

English Teachers' Perception of Digital Summative Assessment in Malaysian Primary Schools

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Abstract

Despite increasing access to educational technology, summative assessment practices in many schools remain predominantly paper-based. This mixed-methods study investigated English language teachers' preferences for summative assessment methods and explored the reasons underlying continued reliance on traditional paper-based assessments in the Malaysian context. An explanatory sequential design was employed. Quantitative data were collected through a survey administered to 30 English language teachers from primary schools, in Sandakan, Sabah, followed by semi-structured interviews with 10 selected participants. Descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis were used to analyse the survey data, while thematic analysis was applied to the interview transcripts. The quantitative findings revealed that a majority of teachers preferred paper-based summative assessments, particularly among those with longer teaching experience. Technical challenges and lack of institutional support were significant predictors of preference for traditional assessment methods, whereas perceived usefulness and confidence in using digital tools were associated with greater acceptance of digital assessment. Qualitative findings further indicated that teachers valued the reliability and familiarity of paper-based assessments and expressed concerns regarding infrastructure, training, and policy clarity. However, teachers also acknowledged the potential of digital tools to enhance feedback efficiency and student performance tracking. The study concludes that teachers' assessment preferences are shaped primarily by contextual and systemic constraints rather than resistance to innovation. The findings highlight the need for improved infrastructure, targeted professional development, and clearer policy support to facilitate the effective integration of digital tools in summative assessment practices in English language education.

Keywords: Summative Assessment, Digital Assessment, English Language Education, Teachers' Perceptions, Mixed Methods

Introduction

Background of the Study

Assessment is a fundamental component of teaching and learning, particularly in English language education, where learners' progress is evaluated across multiple skills, including reading, writing, listening, and speaking (Bennett, 2021; Hashim & Yunus, 2021). Within

formal schooling systems, summative assessment plays a critical role in certifying learning outcomes, informing progression decisions, and ensuring accountability. As a result, summative assessment practices are often closely aligned with institutional expectations and examination requirements.

Traditionally, summative assessment in schools has relied predominantly on paper-based methods such as written examinations and pen-and-paper tests. According to a group of renown These methods continue to dominate classroom assessment practices due to their perceived reliability, standardisation, and compatibility with examination-oriented education systems, including those in Malaysia (Razali et al., 2020). Teachers often regard paper-based assessments as familiar, manageable, and defensible in high-stakes contexts.

In recent years, advances in educational technology have introduced a wide range of digital tools designed to support assessment practices. Digital assessment tools offer potential pedagogical and administrative benefits, including automated marking, immediate feedback, efficient data management, and flexible assessment design. In English language education, digital platforms such as Quizizz, Pear Deck, and Socrative are increasingly used for formative purposes, allowing the integration of multimedia elements and interactive tasks that may enhance learner engagement and reflect authentic language use (Godwin-Jones, 2021; Hashim et al., 2022).

Despite these advantages, the integration of digital tools into summative assessment remains limited. Research in the Malaysian context indicates that teachers often experience low confidence in using digital assessment tools and express concerns regarding assessment validity, reliability, technical stability, and institutional support (Razali & Noor, 2021). This discrepancy between the availability of digital technologies and their limited use in summative assessment suggests the presence of contextual and systemic constraints influencing teachers' assessment decisions.

Given the central role of summative assessment in the Malaysian education system, particularly within examination-oriented school cultures, teachers are expected to prioritise assessment practices that are fair, valid, and reliable (Hashim & Yunus, 2021). Understanding why English language teachers continue to rely on paper-based summative assessments, despite increasing access to digital tools, is therefore essential for informing assessment reform, professional development, and policy implementation in English language education (Yunus et al., 2022).

Problem Statement

Although digital assessment tools are widely promoted for their pedagogical and administrative benefits, their integration into summative assessment remains limited (Redecker & Johannessen, 2021; Panadero et al., 2022). Many English language teachers continue to rely primarily on traditional paper-based assessments, particularly for high-stakes evaluation, due to concerns about standardisation and examination alignment (Razali et al., 2020; Yunus & Tan, 2021). Previous research has identified several factors that may influence teachers' reluctance to adopt digital assessment tools, including technical challenges, limited training, lack of institutional support, and concerns regarding assessment reliability and validity. However, much of the existing literature focuses on technology use in teaching and

formative assessment, with comparatively less attention given to summative assessment practices, particularly in examination-oriented contexts (Yusoff, 2025; Lian, 2025).

In the Malaysian context, empirical research examining teachers' summative assessment preferences in English language education remains limited (Razali et al., 2020; Majuddin et al., 2022). Without a clear understanding of the reasons behind teachers' continued preference for paper-based assessment and the conditions that may facilitate greater adoption of digital tools, efforts to modernise assessment practices may remain ineffective (Yunus & Tan, 2021; Wahab et al., 2022). This gap highlights the need for empirical research that examines both the prevalence of teachers' assessment preferences and the underlying factors influencing those preferences, particularly through a mixed-methods approach (Dawadi, 2021; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate English language teachers' preferences for summative assessment methods and to examine the factors influencing their continued reliance on traditional paper-based assessments (Razali et al., 2020; Bennett, 2021). Using a mixed-methods approach, the study sought to identify both the extent of teachers' assessment preferences and the reasons underlying their choices (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2021).

In addition, the study aimed to explore teachers' perceptions of how summative assessment practices could be improved through the use of digital education tools (Redecker & Johannessen, 2021; Panadero et al., 2022). By integrating quantitative and qualitative data, the study provides a comprehensive understanding of summative assessment practices in English language education (Johnson et al., 2020).

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

RQ1. What is the preference of English language teachers for digital tools compared to traditional paper-based methods in summative assessment?

RQ2. What factors influence English language teachers' preference for traditional paper-based summative assessments?

Research Objectives

The objectives of this study were to:

RO1. Determine English language teachers' preferences for digital and traditional paper-based summative assessment methods.

RO2. Identify the key factors influencing English language teachers' preference for traditional paper-based summative assessments.

Novelty and Contribution of the Study

This study offers several novel contributions to the field of social sciences, particularly within English language education and assessment research. First, it addresses a notable gap in the literature by focusing specifically on summative assessment practices, an area that has received comparatively less empirical attention than formative assessment in studies on educational technology adoption.

Secondly, the study provides context-specific empirical evidence from Malaysian primary schools, an examination-oriented setting where assessment decisions are strongly shaped by institutional accountability and systemic expectations. By examining English language teachers' assessment preferences within this context, the study extends existing research on digital assessment beyond general technology use to the high-stakes domain of summative evaluation.

Furthermore, through the use of an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design, this study moves beyond identifying surface-level trends to uncover the contextual, institutional, and experiential factors that shape teachers' assessment choices. The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings offers a more nuanced understanding of why paper-based assessments continue to dominate despite the recognised pedagogical potential of digital tools.

Overall, this study contributes to social science research by highlighting how teachers' assessment practices are influenced not merely by individual attitudes toward technology, but by broader systemic conditions. The findings provide evidence-based insights that can inform assessment policy, teacher professional development, and future research on digital transformation in education.

Significance of the Study

This study contributes to educational research in several ways. Firstly, it contributes to the pedagogical significance. The findings provide insights into English language teachers' assessment practices and identify factors that influence their willingness to adopt digital tools. These insights may inform the design of targeted professional development initiatives that support the effective implementation of digital summative assessment (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020; Panadero et al., 2022).

Secondly, the study offers institutional and policy significance. By highlighting systemic and contextual barriers to digital assessment adoption, the findings provide evidence that may assist school leaders and policymakers in strengthening infrastructure, professional support, and assessment guidelines (OECD, 2021; UNESCO, 2023). The investigation examined teachers' perceptions and self-reported practices related to summative assessment. Students' perspectives and the effectiveness of specific digital assessment tools were beyond the scope of this study.

Scope of Study

This study focused on English language teachers teaching at public primary schools in Malaysia. The investigation examined teachers' perceptions and self-reported practices related to summative assessment. Students' perspectives and the effectiveness of specific digital assessment tools were beyond the scope of this study.

Definition of Key Terms

Summative Assessment: Assessment conducted at the end of an instructional period to evaluate student learning and achievement.

Digital Assessment Tools: Technology-based platforms or applications used to design, administer, and evaluate assessments.

Paper-Based Assessment: Traditional assessment methods involve printed examination papers and written responses.

English Language Education: The teaching and learning of English language skills, including reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

Literature Review

Introduction

The literature review focuses on studies published within the last five years to reflect contemporary developments in assessment and educational technology. It begins with an overview of summative assessment in education, followed by a discussion of traditional paper-based assessment practices. The chapter then examines the emergence of digital assessment tools, teachers' perceptions of digital assessment, and technology acceptance in educational contexts. Finally, empirical studies and research gaps relevant to the present study are identified.

Summative assessment is widely used to evaluate students' learning outcomes at the end of an instructional period and to support decision-making related to grading, certification, and accountability (Brown & Harris, 2020). Moreover, as quoted by DeLuca et al. (2021), in many education systems, summative assessment outcomes carry high stakes for students, teachers, and institutions, which reinforces the importance of reliability, validity, and fairness in assessment practices.

Recent literature highlights that summative assessment remains a dominant feature of schooling despite growing emphasis on formative assessment, especially in Malaysia. In examination-oriented systems, summative assessment often functions as a key mechanism for monitoring educational standards and student performance, shaping both teaching practices and curriculum implementation (Stobart & Hopfenbeck, 2021). As a result, teachers may experience pressure to adhere to established assessment formats that are perceived as credible and defensible. Within such contexts, innovation in summative assessment is often constrained by systemic expectations and policy requirements. Teachers' assessment decisions are therefore influenced not only by pedagogical considerations but also by institutional accountability demands (DeLuca et al., 2021).

Traditional paper-based assessment has long been the primary mode of summative evaluation in schools. Written examinations, essays, and objective tests remain widely used due to their perceived reliability, standardisation, and alignment with existing examination systems (Stobart & Hopfenbeck, 2021). These assessment formats are familiar to teachers and students and are often considered easier to administer and monitor, particularly in large-scale or high-stakes contexts.

However, recent studies have identified limitations associated with traditional paper-based assessment. Carless (2020) argues that paper-based assessments often emphasise content recall and procedural knowledge, offering limited opportunities for assessing higher-order thinking or authentic application of knowledge. In addition, delayed feedback and heavy marking workloads have been highlighted as ongoing challenges. In primary school contexts, paper-based summative assessment remains particularly dominant due to concerns related

to classroom management, pupils' digital literacy, and the need for standardised assessment practices (Carless, 2020; Stobart & Hopfenbeck, 2021).

On the other hand, the advancement in educational technology have led to the development of a wide range of digital assessment tools, including online testing platforms, learning management systems, automated feedback tools, and analytics-based assessment systems. Recent researches suggest that digital assessment tools can enhance efficiency, provide timely feedback, and support data-driven decision-making (Ifenthaler & Yau, 2020; Sailer et al., 2021). Hence, it is widely accepted in the education system. Digital assessment tools also allow for greater flexibility in assessment design, enabling the integration of multimedia elements and interactive tasks. Sailer et al. (2021) also suggests that these features have been shown to support more authentic and engaging assessment experiences, particularly when aligned with learning objectives.

Despite these potential benefits, the use of digital tools for summative assessment remains limited. Concerns related to technical reliability, assessment integrity, and unequal access to technology continue to present significant barriers, especially in high-stakes assessment contexts (Hillier & Fluck, 2022). These challenges may discourage teachers from relying on digital tools for summative purposes, even when they recognise their pedagogical value.

In addition to the values, teachers' perceptions and beliefs play a crucial role in shaping assessment practices. Recent studies emphasise that teachers are more likely to adopt digital assessment tools when they feel confident in using technology and perceive it as beneficial for student learning (Koehler et al., 2021). Conversely, limited experience, inadequate training, and fear of technical failure may reduce teachers' willingness to use digital tools for summative assessment.

Professional development and institutional support have been identified as key factors influencing teachers' perceptions of digital assessment. Tondeur et al. (2023) found that teachers who receive ongoing training and technical support demonstrate greater confidence and readiness to integrate digital tools into their assessment practices. Without such support, teachers may view digital assessment as risky or impractical, particularly in high-stakes contexts. These findings suggest that teachers' assessment choices are shaped by both individual confidence and broader institutional conditions.

Technology acceptance research provides a useful lens for understanding teachers' adoption of digital assessment tools. Recent studies confirm that factors such as perceived usefulness, ease of use, and facilitating conditions continue to influence teachers' intentions to adopt educational technologies (Granić & Marangunić, 2021; Scherer et al., 2020). In educational contexts, these factors interact with systemic conditions such as infrastructure, policy guidance, and assessment culture. Teachers may recognise the potential benefits of digital assessment but remain reluctant to adopt such tools if institutional support is insufficient or if assessment policies prioritise traditional formats (Scherer & Teo, 2021). This perspective is particularly relevant to summative assessment, where concerns about reliability and accountability may outweigh perceived technological advantages.

English language assessment presents unique challenges due to the need to evaluate multiple language skills, including reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Recent research suggests that digital assessment tools can support innovative approaches to language assessment, such as automated writing feedback and multimedia-based listening and speaking tasks (O'Loughlin, 2023; Tsagari, 2021). However, empirical studies indicate that digital assessment in English language education is predominantly used for formative purposes rather than summative assessment. Therefore, teachers may be hesitant to use digital tools for summative evaluation due to concerns about scoring accuracy, student access, and alignment with curriculum standards. According to Tsagari, (2021) at the primary school level, the need to assess foundational language skills may further limit teachers' use of digital tools for summative assessment, particularly when institutional support and training are insufficient. Although recent studies have examined digital assessment and technology adoption in education, limited research has focused specifically on English language teachers' summative assessment practices at the primary school level, particularly within the Malaysian context. Furthermore, few studies have employed mixed-methods designs to examine both the prevalence of assessment preferences and the contextual factors influencing teachers' decisions (DeLuca et al., 2021; Ifenthaler et al., 2021). This study addresses these gaps by investigating Malaysian primary school English teachers' summative assessment practices using a mixed-methods approach.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a mixed-methods research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to obtain a comprehensive understanding of English language teachers' assessment preferences (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Tay, 2022). A mixed-methods design was adopted, in which quantitative data were collected and analysed first, then followed by qualitative data to explain further and elaborate on the quantitative findings.

The quantitative component involved a survey questionnaire designed to identify teachers' preferences for summative assessment methods and the factors influencing those preferences (Yusoff, 2025; Lian, 2025). The qualitative component consisted of semi-structured interviews with selected teachers to gain deeper insights into the reasons underlying continued reliance on traditional paper-based assessments despite the availability of digital assessment tools (Nikian, Mohamad Nor, & Aziz, 2013; Yin, 2023).

The use of a mixed-methods design was appropriate for this study as it allowed the researcher to triangulate findings, enhance the validity of the results, and address both the extent of teachers' preferences and the reasons behind those preferences (Dawadi, 2021; Tonkin-Crine et al., 2016). This design is particularly suitable in educational research where complex pedagogical practices require both numerical trends and contextual explanations.

Research Context

The study was conducted within the context of English language education in primary schools. English language teachers were selected as the focus of the study due to the subject's strong emphasis on assessment of language skills such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking, which can be assessed through both traditional and digital means. Despite increased access

to educational technology and digital learning platforms, summative assessment practices in many schools remain largely paper-based. This context provided a suitable setting to examine the discrepancy between the benefits of digital assessment tools and teachers' actual assessment practices.

Participants and Sampling

Quantitative Phase: Survey Participants

For the quantitative phase, purposive sampling was employed to select participants who met the inclusion criteria. The participants in this study were English language teachers teaching at public primary schools in Malaysia, particularly Sandakan, Sabah. Participants were required to have experience conducting summative assessments, whether through traditional paper-based methods, digital tools, or both. A total of 30 teachers were invited to participate in the survey through professional networks and school contacts. This sample size was considered sufficient to support inferential analyses, including demographic comparisons and predictive modelling in educational research (Pallant, 2020). Although the sample size was modest, it is appropriate for exploratory mixed-methods research where the aim is to identify trends and predictive relationships rather than population generalisation. The qualitative phase further strengthened interpretive validity.

Qualitative Phase: Interview Participants

For the qualitative phase, criterion-based purposive sampling was used to select interview participants from among the survey respondents. According to Memon et al. (2025), criterion-based purposive sampling was used to intentionally select participants who met specific, predefined criteria directly related to the research objectives, thereby ensuring that the sample was highly relevant to answering the study's research questions and enhancing methodological rigor. Teachers who demonstrated strong preferences for either traditional paper-based assessments or digital assessment tools were invited to participate in the interviews to ensure diverse perspectives.

A total of 10 teachers participated in the semi-structured interviews. Data collection continued until data saturation was achieved, as no new themes emerged during the later stages of analysis. The interview participants varied in terms of teaching experience, age, and school context, allowing for a rich and balanced qualitative dataset.

Research Instruments

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was adapted from previous studies on teachers' technology acceptance and digital assessment practices, with modifications made to suit the context of English language education and summative assessment. Items were initially drawn from validated questionnaires grounded in the Technology Acceptance Model and survey-based educational research, which were used to ensure conceptual alignment and content validity (Davis, 1989; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Several items were modified to suit the school-based teaching environment by adjusting terminology, simplifying language, and contextualising statements to align with teachers' assessment responsibilities and institutional settings.

The adaptation process involved rewording selected items to reflect the context of English language education, particularly in relation to summative assessment practices, while

maintaining the original constructs measured in prior studies. The questionnaire consisted of four sections and employed a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

Section A: Demographic Information

This section collected background information, including age, gender, years of teaching experience, school type, and level taught.

Section B: Assessment Practices

This section examined teachers' current use of paper-based and digital assessment methods for summative purposes.

Section C: Factors Influencing Assessment Preference

Items in this section focused on perceived usefulness, ease of use, reliability, institutional support, and technical challenges related to digital assessment tools.

Section D: Perceptions of Improvement

This section explored teachers' perceptions of how digital tools could improve summative assessment practices, particularly in terms of efficiency, feedback quality, and student progress monitoring.

Interview Protocol

A semi-structured interview protocol was developed to complement the survey findings. The interview questions were designed to explore teachers' experiences, beliefs, and contextual factors influencing their assessment practices. The interview protocol included open-ended questions such as:

1. Teachers' current summative assessment practices
2. Reasons for preferring traditional paper-based assessments
3. Challenges encountered when using digital assessment tools
4. Institutional and policy-related influences
5. Perceived potential of digital tools to enhance summative assessment

The semi-structured format allowed flexibility for probing and follow-up questions, enabling participants to elaborate on their responses while maintaining consistency across interviews.

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection was conducted in two phases. In the first phase, the questionnaire was distributed digitally using an online survey platform, Google Form. Participants were provided with an information sheet outlining the purpose of the study, and consent was obtained prior to participation. The survey remained open for four weeks, and reminder messages were sent to increase response rates.

In the second phase, semi-structured interviews were employed with selected participants. Interviews were carried out either face-to-face or via online video conferencing platforms, depending on participants' availability. Each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes and was audio-recorded with participants' consent. The recordings were subsequently transcribed verbatim for analysis.

Data Analysis

Quantitative Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarize teachers' assessment preferences and demographic characteristics. Inferential statistical analyses were conducted to address the research questions. Chi-square tests were used to examine differences in assessment preferences based on demographic variables. Multiple regression analysis was employed to identify factors predicting teachers' preference for traditional paper-based assessments. Statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data from the interviews were analysed using thematic analysis. The analysis followed six stages: familiarisation with the data, initial coding, theme development, theme review, theme definition, and reporting. Transcripts were analysed thoroughly to ensure familiarity, and meaningful units of data were coded, then grouped into broader themes representing recurring patterns in teachers' responses.

The semi-structured interview instrument used in this study was adapted from previous empirical research examining teachers' assessment practices and the adoption of digital assessment tools in educational contexts. The development of the interview questions was guided by studies that explored teachers' beliefs, technological readiness, institutional constraints, and perceived effectiveness of digital assessments (Alruwais et al., 2018; Bond et al., 2020; Khalil et al., 2022; Redecker, 2017; Scherer et al., 2021).

Validity, Reliability, and Trustworthiness

For the quantitative phase, content validity was established through expert review, and reliability was confirmed using Cronbach's alpha coefficients. For the qualitative phase, trustworthiness was ensured through credibility, dependability, and confirmability. The integration of quantitative and qualitative data further strengthened the validity of the study through methodological triangulation.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the relevant institutional authority. Participation was voluntary, and participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any time without penalty. All data were anonymised, and confidentiality was strictly maintained. Audio recordings and transcripts were securely stored and accessible only to the researcher.

Results

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study based on data collected from the quantitative survey and qualitative interviews. The results are organised according to the research questions and follow the explanatory sequential mixed-methods design adopted in this study (Creswell, 2020). Quantitative findings are presented first to address patterns and trends in teachers' assessment preferences, followed by qualitative findings that provide deeper insights into the reasons behind those preferences.

Quantitative Results

Demographic Profile of Participants

All respondents were English language teachers teaching at the primary school level in Malaysian public schools. A total of 30 English language teachers participated in the survey. Participants varied in terms of age, teaching experience, school type, and level taught, providing a diverse sample for analysis.

Most respondents were between 31 and 50 years old, with teaching experience ranging from less than 5 years to over 20 years. Participants were drawn from primary schools, with representation from urban and rural settings.

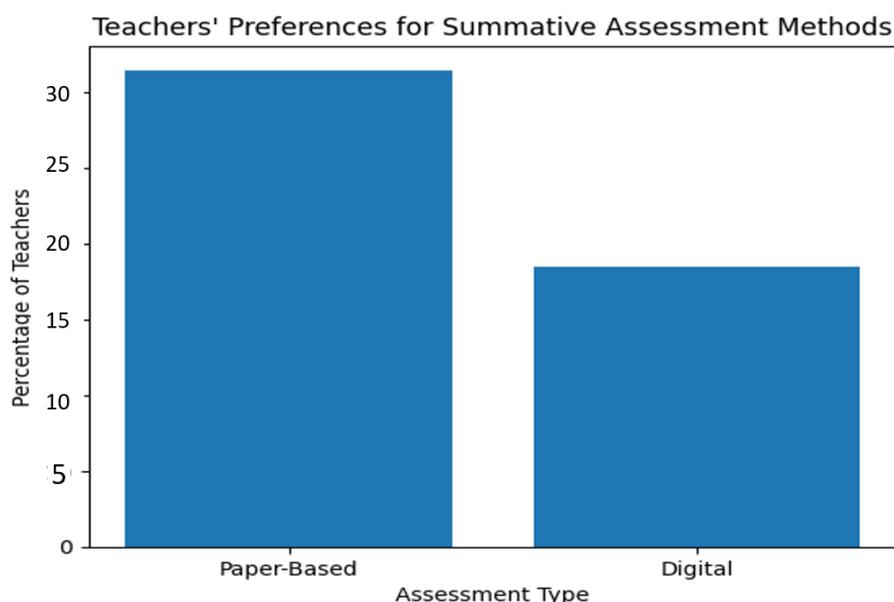


Figure 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents.

The internal consistency of the questionnaire was examined using Cronbach's alpha. As shown in Table 1, all constructs recorded alpha values above 0.70, indicating acceptable to excellent reliability. The overall reliability of the questionnaire was high ($\alpha = 0.89$), confirming that the instrument was suitable for further statistical analysis.

Construct	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha (α)	Interpretation
Preference for Paper-Based Assessment	3	0.78	Acceptable
Perceived Reliability & Familiarity	3	0.81	Good
Technical Challenges	3	0.84	Good
Institutional Support	3	0.80	Good
Perceived Usefulness	3	0.86	Very Good
Confidence / Ease of Use	3	0.88	Very Good
Perceived Improvement / Readiness	5	0.90	Excellent

Teachers' Preference for Assessment Methods (RQ1)

To address Research Question 1, descriptive statistics were used to determine teachers' preferences for summative assessment methods.

The findings indicated that a majority of teachers preferred traditional paper-based assessments for summative purposes. Specifically, 62.7% of respondents reported a stronger preference for paper-based assessments, while 37.3% indicated a preference for digital assessment tools.

Although many teachers acknowledged using digital tools occasionally, paper-based assessments remained the dominant method for high-stakes or summative evaluations.

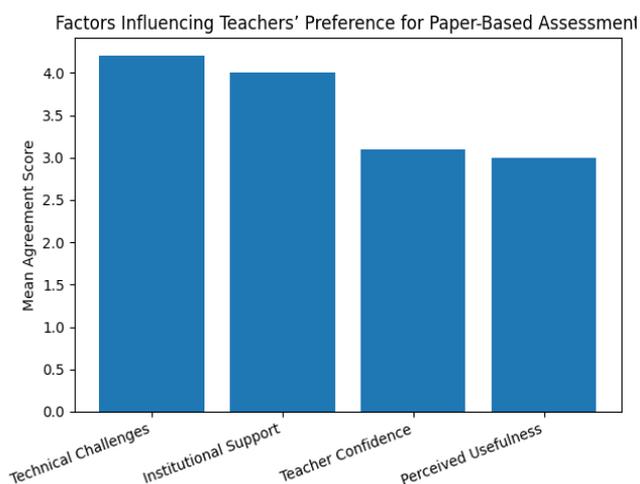


Figure 2 summarises teachers' assessment preferences.

Differences in Assessment Preference Based on Demographic Variables (RQ2)

To examine whether assessment preferences differed according to demographic factors, chi-square tests of independence were conducted.

The results revealed a statistically significant relationship between assessment preference and years of teaching experience (χ^2 , $p < .05$). Teachers with more than 15 years of experience were more likely to prefer paper-based assessments, whereas teachers with fewer than 10 years of experience showed a higher tendency to use digital tools.

No statistically significant differences were found between assessment preference and gender or school location ($p > .05$). However, a moderate association was observed between assessment preference and school level, with secondary school teachers slightly more inclined toward digital assessment tools than primary school teachers.

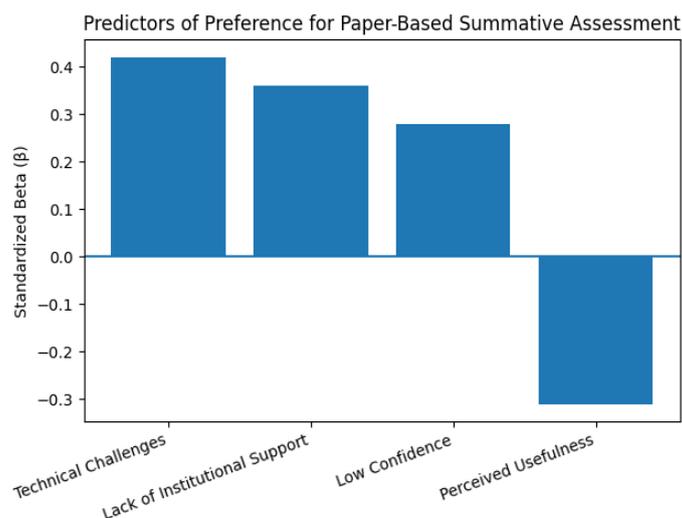


Figure 3 presents the chi-square analysis results.

Figure 3 illustrates the standardised predictors of teachers' preference for paper-based summative assessment.

Qualitative Results

Overview of Interview Data

To address Research Question 2, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 English language teachers. Thematic analysis of the interview transcripts resulted in the identification of four main themes related to teachers' continued reliance on traditional paper-based assessments and their views on improving summative assessment through digital tools.

Theme 1: Perceived Reliability and Familiarity of Paper-Based Assessments

Many participants expressed strong confidence in paper-based assessments, describing them as reliable, familiar, and less prone to technical issues. Teachers noted that paper-based assessments had been used consistently for many years and were perceived as more appropriate for high-stakes examinations.

One participant stated:

"Paper exams are straightforward. There are no technical problems, and students are already used to this format."

This theme highlights teachers' belief that traditional assessments offer greater control and predictability.

Theme 2: Technical and Logistical Challenges of Digital Assessment

Technical difficulties emerged as a major barrier to the adoption of digital tools. Participants reported issues such as unstable internet connectivity, limited access to devices, and system malfunctions during assessments.

A participant explained:

"If the system crashes during an exam, it creates stress for both teachers and students."

These challenges contributed significantly to teachers' reluctance to rely on digital tools for summative assessment.

Theme 3: Lack of Training and Institutional Support

Another recurring theme was the lack of professional training and insufficient institutional support. Many teachers indicated that they had not received formal training on using digital assessment tools effectively.

One teacher commented:

"We are expected to use digital tools, but we are not given proper training or clear guidelines."

This lack of support reduced teachers' confidence and willingness to transition from traditional assessment methods.

Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

The qualitative findings provided explanatory depth to the quantitative results. While survey data indicated a strong preference for paper-based assessments, interview data revealed that this preference was largely driven by practical constraints rather than resistance to technology. Factors such as technical challenges, limited institutional support, and lack of training were consistent across both data sets. The integration of findings suggests that teachers' assessment preferences are influenced more by contextual and systemic factors than by negative perceptions of digital tools themselves.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the results of the quantitative and qualitative analyses addressing the research questions of the study. The findings revealed that although digital assessment tools offer numerous advantages, English language teachers continue to rely primarily on traditional paper-based assessments due to issues related to reliability, technical challenges, and institutional support. The next chapter discusses these findings in relation to existing literature and outlines their implications for policy, practice, and future research.

Discussion, Implications and conclusion

Discussion of Findings

Teachers' Preference for Traditional Paper-Based Summative Assessment

The findings suggest that Malaysian primary school English teachers' preference for paper-based summative assessment is closely linked to the need for stability, manageability, and alignment with existing assessment expectations (Bennet, 2021). Although digital tools are increasingly integrated into teaching and learning, digital assessment practices appear to lag behind instructional innovation.

Due to the high-stakes nature of summative assessment, which carries significant consequences for both students and institutions, teachers tend to prioritise reliability, standardisation, and familiarity over innovation. As a result, teachers' continued preference for paper-based assessments appears to be driven by pragmatic and contextual considerations rather than resistance to technological change. This finding aligns with recent research indicating that teachers adopt new technologies selectively, particularly when

perceived risks, uncertainty, or concerns about validity and reliability outweigh the anticipated benefits of digital assessment tools (Bennett, 2021). Teachers' preference for paper-based assessments appears to be driven by pragmatic considerations rather than resistance to technological change. This finding aligns with research indicating that teachers adopt new technologies selectively when the uncertainty outweighs perceived benefits.

Influence of Teaching Experience and Contextual Factors

The quantitative results indicated that teaching experience significantly influenced assessment preference, with more experienced teachers showing a stronger preference for paper-based assessments. This may be attributed to established assessment routines and long-term reliance on traditional methods that have proven effective over time. In contrast, less experienced teachers appeared more open to digital tools, possibly due to greater exposure to educational technology during their training.

The qualitative findings further highlighted contextual factors, such as limited infrastructure, unstable internet connectivity, and lack of institutional support, as major influences on assessment choices. These contextual constraints suggest that teachers' assessment practices are shaped not only by individual beliefs but also by systemic and organisational conditions.

Factors Predicting Assessment Preferences

The regression analysis identified technical challenges and lack of institutional support as significant predictors of teachers' preference for paper-based assessments. This finding reinforces the argument that structural barriers, rather than pedagogical beliefs, hinder the adoption of digital assessment tools.

Conversely, perceived usefulness and confidence in using digital tools were associated with a lower preference for paper-based assessments. This suggests that when teachers feel competent and recognise the pedagogical value of digital assessment, they are more likely to adopt such tools. These findings are consistent with technology acceptance models, which emphasise the role of perceived usefulness and ease of use in shaping technology adoption.

Teachers' Perceptions of Improving Summative Assessment Through Digital Tools

Despite their preference for traditional methods, many teachers acknowledged the potential of digital tools to enhance summative assessment practices. Teachers highlighted benefits such as efficient marking, timely feedback, and improved tracking of student progress. These perceptions indicate a readiness for change under the right conditions.

The findings suggest that digital tools are not inherently rejected but are viewed as insufficiently supported within current school contexts. This highlights the importance of addressing infrastructural and professional development needs to facilitate meaningful integration of digital assessment tools in English language education.

Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

The mixed-methods approach allowed for a comprehensive understanding of teachers' assessment practices. While the quantitative data established the prevalence of paper-based assessment preferences, the qualitative data provided deeper insight into the reasons behind these preferences. Together, the findings reveal a coherent pattern in which teachers' choices

are shaped by a combination of experience, contextual constraints, and perceived risks associated with digital assessment.

This integration highlights that the gap between the acknowledged benefits of digital tools and their limited use in summative assessment is primarily a systemic issue rather than an individual one.

Implications of the Study

Pedagogical Implications

At the primary school level, where pupils are still developing foundational language and digital literacy skills, English language teachers require structured professional support to ensure that digital summative assessment practices are appropriate according to their development. Targeted training that focuses on practical classroom implementation may increase teachers' confidence in adopting digital assessment tools (Teo, 2011). Furthermore, digital assessment should be introduced gradually, allowing teachers to combine traditional and digital methods through blended assessment approaches.

Institutional and Policy Implications

At the institutional level, schools need to provide reliable technological infrastructure, clear guidelines, and ongoing technical support. Without these supports, teachers are unlikely to adopt digital assessment tools for high-stakes assessments. Meanwhile, at the policy level, assessment frameworks should explicitly recognise and legitimise digital summative assessment practices. Clear policies can reduce teachers' concerns about the validity and credibility of digital assessments.

Implications for English Language Education

For English language education, digital tools offer unique opportunities to enhance summative assessment through multimodal tasks, automated feedback, and data-driven insights into learner progress. The findings of this study highlight the need to align assessment practices with contemporary language learning goals while ensuring fairness and reliability.

From a human resource development perspective, the findings indicate that insufficient institutional support and training constrain teachers' capacity to adopt digital summative assessment practices.

Contribution of the Study

This study contributes to the field of English language education by providing empirical evidence on the factors influencing teachers' summative assessment preferences. By adopting a mixed-methods approach, it provides a depth of understanding on why traditional assessment methods continue to dominate despite technological advancements.

Importantly, the study highlights how summative assessment can be improved through digital tools when contextual and institutional challenges are addressed. These insights can inform future research, teacher training programs, and educational policy development.

Limitations of the Study

Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study relied on self-reported data, which may be subjected to bias thoughts. Next, the sample was limited to English language teachers within a specific educational context, which may affect the generalisability of the findings. Third, the study did not include classroom observations, which could have provided additional findings into actual assessment practices.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future studies could explore students' perceptions of digital versus paper-based summative assessments to provide a more comprehensive perspective. Longitudinal research examining changes in teachers' assessment practices over time would also be valuable. Additionally, experimental studies investigating the effectiveness of specific digital assessment tools in English language learning could further advance the field.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study examined English teachers' pedagogical preferences for digital summative assessment in Malaysian primary schools using a mixed-methods approach. The findings revealed that, despite recognising the pedagogical potential of digital assessment tools, teachers continue to rely predominantly on traditional paper-based assessment methods. This reliance is largely influenced by contextual and systemic factors, including concerns about reliability, classroom management, technical challenges, and limited institutional support.

The study contributes to English language education by providing context-specific insights into summative assessment practices at the primary school level. By focusing on Malaysian primary schools, this study underscores the importance of considering local educational contexts when promoting assessment innovation. Addressing the identified constraints may support teachers in adopting digital summative assessment practices that are pedagogically sound, developmentally appropriate, and aligned with contemporary educational goals.

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