

Relationship between Students' Perception of Assessment, their Exam Preparation Strategies and their CGPA at University Level

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Abstract *The major focus of this study was on the relationship of students' perception of assessment, their exam prep strategies and their achievement (CGPA). The study was correlational, and the survey method was used to find out the research problem. All the public sector universities of Punjab were considered as a population of the study, and only seven (07) public sector universities were taken as a sample. A total number of 1324 students were selected through a simple random sampling technique for the data collection. Two questionnaires, one for students' perception of assessment and the other for students' exam prep strategies, were adapted to collect the data. The collected data were analyzed through mean scores, standard deviation, correlation and t-test. The study findings showed students have different perception and the same exam prep strategies and also concluded a significant relationship between students' perception of assessment, their exam prep strategies and achievement. Based on the results, it is recommended that students should be clearly informed about the assessment practices for the improvement of students' learning.*

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Introduction

With the passage of time, educational stakeholders' interests are increased in the assessment process and also on those factors which affect the students' learning (Wicking, 2020). Mostly this interest concerns the practices how to improve the students' learning and students' perception about the assessment process. To improve the assessment process, students' perceptions are taken into account for all the time but students are not acknowledged (Gerritsen van Leeuwenkamp et al., 2017; Levin, 2000). Svensson and Wood (2007) stated that students have rights to express their views about assessment process at higher education and their views should be considered. However, students have exceptional knowledge and perceptions (Levin, 2000) as they face the difficulties of assessment directly. The perception of students also varies as of instructors, directors, and workers (Meyer et al., 2010).

Furthermore, Brown et al., (2009) viewed that students observe, response and figure out about the assessment process. Their estimations and behaviors regarding evaluation are not significantly related with their parents, tutors, or communities. In addition, a review was conducted by Meyer et al., (2010) that teachers do not agree with their students regarding the injustice of the assessment process. Van de Watering and Van de Rijt (2006) also viewed that students overrated the complexity of exam preparation while teachers undervalued it. The perceptions of students about assessment should be considered with respect to their needs and demands.

Perceptions are related to the understanding of people, and they use the information according to their understanding. (Zimbardo et al., 2009). Expected information is easier and more effective to deal with and identify any

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system ([Roese & Sherman, 2007](#)). Contrary to this, the unpredicted knowledge is also amazing; however, it is a practice very efficiently ([Roese & Sherman, 2007](#)). A few types of research have examined the perceptions of students about the authenticity and fairness of assessment ([Gerritsen van Leeuwenkamp et al., 2017](#)). They found that students face problems when they do not perceive the authenticity of the assessment ([Gulikers et al., 2008](#)). The study result ([Gerritsen van Leeuwenkamp et al., 2019](#)) revealed that students' perceptions of assessment are positively related to their academic outcomes.

In addition, students observe assessment as fair and valuable when assessment is done in a practical situation, and assessment results motivate students (O' Donovan, 2016). During class time, teachers should communicate to student concerning the worth, utility and significance of the assigned tasks ([Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2002](#)). [Dorman et al., \(2006\)](#) found that if there is lack of congruence with planned learning, authenticity and transparency of assessment, then it would reflect the unfavorable results of students' academics and decrease the confidence level of students. [Dhindsa et al. \(2007\)](#) viewed that, however, the students recognized their learning and also had clarity as well as the students' consultation and authenticity ratio. [Dorman et al. \(2006\)](#) and [Dhindsa et al., \(2007\)](#) both claimed for more study recognizing noticed features of the assessment that are helpful and favourable to maximize the knowledge of the student.

Moreover, enhancing the efficiency of student is the main objective of education. The progress of every learning course depends on a diversity of aspects, involving the preparation of exam or learning abilities ([Soltanalgharaei, 2014](#)). Commonly, students utilize various strategies to achieve targets to ready themselves as well for the examination in various conditions ([Azizian & Abedi, 2007](#)). Therefore, any study and learning demand the acquisition of skill. On the other hand, lack of skills can be the main problem for students. On the whole, the students who have the abilities to relate their strategy effectively with their subject content can achieve their targets easily ([Hasan & Zahra, 2009](#)). In fact, no single strategy of study is applied for all the subjects, with a mixture of various styles and strategies that might be applicable for the exam preparation ([Ghanbari et al., 2015](#)). Students

must be utilized various techniques for various sorts of their study tasks ([Mehdinezhad, & Esmaeeli, 2015](#)).

[Williams et al., \(2004\)](#) define the behavioral strategies of examination preparation which are preferred by students as follows. These involve: (i) students require to be motivated by the surrounding incentive, conveying and explaining exam data with students, (ii) the sort of knowledge (abstract theoretical or factual practical) that the students desire to concentrate on and also how they move toward learning and recognizing knowledge, (iii) the methods for concluding how to organize and arrange the course knowledge (logical or personally valued), (iv) students' method to settle and direct their preparation duration for examination (organized-planful or open-ended spontaneous).

In addition, most of the students not have enough information about study styles, even though talented and intelligent students may confront academic issues ([Gettinger & Seibert, 2002](#)). Researchers have stated the different study strategies of students as making notes ([Gurung et al., 2010](#)), coding the content, learn the material by making stories ([Heller & Cassady, 2016](#)), cramming ([Gurung, 2005](#)), while other studies indicate that mnemonic methods and organization of content is a better way of exam preparation that the repetition of content ([Schaap et al., 2012](#)). Students who are unable to accomplish the acceptable outcomes in examination they supposed to achieve without efficient studying (Tsai & Cheng, 2017), which affect their academic abilities ([Abd et al., 2008](#)). Regardless, intelligence, inspirations and individual abilities are the main features of academic success, but exam strategy and learning techniques have a strong impression on educational efficiency ([Thibodeaux et al., 2017](#)).

Various studies have been investigated with the different context that can affect the achievement. For the time being, students' learning strategies have to the front position in the learning process, and course material is also designed according to the diversity of learning patterns of students ([Hou, 2015](#)). [Halili et al., \(2015\)](#) also suggested for investigators to observe the styles of learning in a very close way in various learning aspects, background and departments. The current study also investigates the students' perception of assessment and style of exam preparation and its impact on achievement.

Furthermore, [Smith \(2002\)](#) examined the relationship among the perception of university students of their exam taking abilities, confidence and their efficiency of exam. [Smith \(2002\)](#) observed that there was also a relationship between the confidence and exam efficiency of students, but there was not a linkage among the perception of students of their exam taking abilities and their efficiencies of test. In addition, Vaessen et al., (2016) viewed that if students perceived the assessment process negatively, then it will mislead the students in lower rank and positive perception linked with high scores and progress of students. The study results of [Wang and Chang \(2010\)](#) revealed the relationship between students' perception of assessment and achievement. [Gulikers \(2006\)](#) studied the relationships between perceptions of authenticity, study approach and the learning outcome, he finds out the significant relationship between perceptions of authenticity of assessment, a deep study approach and the outcome.

Keeping in view this aspect of students' perception of assessment and their examination preparation strategies and their relationship with academic achievement at university level, the researcher conducts this study. This study may an attempt to guide the teachers to understand the perceptions of students about assessment.

The Present Study

The features of the assessment tasks as recognized by the students are most important to the awareness of students' purpose and progress related results ([Alkharusi, 2011](#)). For this reason, the perception of students about assessment task should be worthy appreciated and investigated. Different students adapted different study methods according to their subject demands and these study methods effects on the students' achievement and enhance their confidence level. [Bush and Walsh \(2014\)](#) found that daily classroom tasks are better for high achievement. In addition, [Islam et al., \(2011\)](#) stated that students feel more satisfied when they used variety of study methods for their learning and high achievement. The present study designed to find out the relationship between students' perceptions of assessment, their examination preparation strategies and achievement.

Research Questions

The main objective of the study was to find out the relationship between students' perceptions of assessment, their exam prep strategies and achievement. The following questions addressed the research questions:

- 1) What is students' perception of assessment at university level?
- 2) What are students' exam preparation strategies at university level?
- 3) Is there any difference between male and female students' perception of assessment and exam prep strategies at university level?
- 4) Is there any relationship between students' perception of assessment, their examination preparation strategies and their academic achievement?

Research Methodology

The current study was correlational and to investigate the research problem, survey was conducted. To be more specific, the following procedure was adopted for the present study.

Population and Sample of the Study

There are twenty-five (25) public sector universities in Punjab-Pakistan. All the students of these universities constituted the population of this study. A Sample of seven (7) universities was selected randomly. A total sample of 1324 respondents were selected through simple random sampling techniques by using the table of random numbers from the universities of Punjab-Pakistan for this study.

Development, Validation and Administration of Research Tool

Two questionnaires were adapted for data collection, one questionnaire for students' perception of assessment ([Waldrip et al., 2008](#)) and second for students' examination preparation strategies ([Williams et al., 2004](#)).

With the help of experts of department of Education, BZU, Multan, validity of the instrument was measured. The instrument was piloted tested in UE, Multan Campus. The reliability co-efficient of students' perception of assessment the scale was .77 and .83 was on exam prep strategies. For the administration of questionnaire, the researcher herself visited different universities through multiple contacts

for data collection. Porter (2004) considered multiple contacts, a successful technique to get a high response rate.

Data Analysis and Results

The data analysis was done in three sections, first section was about descriptive statistics, second section was about differential statistics and third

section was about Pearson correlation. To find out the significance of difference between respondents' views on students' perception of assessment and their examination preparation strategies with dependent variable of academic achievement (CGPA). The results were recorded in table (1, 2, 3, 4) and interpreted in the following manner.

Table 1. Students' Perception of Assessment

S. No	Factors	Mean	SD
1	Congruence with Planned Learning	3.80	.55
2	Authenticity	3.60	.75
3	Students' Consultation	3.80	.74
4	Transparency	3.70	.58
5	Students' Capabilities	3.60	.65

Table 1 showed the factor wise mean values of students' perception of assessment and students' examination preparation strategies. Two factors (Congruence with Planned Learning and Students' Consultation) have the same mean value (3.80) which shows that students have

positive response about the congruence with planned learning and their consultation. The mean values of more than 3.00 shows that the majority of students have different perception of assessment.

Table 2. Students' Examination Preparation Strategies

S. No	Factors	Mean	SD
1	Environmentally interactive strategies	3.38	.66
2	Environmentally reflective strategies	3.80	.61
3	Factual practical strategies	3.65	.66
4	Abstract theoretical strategies	3.77	.65
5	Organized-planful strategies	3.76	.64
6	Personality valued strategies	3.67	.64
7	Analytical-Logical strategies	3.83	.74
8	Open- ended spontaneous strategies	3.37	.91

Table 2 showed the factor wise mean values of students' exam prep strategies. The highest mean value (3.83, 3.80) shows that most of the students used Analytical-Logical strategies and Environmentally-Reflective strategies. The lowest

mean values are 3.37 and 3.38 which show that the less students used the Open-Ended spontaneous strategies and Environmentally-Interactive strategies.

Table 3. Gender - Wise Comparison of Students' Perception of Assessment and Students' Examination Preparation Strategies

Variables	Gender	N	Mean	t	Sig.
Students' perception of assessment	Male	485	3.68	7.86	.005
	Female	839	3.70		

Students' exam prep strategies	Male	485	3.66	.491	.483
	Female	839	3.67		

Table 3 shows the results of t-test which was applied to compare the differences of male and female students' perception of assessment and examination prep strategies. The mean values of students' perception of assessment were (male = 3.68, female = 3.70) and the value of "t" (t= 7.86, sig = .005) was significant which indicates that both male and female have different perception of assessment. On the basis of these values, it

was inferred that male and female students perceived assessment in a different way. The mean values of students' exam prep strategies were (male = 3.66, female = 3.67) and "t" values (t= .491, sig = .483) shows the insignificant which means both male and female has same exam preparation styles. It was inferred that there is no difference between the preparation strategies of male and female students.

Table 4. Correlation between Students' Perception of Assessment, their Examination Preparation Strategies and their Achievement

	CG PA	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7	F8	F9	F10	F11	F12	F13
CGPA	1													
F1	.05	1												
F2	-.02	.41	1											
F3	.01	.41	.45	1										
F4	.09	.39	.36	.46	1									
F5	.04	.40	.43	.39	.51	1								
F6	.03	.19	.27	.19	.24	.26	1							
F7	.14	.26	.22	.27	.31	.31	.36	1						
F8	.03	.26	.24	.25	.27	.33	.37	.53	1					
F9	.06	.24	.25	.22	.27	.32	.35	.49	.56	1				
F10	.05	.23	.25	.24	.26	.27	.22	.45	.41	.49	1			
F11	.04	.26	.26	.29	.29	.31	.34	.48	.49	.51	.53	1		
F12	.07	.23	.19	.25	.26	.24	.23	.51	.47	.45	.45	.49	1	
F13	-.11	.13	.15	.07	.11	.15	.25	.19	.25	.23	.19	.32	.22	1

Note: Congruence with Planned Learning= 1, Authenticity=2, Students' Consultation =3, Transparency =4, Students' Capabilities= 5, Environmentally-Interactive strategies = 6, Environmentally-Reflective strategies = 7, Factual-Practical strategies =8, Abstract- Theoretical strategies =9, Organized-Planful strategies = 10, Personality-Valued strategies = 11, Analytical-Logical strategies = 12, Open-Ended Spontaneous strategies =13

Table 4 shows the inter-correlation between the five (5) factors of students' perception of assessment, eight (8) factors of examination preparation strategies and CGPA. The calculated values of "r" were between -.02 and .53. The correlation values of following pair of factors namely: (F4 & F5), (F7 & 12), (F7 & F8), (F8 + F9), (F9 + F11) and (F10 + F11) were relatively higher (between .51 and .53) than others. This indicates that 'students' capabilities and environmentally-interactive strategies, 'environmentally reflective strategies and analytical-logical strategies, 'environmentally-reflective strategies and factual-practical strategies', 'factual-practical strategies and abstract- theoretical strategies', abstract- theoretical strategies and personality-valued strategies' and 'organized-planful

strategies and personality-valued strategies', has a moderate level of positive relationship. The remaining factors were weekly positive correlation with each other ("r" values are between .01 and .49). CGPA was very low positive correlations with all the factors (i.e. in 11) except two factors were negatively correlated. Overall, the independent factors of students' perception of assessment, exam prep strategies were correlated with each other and with CGPA. Except two factors, one of authenticity of assessment (r = -.02) and the other open-ended spontaneous strategies (r = -.11) which were negatively correlated with CGPA.

Discussion

The study was focused to find out the relationship

between students' perception of assessment, their exam prep strategies and achievement. [Alkharusi et al., \(2014\)](#) observed interrelations among perception of students about assessment objectives and the assessment process and found out statistically significant differences in gender relate the perceptions of assessment. [Cheng et al., \(2015\)](#) stated that learning oriented assessment depend on the congruence with planned learning and performance-oriented assessment depends on the teachers' consultation with students.

The current study findings revealed that some aspects of students' exam preparation styles have relationship with achievement (CGPA) except one aspect of open ended and spontaneous strategies. The study comes out with the results that male and female students haven't any impact on their perception of assessment as well as exam preparation styles of students.

In addition, [Bhatti and Bart \(2013\)](#) conducted a study and viewed that male and female students have different strategies of preparation. As mostly females prefer to practice concrete information while conceptualization is preferred by males. The results of the study by [Lau and Yuen \(2010\)](#) are as vice versa that mostly of the male preferred concrete knowledge whereas females liked the abstract material.

The outcomes of study [\(Gao, 2012\)](#) disclosed that students, despite of gender, very powerfully experience that there is a similarity among mathematics learning room assessment and planned learning. The current study results also concluded that there is irrelevant disparity of gender views about students' exam preparation methods and there is no disparity among CGPA of male and female students, both candidates have same progress level and have not any influence on perception of student and also their exam preparation methods.

Moreover, the study of [Coetze \(2012\)](#) found that the abstract- theoretical strategies was highest mean (50.98) and men score of factual-practical strategies was (43.51) and 43.24 mean score was organized- planful strategies were obtained while the least preferred strategies by students was environmental-interactive exam preparation strategies. [Williams et al., \(2004\)](#) stated that when students used the organized planful approach for study, then they become ahead of deadlines because of completing the overall content material and assignment.

The study result of [Gulikers et al., \(2006\)](#) found that if teaching and assessment both focus on the learning of students then students' achievement will be improved. [Struyven et al., \(2005\)](#) stated a very strong relationship of students' perception of assessment with their way of learning. Struyven et al., as well explained the progress in efficiencies of student while students undergo involved in the choice of assessment mode [\(Gao, 2012\)](#).

The study gives evidence that students' exam standard is affected by their ways of learning in preparing for the examination (Ng et al., 2011) and their progress of education [\(Naimie et al., 2010\)](#). [Coetzee \(2012\)](#) stated that the students' learning and their study plans relevant to collecting and utilizing knowledge (exercise and theoretical concept) which come out to have importantly supported the students' engagement with educational tasks and their use of education sources. The abstract- theoretical learning strategies also predicted the students' achievement, whereas the factual-practical and analytical-logical preparation of exam study plans also predicted their educational behavior that promote progressive achievement of students. Study has highlighted that students' effective participation in their studies improves their learning abilities [\(Coetzee & Oosthuizen 2012\)](#).

[Viljoen \(2012\)](#) also supported this idea that students' more engagement with their study will enhance their achievement level. Moreover, progress of students' and efficiency is affected by their learning abilities and styles of learning [\(Felder & Brent 2005\)](#). [Entwistle et al., \(2001\)](#) stated that if students planned and organized their study methods as well as effective time management will successes them to achieve high scores in their examination.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that different students have different perception of assessment and also adopt different exam prep strategies. The study also analyzed significant relationship between students' perception of assessment, exam prep strategies and achievement. The findings concluded significance difference between genders perception of assessment and insignificant difference views about their exam prep strategies.

This study recommends that teachers should to improve their assessment practices and to align the assessment practices with learning tasks. Teachers should also clearly inform the objectives and methods of assessment to students. The findings of the study could be significant for the college administration,

policymakers (especially at higher education level), educationists, researchers, and curriculum experts to realize the importance of students' perception of assessment and their exam prep strategies towards reflective practice and its practice for growth and development of students.

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