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Exploring Internal Assessment System Management: Voices from Master's Level Students of Tribhuvan University

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Abstract

Assessment is an essential element of university education as it shapes students' learning outcomes and processes. One powerful strategy for incrementally improving student performance involves continuous assessment. Internal assessment management make sure nondiscriminatory evaluation, promotes continuous learning, enhances competence, and influences students' academic performance for overall educational outcomes. This study aimed to examine students' observations on internal assessment in relation to their academic performance and motivation. The study applied a qualitative research design. We collected informations from the students and transcribed into Devanagari script, than translated it into English, coded the quotation, and developed the themes inductively. Findings of this study included some uncomfortable circumstances regarding academic writing, presentation skills, assessment preparation, and regular attendance. In spite of this, students are excited to utilise new information and are curious about what they are learning as they strive to complete the internal assessment tasks. Therefore, for internal assessment to be implemented and used effectively, the course structure and student characteristics should be taken into consider. Communicating with students about the goals and advantages of continuous assessment may be the key to minimise the possible adverse consequences of continuous, graded assessments, in addition to increasing their participation in regular, non-graded testing. The semester system has been demonstrated to work; students have to study within it, and it has been improved so much that it is completely unrecognisable. Students who want to learn more about the

system must apply from an earlier stage. In the end, regular classroom activities and communication chain interconnections help students become better at using this system.

Keywords: *Assessment system, students' perception, semester system, learning achievement, fairness in evaluation*

Introduction

A systematic approach to assessing, quantifying, and recording an individual's or group's knowledge, abilities, attitudes, and beliefs is called an assessment system. To assess performance or comprehension, it frequently uses a range of techniques and methodologies, including assessments, projects, and observations. For students' academic achievement to be evaluated fairly, openly, and consistently, internal assessment management is essential (Oli,2024). It places a strong emphasis on alignment with learning objectives, methodical record-keeping, and formative feedback. Learning outcomes are improved and responsibility has been promoted by effective management (Black & Wiliam, 2018). Effective systems for assessment can help teachers and students find their areas of strength and growth by giving them insightful feedback. Assessment has a significant impact on students' learning outcomes and processes, making it one of the most crucial elements of a university education (Gibbs and Simpson, 2004). Furthermore, Assessments are a key component of almost every educational institution's process for granting students the certificates of completion they need. It is therefore essential for educational institutions (Meyer et al., 2010). Continuous assessment, whether internal or summative, enhances students' academic performance and psychological health while giving insight into their learning preparedness (Isaksson, 2008). Assessment inspires students to engage in reading by nurturing a spirit of enthusiasm and confidence about the learning outcome (Aftab and Tariq, 2018). It reduces examination anxiety and fosters students' ability to become self-reflective learners (Shields, 2015). Furthermore, a student's perception, feedback, and academic performance may be influenced by an excessive amount of assessments (McDowell and Sambell, 1999).

Internal assessments for the Master of Education (M.Ed.) semester system are essential for assessing students' progress at Tribhuvan University (TU) in Nepal. These evaluations, which account for 40% of the final grade, usually consist of class assessments, assignments, presentations, and discussion participation. Throughout the semester, they are intended to promote active participation and provide ongoing feedback (Luitel,2023). Internal assessments

increasingly contribute to a substantial amount of master's level grades, frequently up to 50%, including quizzes, assignments, and term papers; however, certain institutions do not have standardised rubrics or remedial assessments (Khanal & Timilsena, 2025). Final exams and internal assessments are combined to provide a comprehensive assessment of both academic knowledge and practical abilities. 80% attendance is required in this semester's system in order to take the final test. Each student needs to successfully complete all of the exams administered by the office of the examination controller at the end of each academic session in order to get certification for the M.Ed. degree.

Assessments carried out within an organisation or institution where the rating and evaluation procedures are administered internally are known as internal evaluations. Internal evaluations' main goal is to determine a candidate's level of competence and dependability in a certain field or subject. Internal evaluations make it easier to instantly assess students' progress in a semester-based educational system. By offering important performance indicators, highlighting particular learning difficulties for focused remediation, and directing the ongoing development of assessment techniques, they enhance student learning (Tropman, 2014). The intention of a program's self-assessment is to assist students in developing their own understanding. Students are required to assess both the learning process and the final outcome. Peer assessment is a type of collaborative learning where students are able to evaluate each other's work in addition to their own. While the teacher is typically in charge of evaluating the final outcome, implementing student evaluation in the classroom supports students in analysing both their own work and the process that ultimately brought them to it. The communication loop between teachers and students as well as the teaching-learning process becomes more effective and efficient when this method is integrated into everyday classroom activities (Shield, 2015).

Effective formative evaluation has a significant positive influence on students' motivation and achievement. Additionally, it helps them be able to function independently. In an effective institution, formative assessment will be integrated into everyday classroom activities. In these situations, students are fully aware of the subject matter they are learning and the standards they are striving for (Bram et al., 2017). There is plenty of discussion among the students and the teacher on how the students' work fulfils the assessment criteria. Feedback that is clear and concise helps students understand and evaluate their previous attempts to meet the standards as well as their next moves. Students are inspired to become reflective, curious learners

who feel comfortable assessing their own and others' development since they are aware that they will be helped to fulfil the standards (Meyer et al., 2010).

It is essential to select assessment tasks that accurately understand students' current needs, limitations, and skills in addition to providing ongoing feedback on classroom activities. The range of pertinent activities and assignments that teachers must collect evaluation data from will depend on the subjects being studied and the level of the program (Alquraan, 2014). Class assessments, student written assignments submitted in class or at home, student responses to organised questions, oral responses, project work, portfolios, presentations, creative work, and exhibitions are most likely some of them. Creating and executing a whole-school assessment policy could help guarantee that learning assessment methods impact the standard of instruction and learning throughout the school and are understood by educators, students, and parents (Gyawali, 2021). The first essential step is to create a common understanding of the many forms of assessments and how to use them to enhance classroom instruction. Furthermore, it might be necessary and beneficial to conduct additional research and train the entire school on how to use assessments to improve learning. An assessment policy should serve as the foundation for the educational institution's assessment approach. It will describe the structure that will make it possible to monitor, compile, record, and report on pupils' progress. Additionally, it needs to be in line with the educational institution's policies and procedures for reporting and marking as well as teaching and learning. Any assessment system's influence on students' learning processes and outcomes is demarcated by their opinions of the assessment system (Lizzio and Wilson, 2013). Relationships with teachers and peers, personal characteristics, and earlier assessment experiences all influence the opinions of learners. Students may therefore interpret any given assessment-related activity in different ways, which could have a range of effects on how they learn.

Inequalities in the techniques employed to assess perceptions may be the cause of students' different perspectives on continuous evaluation. Perceptions can be assessed at various levels by various research methodologies. Some studies concentrate on how students perceive specific assessment techniques (Flores et al., 2015). In contrast, others emphasize on the superiority of students in the way of assessment in general (Brown and Wang, 2013), or student understandings of the teachers' style and behavior of assessment in actual (Alquraan, 2014). On the other hand, perception can also be studied from a variety of perspectives. For instance, certain research assess students' perceptions of the fair-mindedness of the assessment's length, content,

and outcomes (Flores et al., 2015), while others examine how cheerful students are with the assessment tasks determine efficiency of assessment system.

This study paper will assess the perception of master's degree students about an internal assessment system adopted by faculty of education, TU. This means the degree of measured perceptions relates to students' understanding and experience regarding internal assessment management. As far as we remain familiar with, a few previous research has been done in this area. As a result, a new internal assessment system which will be categorized and considered in the students' regular and final course grades is essential for study. After considering the making it in line with the University's general academic and examination rules, we are interested in this study area.

The purpose of this study is to examine how master's level students perceive internal assessment management, with a concentrate on its efficiency, fairness, and influence on their achievement, skill development, and overall academic success.

Methods and Procedures

This study adopted a qualitative research design and narrative approach, which captures lived experiences through an assortment of personal stories (Creswell, 2014). Seven students were purposively selected as participants for this study. They were studied in M Ed third semester at Sanothimi Campus, Bhaktapur, and represented from diverse backgrounds and area of specialization. Seven students participated in the study, with one selected from each specialization subject area. They were selected through a purposive sampling technique based on their class presentation and the major subject area they studied. During each interview, students were questioned about their opinions on the use of continuous assessment system management in the instructional program. They also shared their experiences, both positive and negative, in relation with the assessment process. Additionally, students were asked about their views on assigning grades for internal assessments in each subject. They discussed how these grades influenced their motivation and behavior. While we conducted the in-depth interviews, another researcher simultaneously collected information by recording students' responses over the phone.

As a result, we chose them for this study in order to focus on their experiences with the assessment system. When participants want to share their tales and we want to report on them, we have to use narrative research (Creswell, 2012). We had taken in-depth interviews with participants to collect their experiences, voice of sentiment. We had recorded interviews through

mobile set and transcribed carefully. Both researchers tried to control bias during transcription and maintained a natural setting (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). A qualitative interview takes place when a researcher asks one or more participants a broad, open-ended question, records their response, transcribes the interview, and types the information into computer files for analysis. (Creswell, 2012). In order to capture the meaning of the text data, we employed a general inductive strategy to reduce extensive and variable raw text data employing coded and subsequently developed categories (Thomas, 2006). Global themes and basic themes were used to arrange and code the transcribed data. The researcher who prepared the theme network attempted to connect different speculations to the data and make an argument about relevant topics. Significant ideas that were clear in the data were extracted from the transcripts using a technique called thematic analysis. In assessing each participant's level of understanding, these issues have been considered to be relevant.

Results and Discussion

M Ed level students at Sanothimi Campus struggle with time management for both earning and learning. They face many learning challenges, such as difficulty using computers, learning English as a second language, and allocating time for homework assignments. A normal inductive thematic exploration was used to assess the information (Patton, 2015). Every Google Drive interview file was individually coded by us. Code translations and multiple perspectives regarding codes with contradictory meanings are discussed after each file has been coded separately. We have prepared global themes and gathered themes that have been transcribed and coded based on fundamental themes. In order to prepare thematic networks, researchers have attempted to connect various theories to the data and have relevant discussions about issues. Researchers' understanding of students' perceptions of internal assessment effectiveness and fairness was enhanced in both quality and depth by the entire data analysis process, which encouraged in-depth engagement, prolonged reflections, and a variety of perspectives.

Student's perception on the effectiveness of the internal assessment system

Since the study's respondents were students with various educational backgrounds, their responses are also diverse. Included below are student responses about the effectiveness of the internal assessment system. One student from a mathematics background talked with me that;

I feel the internal assessments help me stay on track with the syllabus and reinforce what we learn in class. The assessments push me to study consistently, but sometimes it feels more like busywork rather than actual learning. I don't think they effectively measure my understanding. They often test memory rather than critical thinking.

Students' perceptions of the assessment system's influence on their learning and proficiency development are reflected in these responses, which range from favorable to unfavorable. Another respondent from a language background stated;

Internal assessments give me regular feedback on my progress, which is helpful in identifying my weak areas early. The system has improved my study habits, but I wish it focused more on practical applications of knowledge. It helps me stay engaged with the course, but the stress of frequent assessments sometimes affects my overall performance.

Another health education student stated, "*I value the internal assessment framework since it provides me with a sense of progress throughout the semester*". He further explained, "How can I make an assessment on time if I'm not familiar with the computer and e-learning subject, and there are no appropriate source books in our library?". In another context he added "*When I submit my assignments, I worry that others will quickly figure out my weaknesses since I am always afraid of the assessment presentation and the number of presentations necessary for grading*".

A student from a social science background stated;

I used to read the course material whenever I had free time, even while riding the bus to and from class. However, the implementation of the continuous assessment technique in this course caused me to increase the amount of time I spent studying. Before this course, I would read and study any course materials just a day or two before the final test, but because of the continuous assessment in this course, I understood that I needed to study the topics frequently because there was an evaluation every other week. I was able to feel more relaxed on the day of the final exam thanks to this.

At the same time, we noticed that the students are afraid of the assignment. We quickly identify students who are experiencing anxiety-related symptoms. They also need of counseling, interventions should include an assessment. Regarding this, one student said;

When the teacher says, "Your assessment is coming up," I get really anxious and scared about it. How can I turn in my assignment on time? That's my fear. Another student says, I want to complete my assignments at home because I can't present my paper in front of all of my friends because I'm nervous and I won't do well.

Students experience anxiety when they fail to recognize the link between their studies and grades. This is because their internal locus of control makes them feel powerless during an assessment. Fearing that they won't be able to freely communicate with their teacher about the expectations, fearing that they won't achieve and so haven't studied enough, students have assessed themselves and feel bad about not fulfilling obligations to friends and family, further elucidating a person's personal life. Their personality and behavioral features are largely shaped by their sense of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1994). Finally that influences their intrinsic motivating habits to learn.

Students frequently concentrate more on their standing and grade than on how they might do better. Every student has potential for improvement, regardless of where they are in the class order. While the top-placed student may believe they are performing very well, it's possible that they are particularly capable and may perform far better. Students that are categorized lower in the class usually feel not as much of motivated. Black and Wiliam (2018) have confidence in that when learners are given achieved marks, their self-esteem responds emotionally to the given score. A lower-than-expected grade is interpreted as a failure, whereas a higher-than-expected grade makes pupils happy and eager to know if they outscored others in their class. Emphasising on the learner's continuous improvement standards rather than overall scores is a successful approach that helps minimise ego.

Students have come to understand that many of them come to college believing completely that they will not do well on assessments or in presentations in class assignments for college. Students may believe they are just not college material if they perform poorly in a variety of subjects, or they may believe this belief is restricted to a single course or subject. As psychologist Bandura (1994) fighting self-doubt makes it hard to do much. Actual student achievement is reflected in self-assessment score guides. student aspects include time management techniques, study habits, self-awareness of one's ability to achieve, perseverance, tenacity, administrative skills, and collaborative attitude (Shield, 2015). This finding was consistent with research by Lemanski (2011), which suggested that students choose periodic assessments as a means of encouraging them to study on a regular schedule. According to another

study, pupils feel comfortable in the motivating setting which results from internal assessment for regular study (Bram et al., 2017).

Fairness and Transparency of the Internal Assessment Process

The internal assessment procedure must be fair and transparent to guarantee that every student is assessed impartially and fairly. Fairness guarantees that all students are assessed equally, without favoritism or bias, and transparency ensures that criteria, expectations, and assessment techniques are made apparent to students beforehand. Students and teachers develop trust as a result, which inspires pupils to participate completely. Internal assessments are a trustworthy indicator of students' abilities and development when they are conducted fairly and transparently. One student stated;

After receiving my assessment, I became even more curious and hurried to read, write, seek, and consult with friends while doing my best to complete the report. I found the readings and assignments more difficult in the past two semesters, but they have helped me learn more deeply this semester. For us, impartiality and openness in internal evaluations are crucial. We feel like we are all in agreement when the standards and grading criteria are made clear. We no longer have to worry about favoritism because we are certain that our performance is the only thing being considered.

On the basis of the research, when students are enthusiastically involved in the internal assessment, they have long-lasting knowledge and acquire a good score.

We currently have the second semester exam coming up, and we feel at ease around exam time, mostly because of the assignment. Exam preparation is no longer a concern for me, but regular attendance, assignments, and class presentations are more beneficial to me, thus I can say that assignments contribute to a high passing rate and high quality of education. If assessments cannot be assessed or are given fewer marks, I have little interest in taking them. I always put in a lot of effort when it comes to tests.

The findings complement to the existing body of literature by highlighting the ways in which students' personal beliefs and experiences interact with the social environments of society, schools, and classrooms to influence how they perceive and express fairness in classroom assessments. Regarding this a student reported;

Our teacher ensures fair treatment by giving everyone the same opportunities to participate and be assessed. She provides clear rubrics before assignments and gives constructive feedback to all students equally. If anyone has questions or concerns, she addresses them openly, making sure no one feels left out or overlooked.

These findings support the foundations established by socio-cultural theories of assessment and social psychology theories of fairness to construct a theory of fairness that incorporates the social, cultural, and economic context in which evaluations have been carried out (Brookhart, 2018; Elwood & Murphy, 2015). Students who scored higher on the internal assessment demonstrated excitement about the effectiveness of the system. This can be explained by the fact that if students assumed that the assessment had greater importance, they would be more likely to work harder in their studies in order to achieve better outcomes. Exam grades, which are closely related to feelings and emotions, are another theory that suggests they could influence the views of students. A student appreciates the assessment when they receive a high score, and vice versa (Carless 2006).

Student motivation, performance, and learning outcomes

Increasing student motivation may cause improvements in the way that students perform on assessments and in their grades. After every student performance, the target score may be revised in order to motivate students to keep improving their adjustment. We have asked all seven sampled students about their motivation, class regularity, overall performance and attraction towards master's in education program. Their voices are as follow;

It will make a difference in the final term if we attend every Class; we will get 5 points in the exam. In my first semester due to assignment of work I have obtain good marks in the return examination ,we have given chance for correction and upgrade in grading so its helps for grading system.

It leads to upgrading for student numbers, when students attend regularly, they have an index knowledge, so the majority of students are present every day. In this regard a student said;

The semester system is fruitful, as it has been revised better than the previous annual system. Regular assessment, research work and lots of practical activities have made compulsory for the student. Classes run regularly in the morning so we can join in work

in the day. Study and work make me practical in life so I can enjoy in both earning and learning equally.

According to university regulation 80% attendance is compulsory to be eligible for both internal and external evaluation criteria. It seems that students' regular study habits are primarily influenced by their result on each subject-related assessment rather than the assignment itself. The voice of one student in learning performance was;

The assessment system helps us track our progress and identify areas where we need improvement. It pushes us to stay focused throughout the semester, not just during exams. The feedback from assignments and tests shows us where we stand, helping us improve and ultimately achieve better results.

Instead of boosting the motivation that can improve students' long-term learning and retention of the knowledge they receive from the course, this contributes to increased student motivation and quick learning in order to obtain marks for the specific assessment. One student confidently stated;

Internal assessments have improved my overall learning by keeping me engaged throughout the course. Regular tests, assignments, and presentations make me study consistently instead of cramming at the end. The feedback I receive helps me understand my mistakes improve. It's not just about grades—it's about applying what I've learned and growing academically.

In response to research, internal assessments need to be organised in a way which influences how students actively modify their performance. It demonstrates that in order to shape how students proactively extend their effort for long-term learning, internal assessment should be structured (De Paola and Scoppa, 2011). Examining the Increasing learning outcomes requires strategic interventions and reforms at all educational levels. There are substantial barriers to receiving a substantial service supply through improved regulations and stronger associations, require adjustment.

This result was comparable to that of Tropman (2014), who exposed that internal assessment negotiations the benefits of increasing student self-confidence, reducing anxiety, and simplifying bottomless tolerances through creating a more active learning environment. The research presented here highlights the value of assessment in increasing students' self-efficacy

and learning competencies, both of which improve student performance in learning environments. Using internal assessments, students were able to determine their strengths and areas for improvement in order to improve their overall performance on the next assessment. This finding provides an easy explanation of the formative assessment aspect of this study, where students use the findings of their assessments in order to guide their learning. The results of this study are very similar to those of Black and William (1998), who identified that the most significant and successful component of assessment is learning from assessments.

Conclusion

In Nepal, internal assessment management is essential throughout all levels of education, however it's particularly significant at institutions of higher learning like Tribhuvan University. The recent study highlighted the need of considering the views of learners on assessments when undertaking research on assessment. The views of students regarding assessments could provide important information about how assessments influence learners. Nevertheless, the study additionally demonstrated that, despite internal assessment's beneficial influence on students' achievement in assessments and overall grades, it additionally enhanced students' extrinsic motivation rather than their intrinsic motivation. For better internal assessment administration and application, the course structure and student characteristics should be considered. Assessing learners in the classroom encourages students to critically assess both their individual work and the processes they followed to get what they have achieved. As students' perceptions of assessment's effectiveness and positive effects increased, correspondingly increased their perceptions of its adverse consequences. Thus, teachers could potentially able to clarify to students that assessments aim to be beneficial instruments for learning and that grades are a reflection of their present work rather than their individual potential. We briefly address the matter of standardising assessments since we want to make assured that everyone in the teaching profession is using the same assessment criteria. When it comes to evaluating students, feasibility as well as efficacy of the assessment type may be significantly affected by issues with technology-related resources like electricity, the internet, and smart phones. Therefore, if these aspects are neglected, students may become frustrated with assessments, which could make it difficult to utilise the system in the future.

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