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The reality of using electronic alternative methods in evaluating the student at the Algerian University

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Lahoual Faiza [1]

[1] *University of Khemis Miliana, Algeria, Email:* f.lahoual@univ-dbkm.dz

Abstract:

The study aimed to know the reality of using electronic alternative methods in evaluating the student at the Algerian University, Al-Dhafiri test (2021) were applied On a random sample of 56 teachers in some faculties of the University of Khemis Miliana.

The study reached the following results: University teachers use electronic alternative methods in evaluating student learning at a very low level, electronic tests and assignments are the most frequently used for them at a medium level, followed by peer evaluation at a low level as for the use of electronic portfolio, electronic concept maps, and self-assessment, it was very low

Keywords: Alternative methods; electronic evaluation; alternative evaluation; student; Algerian university.

Corresponding Author: Lahoual Faiza, **Email:** f.lahoual@univ-dbkm.dz

1. INTRODUCTION

We live in an era where human knowledge has flowed, intellectual and scientific achievements have diversified, technological innovations have grown, and economic ambitions have increased, and the cognitive outcome of a society has become the force that shapes its present and secures its future.

Hence, the efforts to reform the educational and higher education systems worldwide have garnered significant interest, leading to the era being labeled as the age of comprehensive quality. This era emphasizes the primary need to invest in human resources.

Algeria stands out among these countries, particularly with its adoption of the (LMD) system, a new framework for higher education aiming to enhance the quality of university education and introduce diverse training pathways tailored to economic demands and modern-day requirements. Educational reform, focusing on what students should learn, how they learn, and how their progress is assessed, highlights the crucial role of evaluation. Without a comprehensive evaluation strategy, mere changes in curriculum and teaching methods risk being ineffective.

The evaluation of student learning is one of the most important stages of the educational process and the most closely related to the educational development that many educational systems seek with their various philosophies. Despite the recognition of the importance

and role of evaluation in the educational process, the methods of evaluation followed in our universities pose a stumbling block to all reform attempts and waste any effort for development. Evaluation is limited to conducting exams that measure achievement, making the exam the sole means of judging students' levels, which makes the exam a goal in itself, while assigning students some activities and duties to complete course requirements.

However, the world has witnessed since the beginning of 2020 exceptional circumstances associated with the spread of the coronavirus, where the COVID-19 crisis posed a huge challenge to education worldwide, especially since most of the world's systems were unprepared for it.

Digital education has become the foundation of education at present, necessitating a reconsideration of traditional educational practices to align with this new approach to teaching and learning.

One of the most important teaching practices that needs to be reconsidered is evaluation methods and tools, considering that electronic evaluation in remote learning contexts is completely different from traditional contexts.

Therefore, university teachers currently face many challenges related to choosing appropriate evaluation tools for the digital learning environment, while maintaining the credibility of evaluation results and utilizing them to improve the processes of teaching and learning.

Here the importance of using alternative tools to evaluate student learning becomes clear, in line with the distance learning system alongside the traditional attendance sessions adopted at the Algerian university according to the batch system.

The alternative evaluation, according to (Allam, 2004), despite the variety of terms that express the concept such as authentic assessment, realistic assessment, true assessment, includes a new perspective on the philosophy of assessment, its methodologies, processes, methods, and tools that go beyond the boundaries of traditional methods and tools that mainly rely on conventional tests known to require paper and pen, choosing among given alternatives in multiple-choice vocabulary, true or false, matching, or others.

It aims to measure the learner's performance through real-life situations linked to projects that reveal problem-solving skills, information analysis, and construction in a new context.

As: "Alternative or authentic assessment methods focus on evaluating the learner's ability to perform at a high level in real-life tasks, similar to those they will encounter in their future life. The focus is on learning processes that can be developed within and outside the academic work, and monitoring their development." (Al-Sharif, 2014, p. 05)

Therefore, through what has been presented, we see that these methods are suitable for assessing student learning in the digital learning environment amidst the circumstances resulting from the

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spread of the coronavirus and the changes in the teaching style.

A study by Al-Subai (2020) emphasized the importance of using alternative electronic assessment, and the necessity of identifying the main obstacles that hinder faculty members from using their tools. Ali and Abdel Halim's study (2020) attempted to reveal the obstacles to distance learning implementation and alternative assessment strategies in the face of the coronavirus pandemic from the perspective of faculty members and students at the Faculty of Specific Education at Zagazig University.

As for the study by Otman (2021), it has proven that the faculty members at Helwan University have positive attitudes towards using the electronic achievement file (portfolio) as one of the most important alternative assessment tools to develop student evaluation methods.

As for the study by Al-Dhafiri and others (2021), it found that the level of practice of faculty members at King Saud University in alternative assessment methods was moderate, represented in: electronic exams and assignments, electronic achievement files (portfolio), electronic concept maps, peer assessment, and self-assessment.

This study aimed to reveal the reality of using alternative assessment methods at the Algerian university in light of the adoption of distance learning alongside face-to-face sessions.

Through this research paper, we seek to answer the following question: What is the reality of the use of electronic alternative assessment methods by teachers at the Algerian university?

Study Objectives:

The study primarily aims to reveal the reality of Algerian university teacher' use of alternative assessment methods in the context of the adoption of distance learning alongside traditional face-to-face education system.

Importance of Study:

In line with the adoption of distance learning or e-learning in Algerian universities amidst the circumstances resulting from the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is also necessary to adopt modern methods to measure the level of outcomes of this type of education.

Typically, the use of technology in education stops at a point preceding the evaluation process, as if evaluation is considered a separate part from the educational process.

In reality, technology can effectively contribute to its development. It is illogical to adopt technology and e-learning while simultaneously clinging to traditional methods of evaluating their outcomes.

Hence, the importance of the study lies in defining the most important alternative methods for assessing student learning in a

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digital learning environment and revealing the actual use of these methods in Algerian universities. Therefore, this study is a response to modern global trends interested in modern assessment methods, requiring the awareness of university teachers about their active role and equipping them with new experiences to keep up with rapid changes, especially concerning the integration of modern technologies in the educational process in general and in assessing student learning in particular.

The study results may be beneficial in developing training programs for university teachers to enhance their skills in applying electronic alternative assessment tools, especially given the trends indicating that distance learning will be a strategic option for the future and not just an alternative during the COVID-19 crisis.

2. Study Concepts

2.1 Alternative Assessment:

The authentic assessment, the constructive assessment, the contextual assessment, the qualitative assessment, the proficiency assessment, the balanced assessment, the direct assessment, and the naturalistic assessment are synonymous terms for the concept of alternative assessment found in the literature of measurement and educational assessment. (Allam, 2004)

Alternative assessment methods focus on: "evaluating the extent of the learner's ability to perform at a high level in real-life tasks,

similar to those they will encounter in their future life. These methods also aim to provide a comprehensive and integrated picture of the learner in all aspects of the educational process." (Al-Sharif, 2014, p. 05)

It can also be defined as: one of the modern assessment types that rely on tasks and require the learner to perform a set of tasks and activities related to reality. It measures cognitive, skillful, and emotional aspects. (Abdul Halim and Ali, 2020, p. 11)

It focuses on the student by presenting activities and tasks that simulate reality, developing them cognitively, skillfully, and intellectually. The student's performance is evaluated according to specific criteria and standards, aiming to improve their performance and provide them with feedback. (Al-Zafeeri & al, 2021)

The electronic alternative assessment: is the use of a set of tools related to electronic technologies to assess students' learning levels, and help them develop their performance as an alternative to the educational assessment tools used previously, due to the emergency circumstances related to the coronavirus pandemic, where assessment methods include: performance assessment, self-assessment, peer assessment, assessment using concept maps, achievement files in electronic form.

2.2 Alternative Electronic Assessment Methods

2.2.1 Electronic Achievement files (Portfolio):

Portfolio contain cumulative records that include a large

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collection of documents serving as evidence compiled about the learner's level of knowledge, experiences, skills, attitudes, values, and preparations, through the completion of tasks, research, practical reports, or following and discussing various news and reports, or preparing research papers.

Based on these documents, the learner's capabilities are determined, relying on them alongside other documents and indicators to issue an accurate and objective judgment on the extent to which the learner has succeeded. (Al-Sharif, 2014)

Achievement files (Portfolio) have witnessed many improvements and developments that have changed their form, as these files have shifted from the traditional form to the electronic form.

Electronic achievement files are: a digital collection of works produced skillfully by an individual who wishes to document their products and processes to enhance their efficiency within a specific period and for specific purposes. (Al-Ansari & Al-Rifai, 2021, p.21)

Electronic achievement files are distinguished by their ability to be stored digitally, in addition to being managed by appropriate software, and modified to suit practical use in different web environments, with the possibility of retrieving the contents of electronic achievement files through a website or presenting them using CDs. (Al-Zafiri & al., 2021, p.16)

2.2.2 Electronic Concept Maps:

They are two-dimensional or multi-dimensional graphic representations reflecting the concepts of the text content structure, organized sequentially in a hierarchical manner.

The main concept is placed at the top of the map, with less general concepts falling under it in lower levels, and with links illustrating the relationships between the main and sub-concepts.

As mentioned by (Zaytoun and Al-Banna, 2001, p. 212): "Concept maps are considered representations of meaning, as well as visual structures specific to a certain field of knowledge."

They have also evolved in line with digital technology, becoming a visual tool designed and produced through the computer to organize knowledge and information, transforming them from verbal form into a visual stimulus that relies on displaying the general idea and its subparts in an interconnected manner through linear drawings, enabling an easy understanding of the relationship between ideas. (Hindawi, 2013)

2.2.3 Self-assessment in the Electronic Environment:

Self-assessment in the electronic environment is the student's ability to observe, analyze, and judge his performance based on clear criteria, then develop plans to improve and enhance performance through mutual cooperation between the student and the teacher. Modern education tends towards adopting this approach and encouraging its implementation in conjunction with other methods.

(Afana, 2010)

2.2.4 Peer Assessment in the Electronic Environment:

Peer assessment in the electronic environment is the evaluation of learners at the same educational level by each other to determine the level, value, or quality of the learner's performance or a produced product, such as an article, presentation, accomplishment file, or performance in a specific test.

The aim is to assist students in planning their learning, identify their strengths and weaknesses, pinpoint areas for improvement, and provide appropriate feedback in their peers' tasks and works. (Abdel Wahab, 2019, p. 151)

These methods have also taken an electronic form to align with the digital learning environment.

2.2.5 Electronic Performance Assessment:

It is a process in which tasks are used to obtain information about the quality of student learning and his ability to apply what he has learned in terms of knowledge and skills in several educational subjects and in various situations, to show that he is able to achieve an educational goal through performance.

Examples of performance evaluation include giving an oral presentation on a specific topic, preparing a research project, summarizing a book, managing a dialogue, conducting a scientific

experiment, writing an article on a specific topic, writing a report on a specific incident, collecting sources from the internet, and others. (Mokkadam, 2009)

Electronic performance assessment takes the following forms:

- Electronic assignments

- Electronic tests

- Assignments: These are tasks assigned to the student to be executed, receiving feedback from the course instructor using a number of programs and applications online, such as writing reports and research.

- Discussions: Tools that allow students to express their ideas and opinions through an interactive educational environment that works on developing their thinking skills through cooperative teamwork using discussion tools in both written and visual forms, all supervised by the course instructor who determines the topics and objectives.

- Projects: The project-based electronic learning model relies on forming student groups according to their academic levels, with each group requested to execute a specific project. It is preferred that the required tasks be distributed within the group so that each student is assigned a specific role to be evaluated on. (Al-Yousef & Omar, 2020)

3. Previous Studies:

Some previous studies have addressed the reality of applying alternative assessment tools and methods at the university, including:

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A study by Lojain Jamaa (2021) aimed to determine the extent to which faculty members at the University of Basra use alternative assessment strategies in light of the e-learning adopted by the university during the COVID-19 pandemic in the academic year 2020-2021. The study was conducted on 253 professors, and it was found that faculty members use alternative assessment strategies at a moderate level.

A study by Nadia Ali (2021) aimed to determine the degree of using alternative assessment strategies before and during the COVID-19 pandemic by female faculty members at Bisha University in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It aimed to understand the significance of differences in usage according to the variables of experience and specialization.

An questionnaire was prepared for this purpose, illustrating four areas of alternative assessment: performance-based assessment, paper-and-pencil assessment, communication-based assessment, and self-assessment. It was distributed to 64 faculty members in the Colleges of Education and Arts.

The results showed that the mean of grades using alternative assessment strategies during the pandemic was higher than the mean of grades used before the pandemic.

The order of using alternative assessment strategies by faculty members was as follows: Presentation and discussion ranked first and

second in the performance-based assessment field, objective tests and worksheets ranked first and second in the paper-and-pencil assessment field, forums and group work ranked first and second in the communication-based assessment field, projects and student achievement files ranked first and second in the self-assessment field, respectively, for each area.

Abdel Aziz Hasab Allah's (2019) study aimed to evaluate assessment practices among faculty members at Minia University in light of using alternative assessment strategies, by identifying the degree of faculty members' use of these strategies from students' perspectives, determining their strengths and weaknesses, providing improvement suggestions.

To achieve these goals, the researcher constructed a scale consisting of five dimensions representing five alternative assessment strategies: performance-based of Education assessment strategy, paper-and-pencil assessment strategy, communication assessment strategy, self-assessment strategy, peer assessment strategy.

The scale was applied to a sample of 1148 male and female students in the faculties of education, science, nursing, and arts, yielding results indicating a low level of use of alternative assessment strategies by faculty members from students' perspectives.

Atif Al Bahrawi's study (2019) aimed to investigate the reality of using teaching strategies, alternative assessment strategies, and tools by students of field training in special education.

The sample individuals were selected from male and female field training students in government schools, totaling 113 students. A scale was prepared by the researcher for this purpose.

The study reached the following results: alternative assessment strategies among special education students during field training were classified as moderate. The strategies were ranked based on usage as follows: observation strategy in the first place, performance-based assessment strategy in the second place, self-assessment strategy in the third place, then the paper and pen strategy, and finally the communication strategy in the fifth place.

4. practical Aspect

4.1 Study Methodology:

The descriptive approach was used due to its suitability for the study's purpose.

4.2 Study Population and Sample:

The study population consists of all permanent teachers at Djilali Bounaama University in Khemis Miliana during the academic year 2022-2023.

An electronic form containing the scale items was sent to all university teachers via their professional email; however, we only received 56 forms. Therefore, we can say that the study sample is a random sample of 56 teachers.

4.3 Study Tool and Psychometric Properties:

To achieve the study's objective, the Dhaifiry scale (2021) were used, consisting of 32 items distributed across 05 axes: the first axis includes 08 items on the use of electronic achievement files in evaluation, the second axis includes 05 items on the use of written tests and electronic assignments, the third axis evaluates performance with electronic concept maps and includes 06 items, the fourth axis on peer evaluation using discussion forums and electronic chat rooms includes 07 items, the fifth axis on electronic self-assessment includes 06 items.

Responses to the scale are made by choosing one of the four alternatives: happens to a high degree, happens to a moderate degree, happens to a low degree, happens to a negligible degree, and the scale is scored according to the mentioned alternatives as follows: 4, 3, 2, 1.

The scale developers ensured its validity by presenting it to 05 judges from King Saud University, and the items were adjusted based on their feedback. The construct validity was verified using internal consistency and reliability through the use of Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

The psychometric properties of the scale were verified in the current study by applying it to a sample consisting of 30 male and female teachers from the departments of psychology and education, sociology, and philosophy at the University of Khemis Miliana.

Validity: Internal consistency method was relied upon as an indicator to verify the validity of the scale.

Internal Consistency Validity:

The validity of the internal consistency of the scale was ensured by calculating the correlation coefficients between individuals' scores on the dimensions of the scale using alternative assessment tools and their total scores on it, and the results are illustrated in the following

table:

Table 1. Correlation coefficients values between individuals' scores on the dimensions of the scale using alternative assessment tools and their total scores on it

Dimensions	**Total Scale Score**
Electronic Achievement Files	0.70**
Written Tests and Electronic Assignments	0.58**
Performance Assessment with Electronic Concept Maps	0.64**
Peer Assessment	0.74**
Self-Assessment	0.65**

**Level of Significance 0.01

It is evident from the previous table: that the correlation coefficient values between individuals' scores on the dimensions and their total scores on the alternative assessment tools scale are statistically significant at the 0.01 level. These values ranged from 0.58 as the lowest value to 0.74 as the highest value, indicating internal consistency of the scale, which suggests the scale's reliability.
Reliability: Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was used to verify the the stability of the scale.

Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient:

This equation was chosen because individuals' responses to scale items according to a four-point scale reached a stability coefficient value of 0.71.

4.4 Statistical Methods:

To achieve the study's goal, the weighted mean, standard deviation, and to calculate the psychometric properties, Pearson correlation coefficient and Cronbach's alpha were computed.

The level was determined based on the intervals or ranges of the Likert four-point scale.

The mean belonging to the range 1-1.74 indicates a very low level.

The mean belonging to the range 1.75-2.49 indicates a low level.

The mean belonging to the range 2.50-3.24 indicates a moderate level.

The mean belonging to the range 3.25-4 indicates a high level.

5. Study Results and Discussion:

Presentation, analysis, discussion, and interpretation of the result of the question: What is the reality of the use of electronic alternative assessment methods by teachers at Algerian universities?

To answer the question, the arithmetic mean and standard deviation of the sample members' scores on the dimensions of the scale of the reality of using electronic alternative assessment methods were calculated, arranged in descending order from the highest to the lowest mean. Based on this, the methods used in assessing student learning were ranked from the most to the least used method, determining the level of use according to Likert's four-point scale periods, as shown in the following table:

Table 2. Values of the arithmetic mean and standard deviation for the scale of the reality of using electronic alternative assessment methods

Dimension	Mean	Standard Deviation	Dimension Order	Level

Electronic Achievement Files	1.13	0.12	3	Very Low Level
Written Tests and Electronic Assignments	3.12	0.53	1	moderate level
Performance Assessment with Electronic Concept Maps	1.07	0.13	4	Very Low Level
Peer Assessment	2.10	0.33	2	Low Level
Self-Assessment	1.02	0.12	5	Very Low Level
Total Score	1.68	0.25	Very Low Level	

Through the table, we notice that the level of teachers' use of alternative electronic assessment methods in general was very low, as the arithmetic mean of their total grades on the scale reached 1.68 with a standard deviation of 0.25, belonging to the range 1-1.74, indicating a very low level of use.

Looking at the assessment methods used, we find that assessment using tests and electronic assignments was the most commonly used by the sample individuals, with an arithmetic mean of 3.12 and a standard deviation of 0.53, falling within the range 2.50-3.24, indicating a moderate level of use.

Following in second place is the peer assessment method with an arithmetic mean of 2.10 and a standard deviation of 0.33, indicating a low level of use, as the arithmetic mean value belongs to the range 1.75-2.49.

In third place, we find the electronic achievement files method with an arithmetic mean of 1.13 and a standard deviation of 0.12, indicating a very low level of use, as the arithmetic mean value belongs to the range 1.75-2.49.

In fourth place, we find the performance evaluation method with electronic concept maps with an arithmetic mean of 1.07 and a standard deviation of 0.13, indicating a very low level of use, as the arithmetic mean value belongs to the range 1.75-2.49.

In fifth place, we find the self-assessment method with an arithmetic mean of 1.04 and a standard deviation of 0.12, indicating a very low level of use, as the arithmetic mean value belongs to the range of 1.75-2.49.

This result is consistent with the study of Al-Yousef and Omar (2020), which concluded that the most commonly used methods in student learning assessment are assignments, short electronic tests, final exams, research projects, especially used with graduating students, while achievement files and electronic concept maps are considered least used due to lack of training on them.

I also agreed with Al-Subeai's study (2020), which confirmed that homework, online exams, electronic contributions, electronic projects, and open-book electronic exams are among the most commonly used methods by faculty members. Electronic homework is considered a common and user-friendly method by students and does not require advanced skills.

However, it differed from the results of those studies in the level of usage, where the level of usage of electronic tests and assignments in their various forms was high in relation to those studies and average in our study.

Our study's results also agreed with Al-Dhafiri and others' study (2021) where it was found that practicing assessment using electronic tests and assignments was the highest in terms of average level, while assessment using electronic accomplishment files was the least practiced by faculty members in evaluating their students' learning. However, generally, we find that the level of university teachers' use of alternative electronic assessment tools is very low compared to what previous studies, which were reviewed, have found, and this can be attributed to several reasons:

First, distance learning at Algerian universities coincides with traditional face-to-face education. Therefore, student learning was traditionally evaluated through paper-and-pencil achievement tests, in addition to electronic homework assignments. There was no urgent need for alternative assessment tools.

Training plays a significant role in enabling teachers to master the appropriate software required for electronic assessment. University teachers found themselves compelled to deliver lessons and conduct assessments remotely through electronic platforms without benefiting from training courses that would allow them to control these platforms.

There may also be negative tendencies among university teachers towards using alternative assessment tools, especially in their electronic form. Alternative assessment represents an additional burden on teachers, particularly with the difficulty of constructing and designing these tools due to the teachers' lack of skills, especially since they did not benefit from training courses on this matter. Only newly employed teachers who had the opportunity to be trained on using the educational platform were able to do so.

We cannot deny the existence of a certain culture of resistance to change among teachers, which may hinder the implementation of alternative assessment methods at Algerian universities. This type of

assessment requires significant effort, causing stress and anxiety, leading teachers to prefer relying on traditional assessment methods.

Assessment using achievement files and concept maps in their regular form requires familiarity with the details, steps, procedures, and conditions for their implementation. In electronic format, the process may be more complex.

With other reasons related to students due to their lack of appropriate devices, and high-flow internet network, along with their need for training on how to use the electronic educational platform.

6. CONCLUSION

Based on the above, it can be said that university teachers use alternative electronic methods to assess student learning at a very low level. Electronic tests and assignments are the most commonly used by them at an average level. Peer assessment is at a low level, while the use of electronic achievement files, electronic concept maps, and self-assessment were at a very low level.

According to the results we have reached, the following recommendations can be made:

- The necessity of raising awareness and encouraging teachers to use alternative assessment tools in evaluating student learning at the university, while achieving a kind of integration between the application of traditional assessment and alternative assessment in line with the nature of each course.

- Programming training courses and workshops for university teachers on how to use alternative assessment tools, with the necessity of providing technical support from the university administration.

- Providing incentives for teachers who use alternative assessment tools, especially in their electronic form, in the context of adopting distance learning alongside face-to-face education, and adopting creative initiatives in the field of electronic assessment and raising awareness of its importance in the educational learning process.

- Adapting the study plans and including activities and tasks that fall within the framework of applying alternative assessment tools.

- Additionally, we can schedule training sessions for students on how to use electronic educational platforms, conduct tests, and various forms of electronic assessments, with the necessity of providing the facilities that allow them to do so within the university, such as internet-equipped rooms with devices and high-speed internet, along with guides and supervisors in those rooms.

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