

Assessment Tools of EFL Courses via Blackboard: Faculty Members' and Students' Perceptions

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Abstract—This study aims at examining the assessment tools used on Blackboard from the perceptions of students and faculty members. For this purpose, two questionnaires were designed and applied to 102 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students and 31 faculty members to measure their perceptions of the assessment tools on Blackboard, the self-efficacy of the EFL students and faculty members in using Blackboard assessment tools, and the challenges they face during the process. Results have shown that most faculty members and students prefer conducting assessment on Blackboard. Results also revealed that faculty members are aware of the assessment tools on Blackboard and feel confident when using them. Besides, both students and faculty members have positive attitudes toward the effectiveness of the assessment tools on Blackboard. However, they believe that there are some challenges related to technical issues, and some EFL students have mentioned that they face difficulties related to the essay tests on Blackboard.

Index Terms—EFL, blackboard, assessment tools, students' perceptions

I. INTRODUCTION

Learning is an integrative process with many required aspects that complete each other to achieve objectives. One of the main aspects of learning is assessment, which is known as the systematic collection, use of data, and review concerning educational programs to improve student learning and development (Palomba & Banta, 1999). When conducting an assessment, a teacher should examine various aspects to determine students' final grades such as students' engagement, motivation, presentation, performance, portfolio, homework, and the mid-semester and final-semester grades (Brown, 2004).

During the spread of COVID-19, technology, including Blackboard, Microsoft Teams, and Zoom, has evolved to be an essential educational tool. These platforms have replaced traditional face-to-face classes. They've been used to conduct all teaching and evaluation activities (Altameemy et al., 2020). Many universities have chosen Blackboard as a Learning Management System (LMS) because of its ease of use, ubiquity, and accessibility. Learners are motivated to participate in online learning activities such as discussion forums, and writing assignments (Mohsen & Shafeeq, 2014).

Blackboard-based education encourages students to get involved in the online learning environment through discussion forums, getting feedback from students and teachers, and writing assignments (Mohsen & Shafeeq, 2014). Moreover, Blackboard-based education can evolve into constructivist, learner-centered learning, when rooted in sound standards of pedagogical structure (Maslamani, 2013). The purpose of Blackboard-based education is to ensure more engagement and participation among students. This purpose is not easy to achieve in the case of face-to-face instruction, which tend to be comparatively unbalanced with one or two individuals dominating the discussions within the class (Almelhi, 2014; Al-Jabry et al., 2014 & Hismanoglu, 2012).

The concept of assessment refers to the systematic process of using and documenting empirical data on the skill, knowledge, aptitude, beliefs, and attitudes to improve education and enhance student learning (Nelson & Dawson, 2014). The process of assessment is quite essential for teachers as it offers feedback on teaching efficiency. Teachers can also assess their students to determine their strengths and weaknesses as well as grade students' learning by monitoring and offering feedback on their progress (Clements & Cord, 2013). Lately, modern methods recommend evaluating students' potential learning process rather than assessing their learning knowledge. Assessing them by using conventional methods has isolated and limited their access to other individuals and resources (Guàrdia et al., 2017).

E-assessment on Blackboard has a variety of tools and allows for a wide range of question types. Multiple-choice, yes/no, and fill-in-the-blank questions are examples. All of the exercises stated above are scored automatically, and there are also free-response questions that can be graded using key phrases or rubrics (Altameemy et al., 2020). Rubrics

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establish the criteria for the teacher's expectations of students' performances. They assist students in self-reflection and evaluation (Moskal, 2003). Moreover, Blackboard assessment offers a wide range of opportunities to enhance assessment including the frequency of assessment, skills practice, and knowledge assessment. These elements also increase the feedback to teachers and students as well as extending the scope of assessment approaches to increase consistency and objectivity (Altameemy & Alrefae, 2021). The current study seeks to examine the perceptions of faculty members and students regarding methods of assessment available on the Blackboard learning system.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Blackboard is a known example among online platforms, which supports learning and has different tools to assess students' progress. Students use the Blackboard system to access course content and materials, complete assignments, quizzes and tests, communicate with other students through discussion forums, and receive notifications and reminders. On the other hand, instructors can use the Blackboard Instructor App to grade assignments, quizzes and tests; upload content, and send messages to students (Shdaifat & Obeidallah, 2019). This learning system has made learning more comfortable for both instructors and learners (Alruwais et al., 2018).

A. Students' Perception of Using Online Assessment: Benefits and Challenges

Starting with the benefits, many researchers have analyzed students' perceptions of e-assessments, and they have found positive perceptions regarding the system's ability to provide students with immediate feedback on their assignments, quizzes and tests (Sarmiento, 2017; Valdez & Maderal, 2021). Immediate feedback increases student motivation, learning level and student performance. In addition, it prevents students from thinking that their incorrect responses are actually correct, and reduces student susceptibility to repeat incorrect answers. Immediate feedback also allows students to identify their weaknesses and strengths, and encourages them to continue to improve (Alruwais et al., 2018; Baha & Asil, 2018; Seifert & Feliks, 2019).

Another benefit of e-Assessment is time saving (Appiah & Tonder, 2018). Online assessment provides students with more flexibility in timing and location, it breaks the time and space constraints. It also helps students in remote and isolated areas to learn and have tests in their locations (Aburumman, 2021; Alruwais et al., 2018; Cai, 2022; Jordan, 2013; Osuji, 2012; Seifert & Feliks, 2019).

E-assessment allows learners to compare their performance with others, thus encouraging them to exchange and communicate with others through the learning process (Kabir & Siddiq, 2020; Prakash & Saini, 2012), and this plays an important role in motivating students to learn, and opens a new horizon of learning for them (Amelung et al., 2011).

In addition, e-assessment is considered as an important resource for online learning environments (Jordan, 2009), as it encourages skills practicing, allows students to participate in problem-solving which promotes deep learning. There are also financial benefits such as cost reduction of assessment (James, 2016). Online assessment also provides randomization of exam questions; repeating tests several times and it doesn't affect students' grades negatively (Betlej, 2013; Mcmillan & Spivey, 2014). Online marking through e-assessment allows using automation in marking process, then students don't suffer from human error anymore and feel secure about their grades (Sorensen, 2013). In addition, online assessment creates a judgment-free environment that allows learners to make mistakes freely, after that they are given opportunities to try again; hence they achieve improvement (Jordan, 2013).

On the other hand, there are some challenges that students face in the context of e-assessment; the most important of them are technological infrastructure problems and poor connections which could obstruct e-assessment process and affect its feasibility (James, 2016; Kiennert et al., 2017). In addition, more training on new technologies and their use in assessment is required (Cai, 2022).

Another challenge is identity misuse through cheating and impersonation which is related to recognition of the student's identity in case of being used by someone else (Kiennert et al., 2017). This may happen through identity hacking and plagiarism in e-assessment. As a result of this, some information could be disclosed to unauthorized parties, and cheating happens and then results may be unfair (Hillier, 2014; Mellar et al., 2018).

Moreover, Online assessment requires students to be digital literate and have particular abilities; such as typing, using numerous screens, and mouse navigation (Mojarrad et al., 2014). Using numerous screens and reading text on computer screens may cause some people to feel more tired than reading on paper. Some students also find it difficult to display some items on the screen because they need to scroll horizontally and vertically to fit a complete picture on the page, this makes students feel distracted, which negatively affect their achievements (Cano & Ion, 2017).

The last challenge is inequality, as some students with higher levels of performance achieve better results in online assessment tests than in traditional assessment tests, in contrast to other peers (Appiah & Tonder, 2018). It is evident from this that high performing students adapt easily to new assessment methods. Hence it can be said that online assessments may not be fair to low performing students because they may feel that it takes a lot of effort and time to complete the process of online assessment (Appiah & Tonder, 2018).

B. Teachers' Perception of Using Online Assessments: Benefits and Challenges

Using technology in supporting assessment can be very useful and has a lot of benefits for teachers and faculty members. Firstly, e-assessment plays an important role in improving teachers' level of monitoring (Wicaksonoa &

Anam, 2022). It also allows them to measure students' progress accurately, and observe students in order to find the misconceptions, which are not clear for the students and solve them before the final exam (Ellaway & Masters, 2008; Sindre & Vegedla, 2015).

E-Assessment enables teachers and faculty members to mark automatically (Jordan, 2013) which reduces work load, and eliminates human error (Dai, 2016). Another benefit of e-assessment is saving teachers' time (Kundu & Bej, 2021), as it enables teachers to accommodate with a large number of students at the same time. Besides, e-assessment helps teachers to spend the time of manual marking in the development of other activities (Howe, 2020; Sorensen, 2013).

In addition, e-assessment reduces paper use, which saves money (Aburumman, 2021) and plays an important role in keeping the environment friendly. In addition, e-assessment helps teachers to improve quality of feedback through reducing the conflict between instructors' feedback practice and students' expectations through tailored feedback (Osuji, 2012). Finally, e-assessment provides more accurate results than paper tests through adaptive testing, which change the test difficulty depending on the user response, by increasing the difficulty if the student responded correctly and decreasing the difficulty if he chose the wrong answer (Alruwais et al., 2018).

Despite having many benefits, e-assessment has some challenges for teachers that obstruct its wide application and acceptance (Kundu & Bej, 2021) such as the difficulty in marking essay questions as the majority of e-assessment systems are not configured for marking open ended questions (Aburumman, 2021).

Security is one of the most significant challenges in an e-assessment system (Miguel et al., 2015). If it is not observed and checked, a lot of problems will appear. As security may be hacked as a result of students' access from different devices and browsers, that's why some institutions refuse to implement online assessments for high stake examinations (Brink & Lautenbach, 2011). Security includes passwords or encrypted smart cards, Internet protocol addresses; and live remote monitoring of students using webcams (Crisp, 2011).

Cheating and plagiarism represent an important challenge for teachers in e-assessment process (Mariam, 2021). Academic dishonesty is considered as an important challenge of e-assessment. It is really difficult for teachers to prevent cheating during exams (Momeni, 2022; Ramazan, 2017).

Perhaps one of the most important challenges is dealing with students who have limited information about communication technologies (Alruwais et al., 2018). When students encounter technical difficulties, their test performance is affected, and thus technical difficulties could hinder students' participation in e-assessment (Abduh, 2021; Kostaki & Karayianni, 2022).

Research questions:

1. *What are the Faculty members' perceptions of using assessment tools on Blackboard?*
 - A. *How efficient is the faculty member in using the assessment tools on Blackboard?*
 - B. *How effective are the assessment tools in Blackboard from the faculty members' perception?*
 - C. *What are the challenges of the assessment tools on Blackboard that faculty members face?*
2. *What are the students' perceptions of using assessment tools on Blackboard?*
 - A. *How efficient is the student in using the assessment tools on the Blackboard?*
 - B. *How effective are the assessment tools in Blackboard from the student's perception?*
 - C. *What are the challenges of the assessment tools on Blackboard that students face?*

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

The descriptive-analytical method is adopted.

B. Participants

A sample of (31) EFL faculty members and (102) EFL students from different levels were randomly selected from English department at Jouf University, KSA.

C. Data Collection Tools

Two questionnaires were prepared one for faculty members and one for students.

The Faculty members' questionnaire consists of:

Section	Number of Items
Self-efficacy	6 Items
The Benefits of assessment tools on Blackboard	8 Items
The Challenges of assessment tools on Blackboard	6 Items

The students' questionnaire consists of:

Section	Number of Items
Self-efficacy	5 Items
The Benefits of assessment tools on Blackboard	7 Items
The Challenges of assessment tools on Blackboard	4 Items

Likert scale was used with degrees from 1 (Strongly disagree), 2(Disagree), 3(Neutral), 4(Agree), 5(Strongly agree).

D. Validity of the Questionnaires

(a). Construct Validity

The initial versions of the questionnaires were submitted to a group of specialists to ascertain the extent to which each item was related to the section it belongs to and also to check the clarity and integrity of the formulation of the items. Modifications were made based on the comments of the panel of jury. The Faculty members' questionnaire in its final form consists of (20) items, and the students' questionnaire in its final form consists of (16) items.

(b). The Internal Consistency of the Questionnaires

We calculated internal consistency by calculating the Pearson correlation coefficient between each item and the section it belongs to as shown in the following tables:

1. The Faculty Members' Questionnaire

TABLE 1
PEARSON CORRELATION COEFFICIENT BETWEEN EACH ITEM AND EACH SECTION

Number of Items	correlation coefficient	Number of Items	correlation coefficient
1	.712**	11	.686**
2	.753**	12	.809**
3	.626**	13	.686**
4	.788**	14	.759**
5	.794**	15	.635**
6	.700**	16	.668**
7	.619**	17	.831**
8	.869**	18	.634**
9	.810**	19	.693**
10	.688**	20	.728**

From the above table, we conclude that all Pearson correlation coefficients between each item and the section it belongs to is significant. (where the significant value is more than (0.5) which indicates a high degree of validity of the internal consistency).

2. The Students' Questionnaire

TABLE 2
PEARSON CORRELATION COEFFICIENT BETWEEN EACH ITEM AND EACH SECTION

Number of Items	correlation coefficient	Number of Items	correlation coefficient
1	.626**	9	.787**
2	.757**	10	.793**
3	.727**	11	.729**
4	.786**	12	.887**
5	.851**	13	.910**
6	.762**	14	.764**
7	.651**	15	.585**
8	.768**	16	.897**

From the above table, we conclude that all Pearson correlation coefficients between each item and the section it belongs to are significant (where the significant value is more than 0.5 which indicates a high degree of validity of the internal consistency).

3. Reliability of Questionnaires

To ensure the reliability of the questionnaires, Cronbach's Alpha test was used, as shown in the following tables:

(1). The Faculty Members' Questionnaire

TABLE 3
CRONBACH'S ALPHA COEFFICIENTS

Section	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Self-efficacy	6	.913
The Benefits of assessment tools on Blackboard	8	.916
The Challenges of assessment tools on Blackboard	6	.922
Total degree	20	.918

From the above table, we conclude that the reliability coefficients value of all sections of the questionnaire were high, and the total degree of reliability of The Faculty members' questionnaire was (.918)

(2). The Students' Questionnaire

TABLE 4
CRONBACH'S ALPHA COEFFICIENTS

section	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Self-efficacy	5	.894
The Benefits of assessment tools on Blackboard	7	.902
The Challenges of assessment tools on Blackboard	4	.982
Total degree	16	.973

From the above table, we conclude that the reliability coefficients value of all sections of questionnaire were high, and the total degree of reliability of the students' questionnaire was (.973)

E. Statistical Analysis

The Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS version 26) was used.

To determine the length of the cells of the fifth Likert scale (lower and upper limits) used in the study, the range (5-1 = 4) was calculated and then divided by the number of scale cells to get the correct cell length, i.e. (4/5 = 0.80) after that this value was added to the lowest value in the scale to determine the upper limit of this cell, and thus the length of the cells became as shown in the following table:

Weighted average	1-1.80	1.81-2.60	2.61-3.40	3.41-4.20	4.21-5
Agreement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

IV. RESULTS

To answer the questions of the study, the mean, the standard deviation, and the ranks were used.

A. What Are the Faculty Members' Perceptions of Using Assessment Tools on Blackboard?

(a). How Efficient Is the Faculty Member in Using the Assessment Tools on the Blackboard?

TABLE 5
THE MEAN, THE STANDARD DEVIATION, AND THE RANKS FOR THE FIRST SECTION IN THE FACULTY MEMBERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

No	Statement	Weighted average	Std. Deviation	Rank
1	I'm aware of all the assessment tools on the Blackboard	4.39	.558	1
2	I can use all the assessment tools on Blackboard easily	4.29	.529	2
3	I feel confident when I use all the assessment tools on the Blackboard	4.13	.670	3
4	I have received enough training in Blackboard assessment tools	3.58	.992	6
5	I can create my rubrics on the Blackboard	3.77	.956	5
6	I feel that my evaluation of my students on the Blackboard is fair	3.87	.824	4
General mean		4.01	0.75	

From the above table, we conclude that the faculty members agreed that they are efficient in using assessment tools on the Blackboard with a mean (4.01), and standard deviation (0.75) low value, indicating homogeneous opinions of the study sample in the items of this section as well as the total. Item (1) came in the first rank with a (4.39) mean. While in the last rank came item (4) with a mean of (3.58).

(b). How Effective Are the Assessment Tools in Blackboard From the Faculty Member's Perception?

TABLE 6
THE MEAN, THE STANDARD DEVIATION, AND THE RANKS FOR THE SECOND SECTION IN THE FACULTY MEMBERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

No	Statement	Weighted average	Std. Deviation	Rank
1	I think Safe Assign is very helpful to me as an instructor to prevent plagiarism	4.00	.931	6
2	I use Journals as an assessment tool for different purposes	2.94	.892	8
3	I can easily provide my students with feedback on the Blackboard	4.42	.765	2
4	I use different types of questions on Blackboard tests	4.10	.870	4
5	I think Blackboard has different types of tests that are effective	4.03	.706	5
6	The automatic scoring makes the assessment process easier for me	4.29	.783	3
7	I think the grade center is very organized and it has so many advantages for me as an instructor	4.55	.568	1
8	I think all the assessment tools on Blackboard are necessary for me	3.90	.746	7
General mean		4.03	0.78	

From the above table, we conclude that the faculty members agreed that the assessment tools used in Blackboard are effective with a mean (4.03) and standard deviation (0.78) low value, indicating homogeneous opinions of the study sample in the items of this section. In the first rank came item (7) with a mean (4.55). While in the last rank came item (2) with a mean of (2.94).

To get more insight, an open-ended item asked faculty members to write any benefits of the assessment tools on Blackboard. Analysis of participants' responses resulted in the following list of benefits ordered according to their frequency:

- Quick and saves time
- Easy to announce to students
- The ability to ask subjective questions
- The ability to revisit students' attempts to track their progress.
- It is an easier means of assessment and communication with students.
- Students can submit assignments electronically and work with various built-in Web-based tools such as e-portfolios, wikis, and blogs.
- Students can assess their peers and self-assess.
- Ability to download all the assessments on desktop to keep a copy of the entire tasks with their scores and feedback.
- Helpful for managing the assessment of a huge number of students.

(c). *What Are the Challenges of the Assessment Tools on Blackboard That Faculty Members Have Faced?*

TABLE 7
THE MEAN, THE STANDARD DEVIATION, AND THE RANKS FOR THE THIRD SECTION IN THE FACULTY MEMBERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

No	Statement	Weighted average	Std. Deviation	Rank
1	I think some assessment tools on the Blackboard are difficult to use	3.94	.893	1
2	I'm not familiar with using some assessment Tools on the Blackboard	2.74	.999	4
3	Some technical issues and connecting problems may spoil the test	3.68	.945	3
4	I can't control students' cheating on the Blackboard	3.87	.922	2
5	I do not trust the automatic scoring on the Blackboard	2.19	.873	5
General mean		3.28	0.93	

From the above table, we conclude that the faculty members are neutral about that the challenges of the assessment tools on Blackboard with a mean of (3.28) and standard deviation (0.93) low value, indicating homogeneous opinions of the study sample on the items of this section. In the first rank came item (1) with a (3.94) mean, while in the last rank came item (5) with a mean of (2.19).

To get more insight an open-ended item asked faculty members to write any challenges they have faced in the Blackboard assessment. Analysis of participants' responses resulted in the following list of challenges ordered according to frequency:

- Inability to process all types of files like pages from Apple products.
- Difficulty in ensuring the authenticity of the work submitted by students (assignments, quizzes, discussions)
- Providing feedback is a cumbersome task.
- Sometimes it is hard to design tests or discussion threads and manage the students' responses.
- Age significantly affects faculty members' perceptions of using Blackboard in teaching and learning.
- A few of the students are not familiar with the grading on Blackboard, especially first-year students.

B. *What Are the Students' Perceptions of Using Assessment Tools on Blackboard?*

(a). *How Efficient Is the Student in Using the Assessment Tools on the Blackboard?*

TABLE 8
THE MEAN, THE STANDARD DEVIATION, AND THE RANKS FOR THE FIRST SECTION IN THE STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE

No	Statement	Weighted average	Std. Deviation	Rank
1	I feel confident using Blackboard to take a variety of online tests including essay and objective tests	4.08	1.002	4
2	I feel comfortable uploading my homework on the Blackboard	4.45	.875	2
3	I know how to view my grades on the Blackboard	4.49	.941	1
4	I can read the feedback from my teacher	4.01	1.029	5
5	I feel comfortable writing my opinions on the discussion board	4.14	1.044	3
General mean		4.23	0.98	

From the above table, we conclude that students strongly agree that they are efficient in using the assessment tools on the Blackboard with a mean (4.23) and standard deviation (0.98) low value, indicating homogeneous opinions of the study sample in the items of this section. Item (3) is in the first rank with a mean of (4.49), while in the last rank came item (4): with a mean of (4.01).

(b). *How Effective Are the Assessment Tools in Blackboard From the Student's Perception?*

TABLE 9
THE MEAN, THE STANDARD DEVIATION, AND THE RANKS FOR THE SECOND SECTION IN THE STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE

No	Statement	Weighted average	Std. Deviation	Rank
1	It is easy to upload my homework via Blackboard from home	3.91	1.045	7
2	I like sharing my opinions on the discussion board with my classmates	4.10	1.104	5
3	I use the tasks on the Blackboard to find the tasks that I need to complete	4.04	1.089	6
4	I think the assessment on the Blackboard is fair to me as an EFL student	4.25	1.019	4
5	Knowing the due dates for submitting my assignments is very helpful on Blackboard	4.52	.829	1
6	I like having the freedom to upload or write my assignment on Blackboard	4.45	.779	2
7	I think taking a test on the Blackboard is more convenient for me	4.43	.885	3
General mean		4.24	0.96	

From the above table, we conclude that students strongly agree that assessment tools in Blackboard are effective with a mean (4.24) and standard deviation (0.96) low value, indicating homogeneous opinions of the study sample in the items of this section. In the first rank is item (5) with a (4.52) mean, while in the last rank is item (1) with a mean of (3.91).

To get more insight, an open-ended item asked students to write any benefit of the assessment tools on Blackboard. Analysis of participants' responses resulted in the following list of benefits ordered according to frequency:

- Ease of communication between teacher and student
- Evaluation speed
- Ease of use
- Time-saving
- Share a draft of solution to a specific question with colleagues or the faculty member, correct the error, and get feedback from the faculty member on the subject.

(c). *What Are the Challenges of the Assessment Tools on Blackboard That Students Have Faced?*

TABLE 10
THE MEAN, THE STANDARD DEVIATION, AND THE RANKS FOR THE THIRD SECTION IN THE STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE

No	Statement	Weighted average	Std. Deviation	Rank
1	Sometimes I can't complete my test because of technical issues and connection problems	3.92	1.105	1
2	I don't feel comfortable that my assignments are checked for plagiarism by using Safe Assign	3.30	1.326	3
3	I think not all the Blackboard types of tests are suitable for me as an EFL student.	2.99	1.231	4
4	I have a problem with the time when I write in English on the essay test	3.87	1.279	2
General mean		3.52	1.24	

From the above table, we conclude that students slightly agreed that they face challenges with a mean of (3.52), however the standard deviation (1.24) was high value, indicating differences in opinions of the study sample on the items of this section. In the first rank is item (1) with a mean of (3.92), while in the last rank is item (3) with a mean of (2.99).

To get more insight, an open-ended item asked faculty members to write any challenges they have faced in the Blackboard assessment. Analysis of participants' responses resulted in the following list of challenges ordered according to frequency:

- Technical problems (internet disconnection)
- Technical issues with the program
- The inaccuracy of the plagiarism checker used on Blackboard.
- It is not possible to return to the previous question
- The exam time countdown bar may cause stress
- Lack of time leads to not completing assignments/exams
- The course faculty member's lack of cooperation in the online tests

V. DISCUSSION

Based on the results mentioned above, faculty members are aware of the assessment tools on the Blackboard and this leads to the effective use of these tools. Faculty members expressed that their effectiveness in using the assessment tools on the Blackboard is due to its ease of use. This result agrees with the result of Little-Wiles and Naimi (2011) and Missula (2008) who reported that faculty members indicated that Blackboard is easy to use and organized. The current result is also consistent with the study of Alkarani and Thobaity (2020) who stated that faculty members reported that Blackboard is a very easy tool for receiving assignments and checking plagiarism.

The results also showed that faculty members expressed that assessment tools in Blackboard are effective to a great extent, as faculty members strongly agree that the grade center in Blackboard is very organized and has many advantages; such as helping in calculating grades, tracking students' progress, downloading grades to the computer, and

preparing reports. This result is consistent with Riad (2022) who valued the idea that grade center in Blackboard calculates grades, and monitor students' progress. Besides, this result agrees with Pusuluri et al. (2017) who found that through the use of the grade center, faculty members can provide students' grades for tests, assignments, discussion boards, blogs, and wikis, and students can view their grades confidentially.

However, faculty members expressed that there are some challenges that face them during using the assessment tools on Blackboard. Faculty members expressed that though most of the assessment tools on Blackboard are easy to use as mentioned earlier, some assessment tools on the Blackboard are difficult to use. This result is consistent with Al-Naibi (2016) who found that some aspects of the Blackboard system are difficult to use. However, the result of the current study is against what Al-Shboul (2013) found out. Al-Shboul found out that many faculty members are reluctant to use Blackboard because they are reluctant to change their style of teaching. The current study result also differs with Sneller (2004) who found that one of the real challenges of using the assessment tools on Blackboard is the lack of professional training and institutional support. In the current study, faculty members focused on the issue of students' cheating as one of the main challenges of assessment via Blackboard. This really needs more efforts and training to help faculty members control the cheating variable in online assessment.

The results of the current study showed that students are effective in using the assessment tools on the Blackboard; this effectiveness depends on user readiness, organizational culture and system adoption. Students expressed their satisfaction that they can view their grades on the Blackboard through the grade center instantly. This result agrees with the result of Abuloum and Khasawneh (2006) and Jones and Jones (2005). However, the result of the current study is not consistent with what Al-Okluk (2018) indicated regarding students' insufficient experience with online learning which leads to poor student utilization of online learning tools. Students also stated that it's easy for them to upload their assignments on Blackboard. This agrees with Elsayy (2018) who found out that one of the main benefits stated by students of using the Blackboard system is the easiness of submitting homework through the system.

Results also showed that students' valued other benefits of online assessment including increased communication between the students and the lecturer and the possibility of easy checking of the relevant deadlines on the Blackboard. This result agrees with the result of Uziak et al. (2018) who found that Blackboard sends individual notifications for students to announce them about important items. Besides, this result is consistent with what Al-Moeather (2020).

On the other hand, the results of the current study showed that there are some challenges that face students when using the Blackboard for assessment purposes such as insufficient technical knowledge and training, limited and poor internet connection and limited time of essay questions. This is consistent with Al Tameemy et al. (2020) and El-Sayed (2022) who revealed that technical problems are the most important challenges that face students.

It is noticed from the results of the current study (especially student's Questionnaire) that there was strong consistency between what students wrote in the open-ended items of the questionnaire and their responses in the closed-ended items especially in the section of challenges. This adds to the reliability of the results of the questionnaire.

VI. CONCLUSION

Blackboard is one of the most common platforms that provide different assessment tools for educational purposes. Examining these assessment tools and their effectiveness and their level of difficulty from English major students' and faculty members' perceptions was the primary goal of this study. The data analysis has shown that the assessment tools on Blackboard, from students' and faculty members' perceptions have a lot of benefits and advantages; as they are very organized, helpful, and easy to use. On the other hand, there are some challenges related to the technical issues, connection problems, and time limits in the essay tests from EFL students' perception, and challenges related to designing tests, providing feedback and controlling cheating form faculty members' perception.

Theoretically, the study gives clear insight into the use of assessment tools on Blackboard. This could help improve the Blackboard assessment system and emphasize the importance of finding solutions for the obstacles such as technical issues to provide a better e-assessment environment for both students and faculty members.

Practically, the current study highlights that the Blackboard allows faculty members to manage the assessment process of a huge number of students, and enable them to keep a copy of the entire tasks with their scores and feedback which save faculty members' time.

To sum up, based on the results, the study recommends to make use of the capabilities of the blackboard system in assessing students learning. Besides, replicating this study using different samples and different data-gathering tools could be beneficial to find out whether the assessment tools on Blackboard are effective enough or still need to be improved.

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