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Title: Evaluating Teacher's Assessments Competence in Higher Education

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Keywords: Teachers' Assessment Competence, Higher Education, Gender Differences, Teaching Experience, Faculty-wise Comparison

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Evaluating Teacher's Assessments Competence in Higher Education



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Abstract

In this study, the assessment competencies of teachers in higher education were examined based on the gender (male and female), teaching experience (novice and experienced) and faculty affiliation (Social Sciences and Sciences). The quantitative type of research design was used and a sample consisting of 24 faculty members was selected using the Questionnaire of Teachers Assessment Competencies (QTAC) which includes the main dimensions of assessment practice, which included traditional and standardized testing, communication of assessment results, performance assessment, non-achievement grading and test reliability. Descriptive analysis showed that teachers exhibited a moderate to high extent of assessment competence with the variation in this being complementary strengths as opposed to significant difference. The competence of female and experienced teachers in relation to standardized testing, communication of results, and promotion of reliability demonstrated a relatively high level of competence, and male and novice teachers demonstrated a higher tendency toward traditional and performance-based assessment practices.

Keywords: *Teachers' Assessment Competence, Higher Education, Gender Differences, Teaching Experience, Faculty-wise Comparison*

Introduction

The evaluation process is one of the key aspects of teaching and learning in higher education because it directly affects the learning strategies and academic performance of students along with their sense of justice and quality. The assessment competence of teachers, which is often described as teacher assessment literacy, is the knowledge and skills educators need to design effective and fair assessments, match assessment with learning outcomes, use the right scoring criteria, interpolate results, and give meaningful feedback to facilitate learning (Pastore, 2023). Modern higher education institutions have a tendency to seriously focus on the aspects of learning-based assessment, and assessment competence of teachers is an important determinant of instructional efficiency and quality of education (Meijer, 2023).

Although this is important, recent global experience indicates that assessment competence of teachers is still wanting in most higher education settings. Systematic review provided by Pastore (2023) showed that university teachers often display a weak knowledge of the fundamental principles of assessment, especially validity, reliability, formative assessment, and feedback use. Such inadequacies exist even in the academic qualified faculty members, which shows that the competence of assessment does not necessarily come in through the expertise of the subject or even teaching experience (Meijer, 2023). Consequently, the issue of equity, uniformity, and accountability in the university assessment practice remains popular in most fields.



The studies have also demonstrated that assessment competence of teachers can be unequal in relation to demographic and professional factors, such as gender and teaching experience. Recent research findings show that there are indeed gender differences in assessment literacy, and female teachers tend to be more sensitive to formative and feedback-based assessment practices, but the findings in studies are not always uniform (Muhson, 2025). Equally, although the experience in teaching is generally believed to increase assessment competence, the research indicates that the novices and experienced teachers may share no significant difference unless they were subjected to formal assessment training (Muhson, 2025; Pastore, 2023). These results show that there is a need to test assessment competence on a basis of empirical studies as opposed to assumptions attributed to length of service.

The problem of assessment competence of teachers in higher education in developing countries, in particular, in Pakistan, is one of the urgent ones. The universities must ensure that they uphold academic standards and promote evaluation based on merit, and the practices of assessment should be aligned to the national quality assurance guidelines, whereas the training of faculty in assessment is not as common. The local research has always indicated the lack of assessment literacy among university teachers with a focus on the frailty in test writing, rubric, and interpretation of assessment outcomes (Shams and Iqbal, 2019). In addition, Pakistani educators tend to apply instruments and methods of assessment to a different setting without appropriate contextual adjustment, thus jeopardizing validity and fairness (Hidri, 2024).

The latest study by researchers based in Pakistan supports these issues by showing that several teachers in universities have failed to receive systemic training in assessment concepts, even though they have advanced degrees. To give an example, Hassan et al. (2026) discovered that a significant percentage of teachers in universities had not been engaged in assessment-based professional development over the past few years leading to a lack of consistency in the use of assessment in institutions. These results indicate the importance of empirical studies on the competence of teachers in assessment at the higher education level, especially across teacher groups and institutions.

Along with the differences based on demographic and experience factors, assessment competence of teachers should be analyzed closely faculties-wise. Traditions of discipline define the construction, demonstration, and evaluation of knowledge; therefore, the assessment practices in the Social Sciences tend to focus on analytical writing and evaluation, and Science faculties tend to be based on problem-solving, laboratory work, and objective testing (Winstone et al., 2022). The previous studies reveal that these disciplinary differences are related to different assessment orientations and assessment literacy, which means that the assessment competence of teachers who teach in the faculties of Social Science and Science can differ significantly (Tabriz University Journals, 2022).

Considering these, it is high time and need to examine the inability of teachers to assess in the higher education based on their gender (male/female), teaching experience (novice/experienced) as well as that of the faculty (Social Sciences vs. Sciences). It is possible to use such an inquiry to develop evidence-based information about the assessment competence patterns, the groups that are to receive specific types of professional advancement, and the institutional policy as the means to enhance the quality, fairness, and learning effectiveness of assessment in universities (Pastore, 2023; Shams & Iqbal, 2019).

Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study were to:

- Determine the level of university teachers' assessment competencies.

Research Questions

- a) What is the overall level of assessment competencies among university teachers in higher education?
- b) What is the level of university teachers' assessment competencies with respect to gender (male and female)?
- c) What is the level of university teachers' assessment competencies with respect to teaching experience (novice and experienced teachers)?

- d) What is the level of university teachers' assessment competencies with respect to faculty affiliation (Social Sciences and Sciences)?

Literature

The assessment competence of teachers has taken center stage in higher education because of its direct impact on quality of teaching, learning among students and the validity of academic judgment. The conceptualisation of the assessment competence of teachers, which is commonly denoted by the term assessment literacy, in modern literature is considered a multidimensional construct that includes the skills to design valid and reliable assessment tools, match the assessment with learning outcomes, use transparent scoring criteria, interpret assessment evidence, and use feedback to enhance learning (Pastore et al., 2023). These competencies are highly relevant in universities since faculty members are unquestionably required to employ professional judgment in complicated assessment cases, and their training on assessment principles is usually minimal (Meijer, 2023). Although the focus of policies is on the outcomes based education and quality assurance, empirical data indicates that a lot of higher education teachers are still exhibiting shortcomings in the core assessment competencies, particularly formative assessment and feedback practices (Pastore et al., 2023).

The recent international studies suggest that assessment competence of teachers is not uniformly developed among individuals and it is also dependent on personal and professional traits. Gender is one of these variables, which have been extensively studied, but with mixed results. Certain quantitative research studies indicate statistically significant gender variations in assessment literacy, although female teachers can be stronger oriented towards formative assessment and feedback-oriented practices, and others indicate minimal differences or no differences when training and contextual variables are put into consideration (Muhson et al., 2025). These contradictory results suggest that gender discrepancies in test competence can be reduced to unequal access to career learning and individual training, mentoring, and institution-wide assessment locus (Pastore et al., 2023). Therefore, the analysis of assessment competence in the light of gender is still topical, especially in the systems of higher education in which the professional development opportunities do not necessarily have an equal distribution.

Besides gender, teaching experience is widely presumed to be decisive in determining the assessment competence of teachers; however, as has been revealed in recent times, teaching experience is not as decisive as previously thought. Research on novice and experienced educators indicates that experience does not always lead to procedural familiarity with the assessment tasks, but does not inevitably lead to a thorough knowledge of assessment principles like validity, reliability, and fairness (Yildirim et al., 2024). Beginner teachers tend to experience a lack of confidence in making assessment plans and grades, and more experienced teachers can use the practices that have been developed over the years but which do not necessarily correspond with the new assessment principles (Gan et al., 2024). Notably, some research points out that significant changes in novice and experienced teachers occur mainly when experience is combined with a program of assessment training and reflection, and not when years of service only (Muhson et al., 2025; Pastore et al., 2023).

In addition to personal factors, the context of disciplinary influences a lot on the assessment competence of teachers in higher education. The studies of disciplinary cultures emphasize that there is a fundamental difference between the epistemological orientations, modes of inquiry and assessment traditions between Social Sciences and Sciences, which, in turn, affects the ways of how teachers conceptualize and implement assessment (Starkey et al., 2023). The disciplines of Social Science tend to place greater weight on interpretive judgment, writing and argumentation, but those of Science tend to place greater weight on accuracy of solving problems, work in the lab, and objective types of tests. Empirical research on the comparison of hard and soft disciplines is supportive of the claim that assessment literacy of teachers as well as their choice in favor of formative or summative methods is a systematic issue in the disciplinary categories (Saidi and Arefian, 2022). These results indicate that it is impossible to comprehend fully assessment competence without references to faculty-wide differences based on disciplinary norms and expectations.

The topicality of these concerns is especially acute in the Pakistani higher learning environment where universities are under pressure to guarantee transparency, merit, and the correspondence to the national quality assurance programs. In local studies, the lack of assessment competence of teachers, in particular, in the construction of tests, the development of rubrics, and interpretation of the assessment outcomes, is regularly documented (Shams & Iqbal, 2019). Research undertaken in Pakistan also reveals that the assessment attitudes

and practices of teachers are influenced by the institutional and examination-focused cultures along with the lack of access to professional development in assessment (Hidri et al., 2024). Pakistani university evidence also reveals that a significant number of faculty members, regardless of their advanced academic qualifications, have not undergone recent or systematic training regarding assessment principles, which leads to assessment inconsistency, within and between departments and faculties (Hassan et al., 2026).

The combinative analysis of international and domestic literature shows an evident gap in the empirical data. Although some of the previous literature has explored assessment competence based on gender, experience, or discipline individually, there have been very few studies that have focused on these aspects in the higher education system especially in developing nations like Pakistan. Furthermore, the current body of research tends to concentrate on the school teachers or language teachers, and university faculty in Social Sciences and Sciences is underserved in the empirical assessment competence research (Pastore et al., 2023; Saidi and Arefian, 2022). Thus, measuring the gender difference in assessment competence of teachers in higher education (male/female), the experience of teachers (novice/experienced), and faculty (Social Sciences vs. Sciences) can provide an in-depth approach to variation in assessment practices and defining the most specific areas of professional development in universities.

Research Design

In this study, the assessment competencies of teachers in higher education were examined based on the gender (male and female), teaching experience (novice and experienced) and faculty affiliation (Social Sciences and Sciences). This study was descriptive and quantitative in nature.

Population and sampling

The population of the study was consisted on all faculty members working in departments of faculties of sciences and social sciences from University of Gujrat. There were 72 faculty members in faculty of science and 98 faculty members in faculty of social sciences at University of Gujrat. Since population size of the study was all 170 faculty members from different department viz. faculty of science and social science from the University of Gujrat. Proportionate stratified sampling was used for the study. First of all, Population was divided into two strata viz. faculty of science and faculty of social science. Ten percent faculty members were taken as sample of the study from each stratum randomly. In this way total sample size was 24 faculty members of the faculty of science and social science were taken from the population.

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Instrumentation

In order to measure university teachers assessment competencies. Questionnaire for Teachers Assessment Competencies (QTAC) was developed by reseachers themselves with the help of literature. The questionnaire was designed on five point Likert Scale (1= not at all, 2= seldom, 3= ocassionally, 4= often, 4= very often). Likert scale describe the degree of agreement or disagreement with the statement about the person, objective, or situation (Frankle, 2012; Gay, 2009).

Reliability of the Instruments

The questionnaire of the study was piloted on 10 faculty members from university of the Gujrat which were not included in actual sample. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to check internal consistency of the research instruments. The alpha value of QTAC was .769, suggesting fair internal consistency reliability.

Data analysis

After collecting the data, data were analyzed by using SPSS version 21. Data were analyzed in two perspectives: Descriptive and Inferential. Mean and standard deviation was used to find out the assessment competency at higher education level.

Results

Table-1

Description of the Respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Gender	M	11	45.8	45.8	45.8
	F	13	54.2	54.2	100.0
Experienced	Novice	12	50.0	50.0	50.0
	Experienced	12	50.0	50.0	100.0
Faculty	Social science	14	58.3	58.3	58.3
	Science	10	41.7	41.7	100.0

Table 1 showed description of the respondents. There were 11 male and 13 female respondents in the sample group of the study. Male respondents were 46% while females were 52% of the total sample group from which the data were collected. The gender inequality among the respondents of the study was in terms of faculty numbers institute. There was less number of females teachers employed in the institute. Therefore, to conclude this gender-wise description reflected the actual population of male and females.

There were 12 novice and 12 experienced respondents in the sample group of the study. Both novice and experienced respondents were 50% each of the total sample group from which the data were collected.

There were 14 social science and 10 science faculty respondents in the sample group of the study. Social science respondents were 58% while science were 42% of the total sample group from which the data were collected.

Question a: What is the overall level of assessment competencies among university teachers in higher education?

Table-2

Descriptive Statistics of Teachers' Assessment Competency

Component	N	Min	Maxi	Mean	S.D.
Using Pepper Pencil Test	24	3.00	4.70	3.83	.341
Standardized Testing	24	3.00	4.80	3.87	.603
Communicating Assessment Results	24	3.00	4.67	3.77	.485
Using Performance Assessment	24	3.00	4.75	3.85	.550
Non Achievement Grading	24	3.00	5.00	3.94	.784
Ensure Test Reliability	24	2.80	5.00	3.78	.669
Valid N (list wise)	24				

Table 2 demonstrated that descriptive statistics of teacher's assessment competency showed the number of respondents was 24 and factors of teachers' assessment practices were 6. Minimum value was 2.80 and maximum value was 5.00. Mean of using of pepper pencil test ($M = 3.83$, $S.D. = .341$), standardized testing ($M = 3.87$, $S. D. = .603$), communicating assessment results ($M = 3.77$, $S. D. = .48598$), using performance assessment ($M = 3.85$, $S.D. = .550$) non achievement grading ($M = 3.94$, $S.D. = .784$), Ensure test reliability was ($M = 3.78$, $S. D. = .669$). The highest mean score of the non-achievement grading reflects the average assessment competency.

Question b: What is the level of university teachers' assessment competencies with respect to gender (male and female)?

Gender wise descriptive Analysis of assessment competency

Table-3

Descriptive Statistics Teachers Assessment Competency (Male)

Component	N	Min	Maxi	Mean	S.D.
Using of Pepper Pencil Test	11	2.60	3.80	3.22	.390
Standardized Testing	11	3.00	4.40	3.83	.321
Communicating Assessment Results	11	3.00	4.33	3.77	3.77
Using Performance Assessment	11	2.75	4.63	3.58	.540
Non Achievement Grading	11	1.33	4.33	3.02	.866
Ensure Test Reliability	11	2.60	4.00	3.40	.565
Valid N (Listwise)	11				

Table 3 demonstrated that descriptive statistics of teachers' assessment competency (gender wise) showed that number of male respondents was 11 and factors of teachers' assessment competency were 6. Minimum value was 1.33 and maximum value was 4.63. Mean of using of paper pencil test ($M = 3.22$, $S.D. = .390$), standardized testing ($M = 3.83$, $S. D. = .321$), communicating assessment results ($M = 3.77$, $S. D = 3.77$), using performance assessment ($M = 3.58$, $S.D. = .540$), non-achievement grading ($M = 3.02$, $S.D. = .866$). Ensure test reliability was ($M = 3.40$, $S. D = .565$). The highest mean score of standardized testing reflects average assessment competency.

Table-4

Descriptive Statistics Teachers Assessment Competency (Female)

Component	N	Min	Maxi	Mean	S.D.
Using Pepper Pencil Test	13	2.20	3.80	2.98	.543
Standardized Testing	13	3.60	4.40	3.97	.230
Communicating Assessment Results	13	3.33	4.22	3.82	.272
Using Performance Assessment	13	2.75	4.00	3.44	.532
Non Achievement Grading	13	1.00	4.00	2.78	1.29
Ensure Test Reliability	13	2.80	4.20	3.67	.465
Valid N (List-Wise)	13				

Table 4 revealed that descriptive statistics of teachers' assessment competency (female) showed that number of female respondents was 13 and factors of teachers' assessment competency were 6. Minimum value was 1.00 and maximum value was 4.40. Mean of using of pepper pencil test ($M = 2.98$, $S.D. = .543$), standardized testing ($M = 3.97$, $S.D. = .230$), communicating assessment results ($M = 3.8298$, $S.D. = .272$), using performance assessment ($M = 3.44$, $S.D. = .532$) non achievement grading ($M = 2.78$, $S.D. = 1.29$). Ensure test reliability was ($M = 3.67$, $S.D. = .465$). The highest mean score of standardized testing shows average assessment competency as compare to non-achievement grading.

Question c: What is the level of university teachers' assessment competencies with respect to teaching experience (novice and experienced teachers)?

Descriptive Statistics Teachers Assessment Competencies (Experience in Category)

Table-5

Descriptive Statistics Teachers Assessment Competencies (Novice teacher)

Component	N	Min	Maxi	Mean	S.D.
Using of Pepper Pencil Test	12	2.20	3.80	3.17	.505
Standardized Testing	12	3.00	4.20	3.84	.337
Communicating Assessment Results	12	3.00	4.33	3.73	.326
Using Performance Assessment	12	2.75	4.63	3.57	.564
Non Achievement Grading	12	1.00	4.33	2.95	1.00
Ensure Test Reliability	12	2.60	4.00	3.37	.569
T-overall		2.96	3.88	3.44	.305
Valid N (List-Wise)	12				

Table 5 revealed that descriptive statistics of teacher's assessment competency showed that number of novice respondents was 12 and factors of teachers' assessment competency were 6. Minimum value was 1.00 and maximum value was 4.63. Mean of using of pepper pencil test ($M = 3.17$, $S.D. = .505$), standardized testing ($M = 3.84$, $S.D. = .337$), communicating assessment results ($M = 3.73$, $S.D. = .326$), using performance assessment ($M = 3.57$, $S.D. = .564$) non achievement grading ($M = 2.95$, $S.D. = 1.00$). Ensure test reliability was ($M = 3.37$, $S.D. = .569$). The highest mean score of standardized testing reflects an average mean score as compare to non-achievement grading.

Table-6

Descriptive Statistics Teachers Assessment competency (Experienced teacher)

Component	N	Min	Maxi	Mean	S.D.
Using of Pepper Pencil Test	12	2.20	3.80	3.00	.453
Standardized Testing	12	3.60	4.40	3.98	.280
Communicating Assessment Results	12	3.33	4.22	3.88	.255
Using Performance Assessment	12	2.75	4.00	3.43	.500
Non Achievement Grading	12	1.00	4.00	2.83	1.24
Ensure Test Reliability	12	2.80	4.20	3.75	.390
T-overall		2.96	3.95	3.48	.403

Table 6 showed that descriptive statistics of teacher's assessment competency showed that number of experienced respondents was 12 and factors of teachers' assessment competency were 6. Minimum value was 1.00 and maximum value was 4.40. Mean of using of pepper pencil test ($M = 3.00$, $S.D. = .453$), standardized testing ($M = 3.98$, $S.D. = .280$), communicating assessment results ($M = 3.88$, $S.D. = .255$), using performance assessment ($M = 3.43$, $S.D. = .500$) non achievement grading ($M = 2.83$, $S.D. = 1.241$). Ensure test reliability was ($M = 3.75$, $S.D. = .390$). The highest mean score of standardized testing reflects an average mean score as compare to non-achievement grading.

Question d: • What is the level of university teachers' assessment competencies with respect to faculty affiliation (Social Sciences and Sciences)?

Descriptive Statistics Teachers Assessment Competencies (Faculty wise)

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics Teachers Assessment Competencies (Social Science)

Component	N	Min	Maxi	Mean	S.D.
Using Pepper Pencil Test	10	2.20	3.30	2.74	.398
Standardized Testing	10	3.60	4.40	3.90	.266
Communicating Assessment Results	10	3.33	4.33	3.85	.342
Using Performance Assessment	10	2.75	4.00	3.23	.503
Non Achievement Grading	10	1.33	4.33	2.98	1.15
Ensure Test Reliability	10	2.80	4.00	3.59	.484
T-overall		2.96	3.95	3.38	.404

Table 7 showed that descriptive statistics of teacher's assessment competency showed that number of social science teachers was 10 and factors of teachers' assessment competency were 6. Minimum value was 1.33 and maximum value was 4.40. Mean of using of pepper pencil test ($M = 2.74$, $S.D. = .398$), standardized testing ($M = 3.90$, $S.D. = .266$), communicating assessment results ($M = 3.85$, $S.D. = .342$), using performance assessment ($M = 3.23$, $S.D. = .503$) non achievement grading ($M = 2.98$, $S.D. = 1.151$). Ensure test reliability was ($M = 3.59$, $S.D. = .484$). The highest mean score of standardized testing reflects an average mean score as compare to using paper pencil test.

Table 8

Descriptive Statistics Teachers Assessment Competencies (Science)

Component	N	Min	Maxi	Mean	S.D.
Using Pepper Pencil Test	14	2.20	3.80	3.33	.394
Standardized Testing	14	3.00	4.40	3.91	.352
Communicating Assessment Results	14	3.00	4.22	3.77	.274
Using Performance Assessment	14	2.75	4.63	3.70	.479
Non Achievement Grading	14	1.00	4.00	2.84	1.09
Ensure Test Reliability	14	2.60	4.20	3.50	.560
T-overall		2.96	3.95	3.51	.304

Table 8 showed that descriptive statistics of teacher's assessment competency showed that number of science teachers was 14 and factors of teachers' assessment competency were 6. Minimum value was 1.00 and maximum value was 4.63. Mean of using of pepper pencil test ($M = 3.33$, $S.D. = .394$), standardized testing ($M = 3.91$, $S.D. = .266$), communicating assessment results ($M = 3.77$, $S.D. = .274$), using performance assessment ($M = 3.70$, $S.D. = .479$), non-achievement grading ($M = 2.84$, $S.D. = 1.09$). Ensure test reliability was ($M = 3.50$, $S.D. = .560$). The highest mean score of standardized testing reflects an average mean score as compare to non-achievement grading.

Discussions

According to the results provided in Tables 3 and 4, the competency of assessment as shown by both male and female teachers is generally moderate to high, with exceptions in the particular elements. It seems that the male teachers are more inclined towards traditional assessment methods which include paper-pencil testing and performance based assessment methods implying that the male teachers are more comfortable with conventional and practical assessment methods. Conversely, the female teachers demonstrate a comparatively greater competence in standardized testing, communicating assessment results, and ensuring test reliability as they are more consistent and consider such processes as accuracy and feedback. There is a relative low competence in non-achievement grading in both groups, which implies that other forms of grading are still a challenge irrespective of the gender. On the whole, the results indicate that there is no significant difference between male and female teachers and they are the manifestations of complementary advantages, which implies

that the targeted development of the professional skills and achievements is to be conducted with an emphasis on particular aspects of evaluation instead of doing it with consideration of gender-based differences only.

Table 5 and Table 6 results indicate that novice and experienced teachers have a general moderate to high level of assessment competency, and significant differences between the specific aspects of assessment competency. New teachers are more inclined to demonstrate fairly greater involvement in traditional assessment types and performance-based assessment as demonstrations of the growing confidence in the application of assessment methods used in the first professional exposure. Conversely, veteran teachers show greater proficiency in standardized test, reporting assessment outcomes as well as test reliability which suggests that the length of time in teaching experience leads to more consistency, accuracy as well as confidence in high stakes and quality-driven tests administration. The competence of novice and experienced teachers in non-achievement grading is relatively lesser, which implies that the alternative and holistic forms of grading do not become easy no matter the level of experience. Generally, the findings imply that experience promotes specific aspects of assessment competence, especially those that deal with reliability and communication, whereas novice teachers show the similar competence in practical assessment procedure that underlines the idea of constant, experience-dependent professional development in high education assessment practice.

As the results in Tables 7 and 8 show, the teachers of both Social Science and Science faculties reveal the generally moderate but high level of assessment competency with the evident differences provided between the aspects of that competency being faculty-specific. The teachers in the science faculty seem to lean more towards the traditional paper-pencil testing and in performance-based assessment practices, which is a reflection of the culture of assessment in science disciplines that place more focus on the accuracy of problem-solving, practical activity and objective assessment. Conversely, the competence of Social Science teachers in reporting assessment outcomes on the one hand demonstrates a comparatively high level of competence regarding test reliability and they, therefore, seem to pay more attention to the feedback, interpretation, and consistency in evaluation procedures. The two faculties are relatively less competent in non-achievement grading which implies that alternative grading practices are still a challenge in both disciplinary settings. As a whole, the results indicate that even though the overall assessment competence of the teachers of Science faculty is a bit weaker, the teachers of Social Sciences do display the advantages of feedback-oriented and reliability-oriented practice, where disciplinary traditions of assessment competence impact assessment practices and where faculty-oriented professional development of assessment is essential in higher education assessment.

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