' attitudes towards take-home exams. Based on the finding, future researchers can further explore the use of take-home exams in other universities or with different populations. In addition, since this research study was limited with time, future researchers could extend the research study tools used to further understand this assessment method. For example, a comparison between students' take-home exam papers and in-class exam papers could be done to highlight the difference of students' performances in both examination types. Exploring the use of take-home exam in different modules could also be a good idea for further research.

Recommendations

From the findings of this study, many recommendations have been drawn for EFL students and teachers in order to effectively use take-home exams and benefit from them. Based on the findings, the researcher would recommend teachers using take-home exams more often to break the traditional way of assessment. They should consider the design of the exam paper in which higher-order thinking skills are triggered, and students' individual answers are required to reduce unethical behavior. Moreover, teachers should raise the students' awareness of the importance of academic integrity. On the other hand, students are invited to share the responsibility of raising their awareness of academic integrity as university students and future researchers. They also should benefit from the use of take-home exams to promote their higher-order thinking skills.

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Appendices

Appendix A

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

I am currently conducting research on TAKE-HOME EXAM (THE). This questionnaire aims at collecting EFL students' attitudes toward THE. You are kindly requested to provide the required information to the best of your knowledge. This information will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

Thank you.

Remark: By definition, take-home

Gender:

Female

Male

- Tick the correct option

1. Are you familiar with the phrase “Take-Home exam (THE)”?

Yes

No

2. You have taken “THEs”:

Before the pandemic

During the pandemic

Both

3. What was your first impression when you first heard about this assessment method?

.....
.....
.....

4. Did revise/ study before THE?

Yes

No

- Justify:

.....
.....
.....

5. THE questions were in form of:

- True/false
- Multiple-choice
- Essays
- Short answer
- Other:

6. Were THE questions googleable?

- all THE questions were googleable
- The majority of THE questions were googleable
- some THE questions were googleable
- THE questions were not googleable

7. Have you plagiarized an answer in a THE?

- Yes
- No
- Justify:

.....
.....
.....

8. How did you manage to complete it?

- An assistant help
- Autonomously
- Handout
- Internet
- Other:

9. Did you waste time looking for answers?

- Yes
- No
- Justify:

.....
.....
.....

10. How was your experience

- Negative
- Positive
- Justify:

.....
.....
.....

.....
.....

11. What is/are the factor(s) that had a positive role during THE?

- A much longer period of time given before the due time
- Absence of teacher
- Comfortable place (your room)
- Availability of sources
- Other.....

12. Based on your experience, did THE activate your higher level of thinking skills [i.e., evaluate arguments/ evidence/ and proofs, etc]?

- Yes
- No

13. How did you feel while doing THE compared to the usual exam method (in class)

a. Confidence:

- more confident
- less confident
- no difference

• Justify:

.....
.....
.....

b. Anxiety:

- more anxious
- less anxious
- no difference

• Justify:

.....
.....
.....

c. Challenging:

- More challenging
- less challenging
- no difference

• Justify:

.....
.....
.....

d. Confusing:

- more confusing

- less confusing
- no difference

- Justify:

.....

e. Comfortable:

- More comfortable
- less comfortable
- no difference

- Justify:

.....

14. Do you think that THE is better than the traditional exam (in-class/ face-to-face)

- Yes
- No

- Justify:

.....

15. Please place a cross on the appropriate box:

THEs need to be well prepared	<input type="checkbox"/> SD <input type="checkbox"/> D <input type="checkbox"/> U <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> SA
THEs tend to be difficult	<input type="checkbox"/> SD <input type="checkbox"/> D <input type="checkbox"/> U <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> SA
THEs require less memorizing	<input type="checkbox"/> SD <input type="checkbox"/> D <input type="checkbox"/> U <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> SA
THEs opens room for creative thinking	<input type="checkbox"/> SD <input type="checkbox"/> D <input type="checkbox"/> U <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> SA
THEs are less stressful than in-class exams	<input type="checkbox"/> SD <input type="checkbox"/> D <input type="checkbox"/> U <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> SA
THEs assess students' ability to apply knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/> SD <input type="checkbox"/> D <input type="checkbox"/> U <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> SA
THEs are fair and objective	<input type="checkbox"/> SD <input type="checkbox"/> D <input type="checkbox"/> U <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> SA
Cheating is hard in THE	<input type="checkbox"/> SD <input type="checkbox"/> D <input type="checkbox"/> U <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> SA
THE improved the quality of my work	<input type="checkbox"/> SD <input type="checkbox"/> D <input type="checkbox"/> U <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> SA
I would prefer to have more THE than classroom exams	<input type="checkbox"/> SD <input type="checkbox"/> D <input type="checkbox"/> U <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> SA
THE is not an efficient assessment method	<input type="checkbox"/> SD <input type="checkbox"/> D <input type="checkbox"/> U <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> SA
THE is more comfortable to me	<input type="checkbox"/> SD <input type="checkbox"/> D <input type="checkbox"/> U <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> SA

SD-Strongly Disagree ; D-Disagree ; U-Undecided ; A-Agree ; SA-Strongly Agree

16. Do you think teachers should reconsider using THE more often?

- Yes

No

17. Why do you think teachers would choose THE ?

Safety reasons (pandemic)

Subject is too difficult

Improve students creative thinking

• Other.....
.....
.....

Please, if you have anything else to add, feel free to write it down here.

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Thank you so much for your time and participation.

Appendice B

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

I am Djidjekh Rania supervised by Dr. Bashar Ahmed. It gives me an immense honor to invite you to participate in a study conducted to investigate Take-Home Exam (THE). I kindly ask you to answer a number of questions related mainly to teachers' attitudes on Take-Home Exam (THE).

- 1) Why did you choose to conduct a take-home exam?
- 2) In designing your exam, what did you try to assess/ trigger exactly?
- 3) Exam questions can take many forms, in what form were the questions of the take-home exam(s) you have designed?
- 4) Were you satisfied with the exam you designed?
- 5) Who do you think is responsible for students' participation in unethical behavior in THEs, i.e., plagiarism and cheating?
- 7) Based on your experience, what do you consider as the benefits and drawbacks of take-home exam

Appendice C

Interview for Teachers

I am Djidjekh Rania supervised by Dr. Bashar Ahmed. It gives me an immense honor to invite you to participate in a study conducted to investigate Take-Home Exam (THE). I kindly ask you to answer a number of questions related mainly to teachers' attitudes on Take-Home Exam (THE).

1. Do you feel obliged to agree that Take-home exams might be a good option during the global pandemic?
2. In what way/s does incorporating Take-home exams challenge the existing rules of traditional assessment?
3. One of the biggest concerns with take-home exams is that integrity will be reduced. In your view, how can teachers raise students' integrity while using take-home exam?
4. It is imperative that teachers design their take-home exam in a way that maintains students' individual responses to the questions being asked. According to you, are teachers at our department well equipped with materials and training to design an effective take-home exam? If No, what should be done to help them overcome this kind of problem?
5. Away of being solvable using knowledge taught in class or got from online sources, Take-home exam's questions have to meet certain pedagogical purposes. In your opinion, what are the pedagogical purposes expected to be fulfilled through Take-Home exam?

المخلص

تم إدراج "الامتحان المنزلي" في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة محمد خيضر بيسكرة خلال جائحة كوفيد 19 كأداة تقييم جديدة. قد أوضحت دراسات سابقة ان هذا النوع من الامتحانات يلعب دورا هاما في تقليل القلق من الامتحان وأنها مؤهلة لتقييم وتعزيز مهارات التفكير العليا للطلبة. دراسات أخرى قد ناقشت مشكلة نقص النزاهة الاكاديمية للطلبة في الامتحانات المنزلية، يهدف هذا البحث الى التحقيق في مواقف الطلاب تجاه الامتحان المنزلي حيث تم استخدام نهج بحث نوعي بغرض استكشاف هذه الظاهرة. من أجل الحصول على البيانات، تم إجراء استبيان مع (30) من طلاب السنة الثالثة LMD من قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة محمد خيضر بسكرة. وعلاوة على ذلك، أجريت مقابلتين مع مجموعتين من الأساتذة ذوي الخبرة الذين يدرسون في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة محمد خيضر بسكرة. مقابلة مع (2) من المدرسين الذين قد اجروا اختبارا منزلي ومقابلة أخرى مع (2) مدرسين ممن لم يجروا هذا الاختبار من قبل لجمع المزيد من الآراء والمواقف نحو هذا النوع من الامتحانات. تظهر النتائج أن الطلاب لديهم مواقف مختلفة منها إيجابية ومنها سلبية تجاه الامتحان المنزلي. ومن ناحية أخرى، عبر المعلمون عن مجموعة متنوعة من الآراء والنقد المثيرة للاهتمام. غير أن النتيجة العامة تشير إلى أنه إذا تم تصميم التقييم على نحو سليم، فإنه يمكن أن يتخذ طريقة تقييم فعالة تتحدى نهج التقييم التقليدي.

