

An Exploration of Jordanian EFL Teachers' Alternative Assessment Strategies during the Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

This study aimed at exploring teachers' perceptions about the utilization of alternative assessment strategies during the COVID-19 Pandemic. It also aimed at finding out whether teachers' perceptions about the utilization of Alternative Assessment Strategies during the COVID-19 Pandemic differ by qualification and experience. A 5-point Likert-scaled questionnaire was distributed to a sample of 378 participants who are EFL teachers (Male/Female) enrolled in teaching at Qasabet Irbid Directorate of Education in 2021/2022. As for data analysis, means, standard deviations, frequencies, percentages, and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were calculated. The results revealed that teachers' perceptions of the effects of the pandemic were high, and that teachers' perceptions of the advantages of using alternative evaluation strategies ranged from high to moderate. The results also revealed that there were statistically significant differences in the perceptions of English language teachers about the advantages of evaluating alternative assessment strategies due to the teachers' experience in favor of teachers who have ten or more years of experience and due to teachers' qualifications in favor of postgraduates.

Keywords: Assessment; alternative assessment; assessment strategies; COVID-19 Pandemic; EFL teachers.

دراسة استكشافية لاستراتيجيات التقويم البديل لدى معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية لغة أجنبية للأردنيين أثناء جائحة كورونا

المخلص

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف تصورات المعلمين حول استخدام استراتيجيات التقويم البديلة خلال جائحة كورونا. كما هدفت هذه الدراسة أيضاً إلى تحديد ما إذا كانت تصورات المعلمين حول استخدام استراتيجيات التقويم البديلة خلال جائحة كورونا تختلف حسب المؤهلات والخبرة. تم توزيع استبيان بمقياس ليكرت على عينة مكونة من 378 (من أصل 681) معلماً ومعلمة للغة الإنجليزية يعملون في مديرية التربية والتعليم للواء قصبه إربد في العام الدراسي (2022/2021). أما بالنسبة لتحليل البيانات، فقد تم حساب المتوسطات الحسابية، والانحرافات المعيارية، والتكرارات، والنسب المئوية، وتحليل التباين الأحادي (ANOVA). وأظهرت النتائج أن تصورات المعلمين لآثار الجائحة كانت مرتفعة، وأن تصورات المعلمين حول إيجابيات استخدام استراتيجيات التقويم البديلة تراوحت بين المرتفعة والمتوسطة. كما أظهرت النتائج وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية في تصورات معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية حول مزايا تقويم البديل تعزى لخبرة المعلمين لصالح المعلمين الذين لديهم عشر سنوات فأكثر من الخبرة المؤهلات التعليمية لصالح الدراسات العليا.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التقويم؛ التقويم البديل؛ استراتيجيات التقويم؛ جائحة كورونا؛ معلمو اللغة الإنجليزية لغة أجنبية.

Introduction

Assessing student's learning is a vital component of the learning process at all levels of education. The assessment process focuses on their comprehension of the material and mastery of skills in the subjects they are learning. Traditionally, assessments focused on paper-and-pencil tests. In recent years, however, innovative, authentic, and comprehensive approaches to evaluations have increased the active participation of students and the quality of education (Al-Abdullatif, 2020).

Assessment of learning is seen as a fundamental component in the education process and a major step in the educational system as it allows the process of assessing the knowledge acquired by the students. It further allows the teachers to identify the misconceptions of the students in order to correct their mistakes and guide their learning strategies (Benkirane, Hamza & Sbihi, 2019). It thus provides detailed criteria for judging the quality of student learning, and clarifying the metiers and weaknesses of the education process (Litchfield and Dempsey, 2023).

One of the primary responsibilities of teachers is to evaluate learners' performance. Assessments have played a significant role in determining students' academic success and highlighting learning gaps, enabling teachers to classify their degrees of achievement (Xu & Brown, 2016). The domain of - assessments is associated with the quality assurance aspect as well as the assessments' potential to support students' active learning, i.e., engage students with their learning. Such a target could be achieved through implementing well-designed assessments that can ensure providing a measure of students' progress (Amua-Skyi, 2016).

In EFL classrooms in particular, Assessment is one of the important guidelines that educators adhere to evaluate students' performance and raise the caliber of their work for better outcomes (Rao, 2018). Hence, in EFL teaching, since the assessment process establishes the students' level, English language teachers should be aware of this and concentrate on the learning outcomes of their students through ongoing evaluation.

In fact, the assessment process is significant for EFL teachers and learners equally at the same level as it allows the teachers to evaluate their performance in the first place and then proceed to concentrate on teaching and learning languages in an effective manner. Additionally, EFL teachers can attain better teaching outcomes by assessing their students' performance persistently.

Assessment helps EFL students estimate their abilities in comparison to the entire group; promotes EFL teachers to build the curriculum in accordance with the demands of the students; Assessment promotes learner-centered, active learning; it gives EFL students a chance to share what they have learned; it assists them in achieving the course's goals and objectives; it allows them to actively evaluate their own performance; it enhances the quality of instruction, which in turn enhances EFL students' learning; assessment improves students' comprehension, acquisition, and retention of new abilities and concepts during

their learning process; it expedites the planning of how students will study and acquire language skills in a methodical manner; Students are encouraged by assessment to pick appropriate and worthwhile activities and to talk about strategies for completing their assignments; Evaluation evaluates EFL students' performance in relation to actual classroom lesson plans; assessment pushes EFL students to compete with one another and advance them in peer reviews (Rao, 2018: p, 341).

According to many researchers (Monib, Karimi, and Nijat, 2020; Dung & Ha 2019; Charvade, Jahandar & Khodabandehlou, 2012), the shortcomings of traditional assessment have led to new forms of assessment through which the student's performance is measured according to specific criteria to ensure the extent to which educational objectives are achieved.

Alternative assessment is a multidimensional assessment and not limited to written tests, but rather includes other methods such as observation, student performance, portfolios, projects, diaries and self-assessment (Yudha, Munir, Lestari, and Anam, 2022).

Alternative assessment is a comprehensive approach to evaluate students, with an emphasis on their higher-order thinking abilities. It involves a distinct kind of grading in which students are allowed to submit their own answers or work by gradually demonstrating the subject they have acquired over a predetermined amount of time. It is worth mentioning that AAs are seen as an ongoing process of making judgments about students' development in language by using unconventional strategies. On the other hand, in contrast to the traditional form assessment, which consists of the average grading of an accumulated set of work and an accumulated display of information studied for a certain time period, students are allowed to provide their own responses rather than just selecting from a list of possibilities (Law and Eckes, 1995).

Morrow, Shanahan, and Wixson (2012), are considered crucial for the successful preparation of the EFL students. Therefore, EFL teachers are highly instructed to uphold all of the Foreign Language Learning's standards. Actually, they should be willing and capable of designing alternative assessment strategies that can emphasize the Higher-order thought processes, reading comprehension and writing abilities.

On the other hand, since declaring the COVID-19 (Coronavirus Disease) outbreak by the World Health Organization (WHO), and during this unprecedented time, Global educational institutions persisted in responding swiftly to the impact of the most recent pandemic, leading to modifications in the evaluation procedures within the learning process. (UOL, 2020).

Overall, while moving from a conventional way of teaching (i.e., face-to-face teaching mode) to distant learning (i.e., online teaching mode) during the pandemic era, it was an undeniable fact that the academic institutions, as well as the teachers, have faced many challenges in the actual process of implementing online learning. Furthermore, the preceding studies conducted during the pandemic demonstrated that instructors and their students have encountered various hurdles in teaching practices and employing influential

communication patterns with their students (Glazkova, Markova & Zaborova, 2017). In addition, Zaborova and Markova's (2016) study revealed that online learning mode has led students to be more insulated and even made them feel muddled. Further, the new online adopted mode has resulted in reducing the students' interest in learning the subject matter.

The shift to distance learning as a replacement for face-to-face learning was chosen and implemented due to the advantages of this alternative learning method, including: allowing students to learn at their own pace; supporting student-centered learning, which empowers students to take ownership of their education; and allowing students to access course materials whenever they choose (Khusniyah and Hakim, 2019; Hidayat, Lubis, Nurhayati, Rahmatya and Wicaksono, 2020).

Statement of the Problem

The COVID-19 pandemic changed teaching and assessment in educational institutions, requiring teachers to adopt new assessment strategies (Kaisar, 2023). The restrictions associated with the virus made it difficult to apply traditional methods, therefore, online alternative assessments were used (Adama, Graf, Asante and Yamoah, 2022). However, researchers (Bozkurt et al. 2020; Gamage et al. 2020; Reedy, Pfitzner, Rook & Ellis, 2021) emphasized that teachers faced many challenges in applying alternative assessment strategies. On the other hand, many researchers (Denman & Al-Mahrooqi, 2018; Janisch, Liu & Akrofi, 2007) confirmed that alternative assessments contribute to developing the fourth English skills. So, this study is to identify alternative assessment strategies used by EFL teachers in Jordan during the COVID-19 pandemic and the factors that facilitate the implementation of alternative assessment strategies by EFL teachers in Jordan.

Purpose of the Study

This research aims to examine teachers' perceptions about the utilization of alternative assessment strategies during the COVID-19 Pandemic and to determine whether teachers' perceptions about the utilization of Alternative Assessment Strategies during the COVID-19 Pandemic differ by qualification and experience.

Questions of the study

The current study aims to answer the following questions:

1. What are Jordanian EFL teachers' perceptions the utilization of alternative assessment strategies during the COVID-19 Pandemic?
2. Do Jordanian EFL teachers' perceptions about the utilization of Alternative Assessment Strategies during the COVID-19 Pandemic differ by qualification and experience?

Significance of the Study

EFL teachers face challenges in implementing meaningful assessment strategies and obtaining prompt and efficient feedback during the COVID-19 pandemic to promote EFL learning for students. Hence, exploring the implementation of such assessment strategies implemented by EFL teachers in Jordan during the COVID-19 pandemic represents a necessity to identify the alternative assessment strategies implemented by those teachers and how efficient these strategies were. Moreover, based on the reviewed literature on the implementation of AASs by EFL teachers, it was found that most studies highlight the benefits of alternative assessment strategies in university-aged foreign language classrooms, but few focus on high school EFL teachers' implementation of EFL AASs (Tamjid & Birjandi, 2011; Wei, 2011; Antón, 2009).

Review of the Related Literature

Suah and Ong (2012) investigated teachers' alternative assessment practices and the effect of experience on those practices. It applied to a sample of (406) in-service teachers in Malaysia. The results showed that most teachers use traditional assessments. The results also showed the effect of the experience variable in using alternative assessment, favoring teachers with more experience.

Al-Zoubi (2019) investigated the extent to which the Al Korah Directorate of Education in Jordan used real alternative evaluation methods and instruments. 39 English language teachers, both male and female, made up the study's sample. A 28-item questionnaire was created to meet the study's objectives. According to the survey, English language teachers used a moderate amount of authentic evaluation procedures and instruments (2.65%). Additionally, the study demonstrated that there were no statistically significant gender differences in the extent to which teachers used authentic assessment techniques and strategies. However, due to experience—with more experienced teachers employing authentic assessment strategies and tools—and the impact of training, there were statistically significant differences in the degree to which teachers used these strategies and tools.

Monib, Karimi, and Nijat (2020) sought to identify the utilization of alternative assessment in Afghanistan to provide an overall picture of the effect of alternative assessment in EFL classrooms. The sample of the study included (24) previous studies. To achieve the study objectives, a content analysis was used. The research discovered that the majority of the studies discussed positive reactions and the benefits of using alternative assessments, which give teachers and students additional chances to grow as individuals.

AlNatour, Hijazi, and AlZuraiqih (2020) investigated the extent of using modern assessment strategies and tools by (43) Jordanian EFL teachers from Irbid's first governorate. A descriptive-analytical approach was adopted. The findings demonstrated how little Jordanian English language teachers used contemporary evaluation techniques and resources to gauge their students' comprehension. Moreover, teachers tended to employ traditional assessment

techniques rather than contemporary techniques. The findings showed that gender experience and qualifications did not significantly affect how much English language teachers in Jordan used contemporary evaluation techniques and resources.

Bashir, Bashir, Lambert, Rana, and Vernallis (2021) examined university students' experiences and insights about the alternative assessment used during the Covid-19 pandemic. The researcher believed that the pandemic created challenges and disruption in the Education sector. The researcher focused at the university level, particularly at Aston University's Bioscience students whom experienced the closure of the campus and the shift that took place from face-to-face teaching and assessment to online format alternative assessments. 151 students presented the sample of the study. Findings showed that most students had a good experience with online open-book exams and that most would be happy to use this format going forward. Most students said that they had excellent internet connectivity and that they had no technical problems. Contradictory desires were shown by the shift to online and distant learning; while most students wanted more interactive lectures, only half felt comfortable utilizing video cameras for interaction.

El Said (2021) investigated the effect of the sudden shift from face-to-face to online distance learning due to the COVID-19 lockdown at one of the universities in Egypt. A T-test and a Chi-square test were applied to compare the scores of (376) business students who finished a face-to-face course in the spring of 2019 and (372) students who completed the same course entirely online via distance education in the spring of 2020 during the period of lockdown. In addition, 435 students were surveyed for the study, and a small number of instructors were interviewed regarding their experiences in both teaching and learning during the lockdown that took place. The study found that students appreciated the ease of using an online portal, but professors found it unhelpful due to poor internet connectivity and speed variations. Professors preferred online alternative assessments, but students complained about unfair practices and weak mechanisms for receiving petitions.

Hermawan, et al., (2021) carried out a study that sought to describe how alternative learning assessments were applied in the psychomotor domain to Japanese online learning at SMAN 10 Malang (note: SMAN 10 Malang started implementing activities for learning from home after the government issued a circular regarding the implementation of education policies during the Covid-19 emergency). The study used a descriptive qualitative method to gather primary data, revealing the implementation of various assessment alternatives in online Japanese language learning, including online practice, product, and project assessments, resolving the Covid-19 issue.

Zhang, Yan, and Wang (2021) investigated the online alternative assessment practices implemented by (6) Chinese EFL teachers during the pandemic in a Chinese university. The findings of the study showed that the Chinese EFL teachers made assessment decisions and designated newly alternative assessment methods based on several factors including the policy, the local

framework, and the teachers' own teaching practice and reflections. The findings further demonstrated that the alternative assessment methods implemented by the Chinese EFL teachers were context-dependent as the teachers have made both top-down planned changes and bottom-up improvised changes, which were mediated by contextual and experiential factors in order to adjust to different assessments' needs.

Hussin, Amran, Khafidz, Rahman, Ismail, Zakaria, and Azlan (2022) carried out a study that sought to identify the perceptions of Islamic studies students on the implementation of the digital alternative assessments they undertook in terms of practice, form, and effectiveness. Hussin, et al., (2022) carried out a questionnaire that involved 461 participants. There was a five-point Likert scale used to gauge the data. Version 26.0 of SPSS was used to do additional data analysis. The results of the study demonstrated that participants held the practice and structure of digital alternative assessment in Islamic studies in high esteem since it was found to be authentic. Stated differently, the assessment facilitated the application of advanced knowledge and skills, information synthesis, meaningful learning, real-world application of the knowledge, and skill improvement through self-reflection on the learning. Additionally, the lecturers conducted all of their instruction and evaluations online, and the effectiveness of the examinations was thought to be quite good.

Method and Procedures

Research design

In the current study, a descriptive analytical approach was used to answer the research questions.

Population and participants of the study

The population of the study consisted of all (681) male and female EFL teachers of Qasabet Irbid Directorate of Education in the school year 2021/2022. For the quantitative strand of this study, a convenient sample of (378) teachers were selected (55.8) percent of the participants were male, (44.7) percent had bachelor's degrees, and (53.2) percent had less than ten years of experience.

Research Instruments the Questionnaire

The questionnaire compresses close-ended questions distributing two parts, namely: Demographic information about the respondents: Jordanian EFL teachers' perception of the utilization of Alternative Assessment Strategies in the schools of Qasabet Irbid Educational Directorate during the COVID-19 Pandemic (34 items). Participants' responses to the second part of the questionnaire were rated using a five-point Likert scale; from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Moreover, to analyze the participant's responses, the researcher used the following scale: the interval (1% to less than 2.33%) showed low agreement (practice), the interval (2.33% to less than 3.66%) showed moderate agreement (practice), and the interval (3.66 to 5) showed a high agreement (practice).

Validity and reliability of the questionnaire

To ascertain the questionnaire's validity, the jury examined it. The jury was graciously requested to peruse the questionnaire items and assess their linguistic and content appropriateness. The jury gave the researcher feedback and recommendations after reviewing the questionnaire. The questionnaire item was revised after taking into account their comments, which included rephrasing a few items. As recommended by the jury, the researcher made the changes.

The questionnaire was piloted with (50) teachers who were not part of the study population in order to assess its reliability. The Pearson Correlation Coefficient between the item score and the domain's overall score was then derived. In addition, the item score's adjusted item-total correlation with the domain's overall rating was derived. The Pearson Correlation Coefficient between the item score and the domain total score is higher than the threshold of (0.35), according to the results. Additionally, the item score and the domain total score have an adjusted item-total correlation that is higher than the threshold of (0.40). According to these findings, the four questionnaire dimensions have an adequate level of internal consistency (Leach et al., 2011).

To evaluate the reliability of the two dimensions of the questionnaire, Cronbach Alpha and test-retest methods with two weeks between them were used. Results revealed that the Cronbach Alpha Coefficients for teachers' perception of using alternative assessment strategies during the COVID-19 Pandemic (Advantages), and teachers' perception of using alternative assessment strategies during the COVID-19 Pandemic (Disadvantages) were 0.97 and 0.98 respectively. Teachers' perception about using alternative assessment strategies during the COVID-19 Pandemic (Advantages), teachers' perception about using alternative assessment strategies during the COVID-19 Pandemic (Disadvantages) were, 0.88 and 0.92) respectively. Because of this, both of the domains are reliable and exceed the cut-off point.70 (Cronbach, 1951).

Results

First, the findings cover the first study's question: What are the Jordanian EFL teachers' perceptions about the utilization of Alternative Assessment Strategies in the schools of Qasabet Irbid Educational Directorate during the COVID-19 Pandemic? In order to respond to the question at hand, the mean scores and standard deviations of the viewpoints given by Jordanian EFL teachers regarding the use of alternative assessment strategies in Qasabet Irbid Educational Directorate schools during the COVID-19 Pandemic were computed. Table1 presents the advantages of alternative strategies for assessment:

Table 1: Means and Standard Deviations of Teachers Perception of the Advantages of Utilizing Alternative Assessment Strategies

No.	Item	Mean	Std.	Rank	Level of agreement
3.	The COVID-19 pandemic has raised the need for adopting alternative assessment strategies instead of traditional assessment methods in foreign language education.	4.08	1.09	1	High
4.	I adopted alternative assessment strategies during the COVID-19 pandemic because they are aligned with the course learning outcomes.	4.08	1.04	1	High
2.	The lack of physical interaction between EFL students and teachers during the COVID-19 Pandemic limited the teachers' ability to assess student learning.	4.01	1.12	3	High
5.	I adopted alternative assessment strategies during the COVID-19 pandemic because they are tailored to the student's needs and abilities.	3.96	1.13	4	High
1.	The COVID-19 pandemic has negatively affected foreign language education (e.g., how it is conducted, what types of activities are held).	3.93	1.16	5	High
11	Alternative assessment strategies enable students to develop communication skills.	3.81	1.21	6	High
8.	Alternative assessment strategies are flexible, straightforward, simple, and continuously adaptable to allow teachers to cater to different preferences and	3.80	1.15	7	High

	learning styles.				
7.	Alternative assessment strategies are non-intrusive, as they continuously assess progress during day-to-day.	3.80	1.15	7	High
6.	I adopted alternative assessment strategies during the COVID-19 pandemic because they require students to produce rather than choose a pre-set response, hence allowing teachers to assess proficiency and actual abilities.	3.77	1.18	9	High
12	Alternative assessment strategies enable students to develop logical reasoning.	3.71	1.25	10	High
15	Alternative assessment strategies provide a fair and transparent process of assessment by eliminating the unreliable assessment typically associated with traditional pencil-and-paper assessment.	3.71	1.30	10	High
10.	Alternative assessment strategies enable students to achieve intended learning outcomes.	3.70	1.25	12	High
9.	Alternative assessment strategies enable students to perform, create, make accurate judgments, and use higher-order thinking skills.	3.69	1.17	13	High
13	Alternative assessment strategies enable students to think, analyze, and apply knowledge. While stepping out of their comfort zones and enable them to think outside the box.	3.63	1.32	14	Medium
14	Alternative assessment strategies enable students to	3.60	1.32	15	Medium

	step out of their comfort zone and think outside the box.				
16	Alternative assessment strategies constitute adequate measures for assessing student progress (vs. traditional pencil-and-paper assessment).	3.59	1.34	16	Medium
	Total	3.88	.75		High

Table 1 demonstrates the medium to high levels of agreement among teachers mean scores about the advantages of using alternative assessment strategies, which varied from 3.59 to 4.08. Regarding the statement, "The COVID-19 pandemic has raised the need for adopting alternative assessment strategies instead of traditional assessment methods in foreign language education." teachers provided the highest level of agreement (Mean= 4.08). On the other hand, they noticed that the item "Alternative assessment strategies constitute adequate measures for assessing student progress (vs. traditional pencil-and-paper assessment)" had the lowest level of agreement (Mean = 3.59). Regarding topics 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 15, it was noted that the teachers expressed a high degree of consensus. Teachers generally expressed a high degree of consensus (3.88) in this domain as a whole.

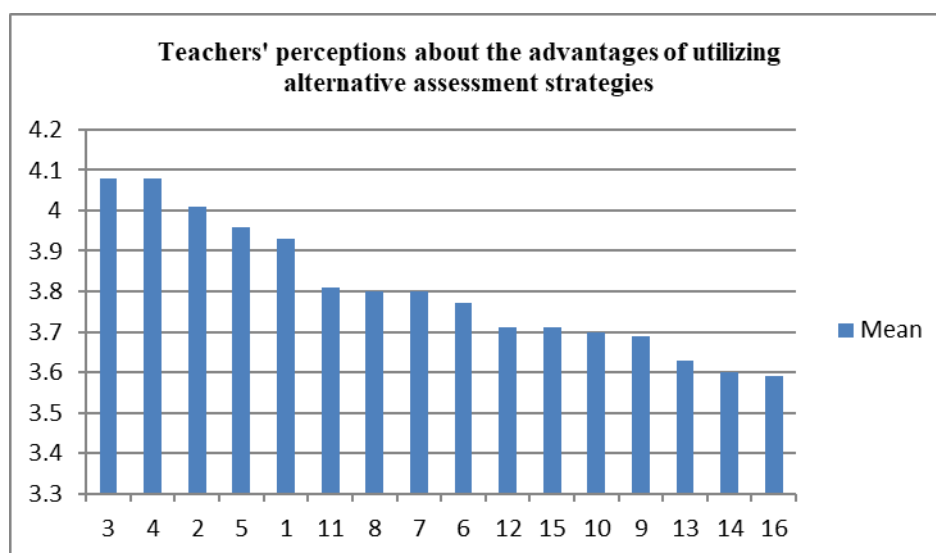


Figure 1: Teachers' perceptions about the advantages of utilizing alternative assessment strategies

Additionally, perspectives regarding the drawbacks of using Alternative Assessment Strategies at Qasabet Irbid Educational Directorate schools during

the COVID-19 Pandemic were gathered from the teachers. The mean scores and standard deviations of the teacher's perceptions regarding the disadvantages of using alternative assessment strategies are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Means and Standard Deviations of Teachers' Perception about the Disadvantages of Utilizing Alternative Assessment Strategies

No.	Item	Mean	Std	Rank	Level of agreement
4	The nature of the EFL classes in the schools of Qasabe Irbid Directorate of Education hinder teachers' ability to use alternative assessment strategies.	4.12	.79	1	High
14	Plagiarism is a major concern in using alternative assessment strategies, as students' unfamiliarity brings about a higher risk of cheating to gain better grades.	4.10	.86	2	High
12	Inadequate administrative support for alternative assessment strategies may pose extra challenges to using these assessments.	4.08	.93	3	High
1	Alternative assessment strategies proved impractical because the students in the schools of Qasabet Irbid Educational Directorate are more accustomed to traditional assessment.	4.06	.77	4	High
18	Using alternative assessment strategies may cause students to be unduly concerned about their submissions.	3.96	.94	5	High
13	The resources required to implement alternative assessment strategies are scant. Besides, the resources required to implement Alternative assessment strategies are scant and often inadequate for proper implementation.	2.80	.81	6	Medium
17	Using alternative assessment strategies may cause stress among students.	2.77	.72	7	Medium

16	Using alternative assessment strategies may cause anxiety and fatigue among teachers.	2.76	.72	8	Medium
11	The nature of EFL courses and the current EFL teaching paradigm in the schools of Qasabet Irbid Educational Directorate hinder teachers' ability to implement alternative assessment strategies.	2.73	.82	9	Medium
10	Alternative assessment strategies are a time-consuming and increase the teacher's workload, as individual attention is needed to provide an accurate assessment of a student's ability.	2.72	.71	10	Medium
5	Alternative assessment strategies are difficult to administer, because in the schools of Qasabet Irbid Educational Directorate lack training or appropriate models of administering alternative assessment strategies.	2.71	.78	11	Medium
3	Adopting alternative assessment strategies during the COVID-19 pandemic was problematic as EFL teachers in the schools of Qasabet Irbid Educational Directorate were not adequately trained to incorporate these assessments into classroom activities.	2.70	.71	12	Medium
8	Alternative assessment strategies limit the amount of content teachers can cover during the semester.	2.70	.82	12	Medium
2	Alternative assessment strategies proved impractical because the students in the schools of Qasabet Irbid Educational Directorate are not proficient enough to carry out alternative assessment strategies.	2.66	.67	14	Medium
15	There are significant differences in male and female teachers' perceptions of the efficacy of the alternative assessment strategies.	2.62	.75	15	Medium
7	Assessing certain aspects of	2.52	1.44	16	Medium

	student learning (e.g., grammar, vocabulary) is relatively harder through alternative assessment strategies.				
9	Alternative assessment strategies cannot provide quantitative or numerical data, which makes assessment both subjective and hard to interpret.	2.41	1.46	17	Medium
6	Alternative assessment strategies are difficult to administer and score, especially with large classes.	2.26	1.34	18	Low
	Total	3.04	.400		Medium

Table (2) indicates that the mean scores of teachers' perceptions about the disadvantages of utilizing alternative assessment strategies ranged between (2.26) and (4.12) with low to high levels of agreement. Teachers stated the highest level of agreement (Mean=4.12) on the item "The nature of the EFL classes in the schools of Qasabet Irbid Educational Directorate hinder teachers' ability to use alternative assessment strategies.", whereas, they stated the lowest level of agreement (Mean=2.26) on the item "Alternative assessment strategies are difficult to administer and score, especially with large classes". It was observed that the teachers reported a high level of agreement on the items (4, 14, 12, 1, and 18). On other hand, they reported a medium level of agreement on items (1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 15, 16, 17, 19, and 20). However, they stated a low level of agreement on the item number six. In general, teachers reported a high level of agreement (3.84) in the overall domain

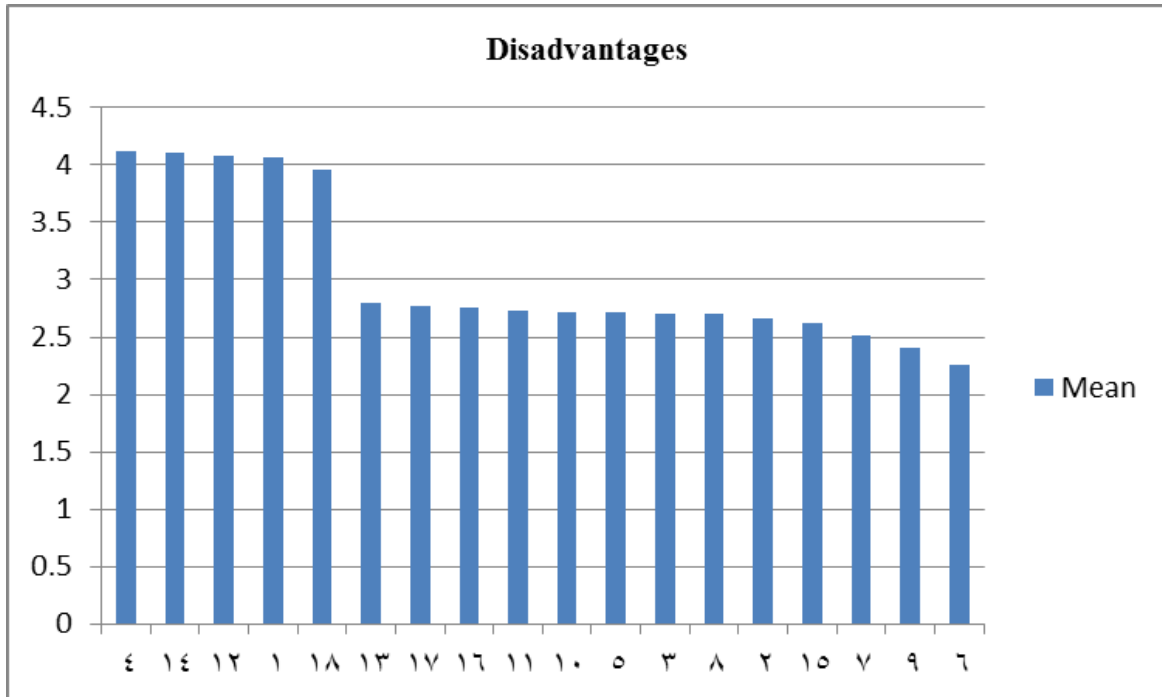


Figure 2: Teachers' perceptions about the disadvantages of utilizing alternative assessment strategies

Second: Results related to answer research question two: “Do Jordanian EFL teachers’ perceptions about the utilization of Alternative Assessment Strategies in the schools of Qasabet Irbid Educational Directorate during the COVID-19 Pandemic differ by qualification and experience?”

To answer this question, the means and standard deviation of teachers’ perception about the advantages of utilization of Alternative Assessment Strategies in the schools of Qasabet Irbid Educational Directorate during the COVID-19 by qualification and experience. Table 3 illustrates the results.

Table 3: Means and Standard Deviation of Teachers' Perceptions of the Advantages of the Utilization of Alternative Assessment Strategies

Independent variable		Mean	Standard Deviation
Qualification	Bachelor's Degree	3.92	.68
	Postgraduates	4.13	.73
Experience	Less than 10 years	4.23	.56
	10 years and more	3.82	.81

In Table (3), it may be seen the variances in the teachers' perceptions regarding the advantages of alternative assessment by qualification and experience.

To evaluate the effect of qualification and experience on the teacher's perceptions about the advantages of alternative assessment by qualification,

and experience, Two-way ANOVA was performed. Table (4) demonstrates the results:

Table 4: Results of Two-way ANOVA to Assess the Demographical Variables on

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Qualification	2.307	1	2.307	4.936	.027	.013
Experience	10.188	1	10.188	21.798	.000	.055
Error	174.797	374	.467			
Total	6362.313	378				
Corrected Total	193.717	377				

As Table (4) shows, there is a statistically significant difference between teachers' perceptions about the advantages of alternative assessment due to teachers' qualifications in favor of postgraduates. Moreover, there is a statistically significant difference between teachers' perceptions about the advantages of alternative assessment due to teachers' experience in favor of teachers with ten or more years of experience.

Furthermore, the means and standard deviation of teachers' perceptions about the disadvantages of utilization of Alternative Assessment Strategies in the schools of Qasabet Irbid Directorate of Education during the COVID-19 by qualification and experience were retrieved. Table 5 demonstrates the results.

Table 5: Means and Standard Deviation of Teachers' Perceptions about the Disadvantages of the Utilization of Alternative Assessment Strategies

Independent variable		Mean	Standard Deviation
Qualification	Bachelor's Degree	3.12	.42
	Postgraduate	3.22	.44
Experience	Less than 10 years	3.28	.41
	10 years and more	3.06	.43

Table (5) shows the teachers' Perceptions of the disadvantages of alternative assessment varied according to their qualifications and experience.

Two-way ANOVA was used to evaluate the impact of experience and qualification on the perceptions of disadvantages of alternative assessment by experience and qualification. Table 6 presents the findings:

Table (6): Results of Two-way ANOVA to Assess the Demographical Variables on Teachers Perceptions about the Disadvantages of Alternative Assessment

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Qualification	.376	1	.376	2.158	.143	.006
Experience	2.001	1	2.001	11.480	.001	.030
Error	65.193	374	.174			
Total	3889.898	378				
Corrected Total	70.845	377				

Table (6) shows that there is a statistically significant difference between teachers' perceptions about the disadvantages of alternative assessments due to teachers' experience in favor of teachers with less than 10 years. In contrast, there is no statistically significant difference between teachers' perceptions about the disadvantages of alternative assessments due to teachers' qualifications.

Discussion

Discussion of the Results Related to the First Research Question:

The question was about Jordanian English as a foreign language teachers' perception of the benefits of using alternative evaluation strategies in Irbid Qasabat Education Directorate schools during the Covid-19 pandemic. The results exposed that teachers' perceptions of the items in this question ranged from medium to high.

Teachers reported the need imposed on them to use assessment strategies. Alternative assessment strategies can no longer be used, which are carried out in face-to-face education. After the pandemic, the form of education changed from face-to-face to distance learning, and accordingly, the teacher became obligated to adopt assessment strategies different from what was done inside the classroom. Alternative assessment is done using computers by sending tests to students, and then the student answers them and sends them back to the teacher for analysis.

Although online assessment was the only method used during the pandemic, the absence of interaction between the student and the teacher during the assessment, in addition to relying on written tests, limited teachers' ability to evaluate other students' learning, especially skills, and therefore the evaluation was not comprehensive of all aspects of learning.

Teachers on the other hand reported that alternative assessment strategies provided better opportunities for students than traditional assessment, and the reason for this could be that the alternative assessment strategies used during the pandemic gave students more flexibility and a longer time to answer, as online assessment during the pandemic reduced exam anxiety and thus helped students perform better.

Teachers also reported that alternative assessment strategies enabled students to develop their mental abilities and logical thinking. The reason for this is mainly because the alternative assessment made the students depend on themselves in answering, unlike the traditional assessment inside a room, where the teacher sometimes guides the students to the correct answers or provides them with clarification about each other. In questions, under the alternative assessment, the student was essentially relying on himself, and this contributed to developing his mental abilities and skills in answering questions. In other words, the student was relying on himself to understand the question and answer it.

Finally, teachers reported that alternative assessment strategies constitute an alternative to traditional assessment if their ratings of this poverty were moderate. This may be because traditional assessment measures the cognitive and skill aspects of education, while alternative assessment during the pandemic focuses on measuring cognitive aspects only, which means assessment is more comprehensive in learning aspects than alternative assessment.

Another reason that may have affected teachers' perceptions of the previous paragraph is that the alternative assessment, due to the circumstances of the pandemic, was often brief and asked the student for specific answers or was in the form of multiple choice, and this type of test may not accurately measure the aspects targeted for measurement, unlike the traditional assessment which targeted cognitive aspects through essay questions, which gave a higher chance of excluding guesswork during the answer and thus being more accurate in measuring learning aspects.

Regarding the disadvantages of using alternative assessment strategies, teachers reported that the nature of the English language subject as a foreign language, the possibility of students resorting to cheating during exams and the students habit of using traditional assessment strategies were the most prominent disadvantages of alternative assessment strategies, and this result may be due mainly to the students weakness in the English language subject, the teacher was prompted to clarify some aspects of the test in the traditional assessment but during the pandemic, the student resorted to asking those around him if he found difficulty in some aspects which constituted an entry point for cheating, and in light of the lack of supervision by the teacher during the assessment, the student's answer usually includes large quotations from the prescribed curriculum, which makes it difficult to accurately evaluate the student. Another reason that using assessment strategies during the pandemic may reveal flaws is that tests during the pandemic did not have any kind of control or discipline, as the case in traditional assessment, which may also lead to the student seeking help from others, and thus the assessment is not accurate to a level that allows the student's level to be accurately determined.

One of the drawbacks of this type of assessment, as teachers reported, is that the student feels concerned about his inability to reach his teacher. His answer may be due mainly to the frequent interruptions of the Internet during the pandemic, especially considering the limited time allocated to carry out the

assignment or test, as there is great pressure on the Internet during the pandemic. It affected the quality of education, causing anxiety for some students due to their fear of not completing educational tasks on time.

With regard to the defects of alternative assessment strategies related to the materials needed to implement the strategies, the time to implement the strategies or the competencies of the advertiser in implementing the strategies, the accuracy of the alternative assessment strategies, and the management of classroom management during the implementation of the strategies the teachers reported an average level of assessment, and the reason for this is that the teacher was forced to deal with alternative assessment strategies during the pandemic, at least to a minimum meaning that despite the difficulties, the teacher had to apply these strategies because there is no alternative to apply them.

The reason that may have affected teachers' evaluations is the Jordanian Ministry of Education's keenness to provide all available facilities for the success of the distance education process considering the pandemic, and these efforts may have contributed to reducing the difficulties that teachers face while implementing alternative evaluation strategies.

These results show that Teachers' attitudes were moderately positive which are in line with previous research (Al-Nouh, Taqi& Abdul-Kareem, 2014). They also offered many advantages of alternative assessment strategies such as the availability to conduct tests on students. They are in line with (Arifuddin, Turmudi & Rokhmah (2021).

Discussion of the Results Related to the Second Research Question:

The question was about the effect of the variables of academic qualification and experience on English language teachers' perceptions of alternative assessment strategies, as the results showed that there were statistically significant differences in English language teacher's perceptions of the advantages of alternative assessment due to teachers' qualifications in favor of postgraduates and due to the teacher's experience in favor of teachers who have ten or more years of experience.

This result confirms that the teacher's experience and qualifications play a central role in influencing teacher's perceptions of the advantages of alternative assessment strategies because long experience enables the teacher to know the foundations, rules, and appropriate tools for alternative assessment, and the scientific practice of the teacher with long experience of alternative assessment strategies has enabled the teacher to get over the challenges this kind of assessment faces.

This may be due to the fact that that teachers with qualifications and experience lack time to go to their jobs to offer lectures, correct tests, and write grades for their students. So, for them, using alternative assessment strategies is a good choice. Furthermore, such competencies are easily adapted to writing research and articles, as well as interacting with computers and electronic methods of communication.

Therefore, the utilization of alternative assessment strategies is easy to design and prepare for them compared to other teachers. Another explanation for this result is that teachers with qualifications and experience are more effective because they have more opportunities to test suitable alternative assessment strategies and lessons on multiple cohorts of students.

Another important explanation for this result is that teachers with qualifications and experience have more ability to choose and recognize which alternative assessment strategies address priority needs for their students compared to teachers without qualifications and experience.

On the other hand, the results showed that there was a statistically significant difference between teacher's perceptions about the shortcomings of alternative evaluation due to teachers' experience in favor of teachers with less than 10 years of experience. This result may be due to those with less experience not having sufficient experience to implement alternative evaluation strategies, which led to the difficulty of applying these strategies from their point of view.

This finding is consistent with those of previous research (e.g., Al Zoubi, 2019). There is a statistically significant difference between teachers' perceptions about the advantages of alternative assessment strategies due to teachers' qualifications in favor of postgraduates.

Conclusions

To improve student performance in EFL classrooms, various assessment strategies should be adopted, as well as incorporating alternative assessment strategies during online classes from the beginning could reduce students' anxiety, shyness, and reluctance. The utilization of alternative assessment in schools can be integrated with remote teaching successfully, provided that teachers are sufficiently experienced. Also, there are several advantages of the utilization of alternative assessment in schools as long as teachers and educators can avoid the obstacles and challenges or try to improve them. All in all, this study can help educators to improve the utilization of alternative assessment strategies as it shows the disadvantages of the utilization of alternative assessment strategies from the teachers' perception.

Recommendations

Following are some recommendations made in light of the findings of the study; this study highlights the necessity of conducting further studies in the EFL context investigating the obstacles and challenges encountered in online learning and suggesting appropriate actions to sort them out. Besides, there can be further studies that investigate learners' perceptions of online assessment and their problems while doing online exams.

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