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Investigating the Relationship between the Results of the Continuous and Final Assessment of Rudehen's First High School Students

Running title: Studying students' continuous and final scores

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the relationship between continuous assessment results (as a predictor variable) and final assessment results (as a criterion/predicted variable) in Rudehen's first high school students. This is an applied research study in terms of purpose and descriptive correlation of survey type in terms of method. The statistical population consisted of first-year female high school students studying at Rudehen High School in 2020-2021. The random cluster sampling method selected two hundred seventeen people using the Cochran formula. Then, students' academic records were searched. The scores of the three subjects studied in the research (i.e., Arabic, English, and Social Studies) in the seventh, eighth, and ninth grades were extracted and classified. Data were analyzed using Pearson's correlation test using SPSS software. The results showed a significant positive relationship between formative and final assessment scores in the study sample ($r = 0.644$, $p = 0.000$ and $R^2 = 0.552$). The first high school students' continuous assessment scores predicted about 31%, 39%, and 51% of the variance of the final assessment scores in Arabic, Social Studies, and English, respectively. There is an academic failure between students' mid-term and final grades in Arabic language and Social Studies. Slightly insignificant growth was observed between students' mid-term and final grades in the English course.

Keywords: *Continuous, Assessment, Final assessment, Grade*

Introduction

Assessment is an old phenomenon and an integral part of human daily life, one of the important criteria in education development. In the current era, where the education system and teachers are under much pressure to assess students' success, teachers use assessment to measure academic achievement. Among the tools teachers or the education system used to assess teaching materials and new knowledge are final assessment and continuous assessment (American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, & the National Council on Measurement in Education, 2014).

The student makes the final assessment at the end of credit or at a specific time in the study. It compares the learner's knowledge and skills with standards and criteria and measures the degree of mastery of learning. Instead of focusing on a specific individual, it focuses on how a population responds (States et al., 2018).

Because final grade numerical scores cannot properly assess students' academic achievement, monitoring, controlling, and assessing students' conceptual learning achievement cannot be left to the final assessment. Therefore, designing a good continuous assessment can help teachers fill the gap (Tridane et al., 2015).

Indeed, continuous assessment, also known as formative assessment, stepwise assessment, feedback assessment, process assessment, and the like, is an integral part of the teaching-learning process that helps improve and solve the problems of the process. Such assessment is the activities of teachers and learners in the assessment process to provide some information as feedback and, if necessary, change teaching and learning activities (Black & Wiliam, 2009).

Continuous assessment is a kind of assessment made during the learning process to improve teaching and learning and a kind of qualitative feedback (beyond the score) for students and teachers that emphasizes the details of content and performance (Huhta, 2010).

Meta-analysis studies in the field of the continuous assessment indicate the large effect size of this assessment in improving learning. Webb et al. (2019) believe that this effect size failure occurs when continuous assessment is a sequence of steps to achieve the final assessment, and both assessments follow a common path in goals and planning. Combining both types of tests is essential for teachers to observe students' learning process using the continuous test and ensure that the

continuous test is performed correctly using the final test.[1] Sometimes continuous assessment scores do not improve final performance. This has led some researchers to suggest that the terms formative assessment and assessment for learning should be distinguished (Swaffield, 2011).

In Iran, from the 2001-2002 academic year, the continuous assessment was considered at all academic levels. The presentation of coordinated final grades increased the stability and application of what has been learned in solving life problems. However, by examining the regulations of the exams, it can be seen that the use of continuous assessment was approved. In the regulations of the exams from 1952, it was rarely used. The assessment regulations currently discuss all three types of exams, including entrance, formative, and final, as well as written, oral, and practical assessments. In practice, formative assessment is based on student participation and the final written assessment to promote students. This discrepancy between the regulations and the practice takes our assessment system away from its own assessment goals and the assessment of other countries (such as Germany and the United Kingdom) (Kazemi, 2011).

A review of the continuous assessment literature shows a strong relationship between continuous assessment methods and improved learning and academic achievement. Studies show that conducting assessments in the classroom improves learning and academic achievement, reduces the gap between students' academic achievement, and increases motivation, self-confidence, and self-esteem (Tridan et al., 2015; William, 2006). They studied the research report and concluded that continuous assessment improves and enhances students 'learning and teachers' use of continuous assessment in the classroom improves students' learning activities. Students' continuous assessment and academic activities have become one of education professionals' main concerns. Undoubtedly, continuous assessment is essential. However, the basic argument is that the rationale for such a process in the current education system is so varied that it is impossible to conclude logically. Some emphasize continuous assessment information, while others emphasize its corrective role. Some see continuous assessment as taking a test and providing feedback, while others see it as a continuous learning activity and instruction. Some also consider continuous assessment to provide explicit or implicit instructions for future activities.

As one of the important components of teaching, continuous assessment in the classroom is important that directly affects learning in learners (McMillan, 2007). Continuous assessment is an approach that focuses on the teacher's mere attention from the end of the learning activity to the learning activity process. While having a glimpse of expectations, this approach focuses on how expectations are met regarding learner performance. When the instructor becomes aware of the learner's learning quality and distance from expectations and goals during the continuous assessment, there is an opportunity to change the method (Boston, 2002). Black and Wiliam (1998) defined continuous assessment as all the activities of teachers and learners that provide information to prevent failure and make changes in teaching and learning activities (Yam & Rossini, 2012). Any assessment made of the student should provide an opportunity to improve his learning process. The purpose of student assessment is to measure standards and develop and improve them and support learning in learners by providing feedback on their performance to improve learning (Hargreaves, 2005; Yorke, 2003).

A review of the assessment literature shows that continuous assessment is very small. On the other hand, middle and high school teachers do not conduct continuous assessments scientifically and, in some cases, ignore them. Also, some teachers do not have enough experience in continuous assessment and do not know what can be assessed (Adib et al., 2016).

To increase the efficiency of educational assessment systems, recently, in education, the assessment process has been divided into two stages: continuous and final. Since both of these processes pursue the same goal, they need to be in line with each other, and the results show the solidarity and performance of these two processes. Therefore, the main question in this article is, "Is there a relationship between the mid-term and final grades of the first high school students in Kowsar High School, Rudehen?"

Methods

This is an applied research study regarding the purpose and descriptive correlation in terms of method. Here, the relationship between the results of continuous assessment (as a predictor variable) and the final assessment (as a criterion/predicted variable) was examined. The statistical population consisted of first-year female high school students studying at Rudehen High School in 2020-2021. The random cluster sampling method selected two hundred seventeen people using the Cochran formula. Then, students' academic records were searched. The scores of the three subjects studied in the research (i.e., Arabic, English, and Social Studies) in the seventh, eighth, and ninth grades were extracted and classified. To analyze the data, two methods were used: 1) descriptive statistics, including frequency distribution tables, graphs,

[1] The Watson Glaser test is an aptitude assessment used by law practices to test critical thinking ability among other skills.

percentages, means, and SD, and 2) inferential statistics, including Pearson correlation coefficient analysis. Data were analyzed using Pearson's correlation test using SPSS software.

Research Tools

In this study, to collect information, the information in the student's academic records, including the continuous/final assessment grades of seventh, eighth, and ninth-grade students in Arabic, English, and Social Studies, was used.

Results

Descriptive Findings

Review of data based on descriptive statistics

In this section, data was collected and analyzed using appropriate statistical methods. Information on some of the demographic characteristics of the participants is given in Table 1.

According to Table 1, the frequency/percentage distribution of the sample in terms of grade was 18.66% in seventh grade, 33.34% in eighth grade, and 48% in ninth grade.

According to Table 2, the frequency/percentage distribution of students' mid-term/final grades by grade in the sample was 33.3% for the Arabic course, 30.6% for the English course, and 36% for the Social Studies course.

Mean distribution of mid-term/final grades in terms of demographic factors

According to Table 3, the average final grades (16.70 with an SD of 3.883) are lower than the mid-term grades (17.66 with an SD of 3.119) in the Social Studies course, indicating failure.

According to Table 4, the mean distribution of mid-term grades (18.47 with an SD of 3.463) was higher than that of final grades (17 with an SD of 2.781) in seventh grade. Also, the mean distribution of mid-term grades (17.10 with an SD of 2.670) was higher than the final grades (15.58 with an SD of 3.305) in the eighth grade. On the other hand, the mean distribution of mid-term grades (17.75 with an SD of 2.238) was almost the same as that of the final grades (17.89 with an SD of 2.903) in ninth grade.

Table 5 shows the mean and SD mid-term/final grades of Arabic courses at different levels of education.

Regarding the seventh grade, according to the results listed in the table, the mean distribution of the seventh grade's mid-term/final grades of the Arabic course were 17.57 and 15.14, respectively. A mid-term/final grades comparison shows many differences between mid-term and final grades. Also, it can be said that the final grades had more failures than the mid-term grades.

Regarding the eighth grade, according to the results listed in the table, the mean distribution of the eighth grade's mid-term/final grades of the Arabic course were 17.04 and 14.48, respectively. A mid-term/final grades comparison shows many differences between mid-term and final grades. Also, it can be said that the final grades had more failures than the mid-term grades. This shows that the eighth-grade students have failed the final exams of the Arabic course.

Regarding the ninth grade, according to the results listed in the table, the mean distribution of the ninth grade's mid-term/final grades of the Arabic course were 17.44 and 17.50, respectively. A comparison of mid-term/final grades shows not much difference between them. Also, the final grades were almost the same as the mid-term grades.

According to Table 4, the mean of final grades (15.71 with an SD of 2.570) was lower than that of mid-term grades (17.35 with an SD of 2.089) in Arabic, indicating failure.

Table 6 shows the mean and SD mid-term/final grades of the English course at different levels of education.

The table above shows the mean and SD of the mid-term/final grades of the seventh-grade English course. According to the results listed in the table, the mean of the seventh grade's mid-term/final grades of the English course were 19.17 and 19.12, respectively. A comparison of mid-term/final grades shows not much difference between them. As a result, it can be said that the final grades did not grow much compared to the mid-term grades.

The table above also shows the mean and SD of the eighth grade's mid-term/final grades of the English course. According to the results in the table, the mean of the eighth grade's mid-term/final grades of the English course were 16.09 and 16.09, respectively. A comparison of mid-term/final grades shows not much difference between them.

The table above also shows the mean and mid-term/final grades of the English course for the ninth grade. According to the results in the table, the mean of the ninth grade's mid-term/final grades of the English course were 18.01 and 18.38, respectively. A comparison of mid-term/final grades shows not much difference between them. As a result, it can be said that the final grades did not grow much compared to the mid-term grades. Overall, according to the results in Table 6, the mean of final grades (18.13 with an SD of 3.118) was higher than that of mid-term grades (17.84 with an SD of 3.260) in the English course, indicating achievement.

Table 7 shows the mean and SD mid-term/final grades of the seventh-grade Social Studies course. According to the results listed in the table, the mean mid-term/final grades of the seventh-grade Social Studies course were 18.67 and 16.73, respectively. A comparison of mid-term/final grades shows a big difference between them. Also, final grades have had more failures than mid-term grades. This indicates that seventh-grade students have had an academic failure in the final exams of the Social Studies course.

The table above also shows the mean and SD mid-term/final grades of the Social Studies course for eighth grade. According to the results in the table, the mean of the mid-term/final grades of the Social Studies course in the eighth grade was 17.36 and

15.38, respectively. A comparison of mid-term/final grades shows a big difference between them. Also, final grades have had more failures than mid-term grades. This indicates that eighth-graders have had an academic failure in the final exams of the Social Studies course.

The table above also shows the mean and SD of the ninth grade's mid-term/final grades of the English course. According to the results listed in the table, the mean of the mid-term/final grades of the ninth-grade Social Studies course were 18.01 and 18.38, respectively. A comparison of mid-term/final grades shows not much difference between them. As a result, it can be said that the final grades did not grow much compared to the mid-term grades. Overall, according to the results listed in Table 6, the mean of the final grades (17.79 with an SD of 2.374) was higher than the mid-term grades (18.04 with an SD of 2.381) in the Social Studies course, indicating failure.

Overall, the mean of the final grades (16.54 with an SD of 2.310) was lower than the mid-term grades (17.80 with an SD of 2.238) in the Social Studies course, indicating failure.

Inferential Findings

Analysis of data based on inferential statistics

In this section, the relationship between mid-term and final grades of students by grade and course is examined, shown in Tables 8-20.

H1: There is a relationship between the continuous and final assessment scores of Rudehen's first high school students.

Table 8 shows that there is a significant positive relationship between formative and final assessment scores in the study sample ($r = 0.644$, $p = 0.000$ and $R^2 = 0.352$). This indicates that 35% of the variance in the final grades can be attributed to continuous assessment scores.

H2: There is a relationship between the continuous and final assessment scores of the Arabic course for Rudehen's first high school students.

Table 9 shows that there is a significant positive relationship between formative and final assessment scores in the study sample ($r = 0.911$, $p = 0.000$ and $R^2 = 0.212$). This indicates that 31% of the variance in the final grades can be attributed to continuous assessment scores.

There is a relationship between the continuous and final assessment scores of seventh-grade Arabic for Rudehen's first high school students.

Table 10 shows that there is a significant positive relationship between formative and final assessment scores in the study sample ($r = 0.742$, $p = 0.000$ and $R^2 = 0.310$). This indicates that 31% of the variance in the final grades can be attributed to continuous assessment scores.

There is a relationship between the eighth-grade Arabic course's continuous and final assessment scores for Rudehen's first high school students.

Table 11 shows that there is a significant positive relationship between formative and final assessment scores in the study sample ($r = 0.693$, $p = 0.000$ and $R^2 = 0.413$). This indicates that 41% of the variance in the final grades can be attributed to continuous assessment scores.

There is a relationship between the ninth-grade Arabic course's continuous and final assessment scores for Rudehen's first high school students.

Table 12 shows that there is no significant relationship between formative and final assessment scores in the study sample ($r = 0.808$, $p = 0.071$ and $R^2 = 0.373$). This indicates that 37% of the variance in the final grades can be attributed to continuous assessment scores.

H3: There is a relationship between the English course's continuous and final assessment scores for Rudehen's first high school students.

Table 13 shows that there is no significant relationship between formative and final assessment scores in the study sample ($r = 0.666$, $p = 0.000$ and $R^2 = 0.511$). This indicates that 51% of the variance in the final grades can be attributed to continuous assessment scores.

There is a relationship between the continuous and final grade marks of the seventh grade English course for Rudehen's first high school students.

Table 14 shows that there is no significant relationship between formative and final assessment scores in the study sample ($r = 0.412$, $p = 0.190$ and $R^2 = 0.501$). This indicates that 50% of the variance in the final grades can be attributed to continuous assessment scores.

There is a relationship between continuous and final grade marks of the eighth grade English course for Rudehen's first high school students.

Table 15 shows that there is no significant relationship between formative and final assessment scores in the study sample ($r = 0.735$, $p = 0.090$ and $R^2 = 0.441$). This indicates that 44% of the variance in the final grades can be attributed to continuous assessment scores.

There is a relationship between the continuous and final grade marks of the ninth grade English course for Rudehen's first high school students.

Table 16 shows that there is no significant relationship between formative and final assessment scores in the study sample ($r = 0.162$, $p = 0.305$ and $R^2 = 0.509$). This indicates that 50% of the variance in the final grades can be attributed to continuous assessment scores.

H3: There is a relationship between the continuous and final assessment scores of the Social Studies course for Rudehen's first high school students.

Table 17 shows that there is a significant positive relationship between formative and final assessment scores in the study sample ($r = 0.699$, $p = 0.000$ and $R^2 = 0.390$). This indicates

that 39% of the variance in the final grades can be attributed to continuous assessment scores.

There is a relationship between the seventh-grade Social Studies course's continuous and final assessment scores for Rudehen's first high school students.

Table 18 shows that there is a significant positive relationship between formative and final assessment scores in the study sample ($r = 0.909$, $p = 0.000$ and $R^2 = 0.311$). This indicates that 31% of the variance in the final grades can be attributed to continuous assessment scores.

There is a relationship between the eighth-grade Social Studies course's continuous and final assessment scores for Rudehen's first high school students.

Table 19 shows that there is a significant positive relationship between formative and final assessment scores in the study sample ($r = 0.719$, $p = 0.000$ and $R^2 = 0.372$). This indicates that 37% of the variance in the final grades can be attributed to continuous assessment scores.

There is a relationship between the ninth-grade Social Studies course's continuous and final assessment scores for Rudehen's first high school students.

Table 20 shows that there is no significant relationship between formative and final assessment scores in the study sample ($r = 0.849$, $p = 0.088$ and $R^2 = 0.331$). This indicates that 33% of the variance in the final grades can be attributed to continuous assessment scores.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study investigated the relationship between the final assessment results and the continuous assessment of Rudehen's first high school students. The results showed that the first high school students' final/continuous assessment scores were almost identical and had little failure. It can be concluded that despite the decisive role of continuous assessment in students' academic achievement, emphasized in the results of previous research, the present study's findings were not consistent with those of previous research. Also, other findings of this study showed that the mid-term/final grades of the Arabic language and Social Studies course were significantly faced with academic failure. Conversely, the final assessment scores were higher than the continuous assessment scores in the English course, indicating a tangible achievement. In explaining the findings, it can be said that the comparison of continuous/final assessment scores provides the possibility of feedback for teachers and schools to identify and compensate for possible educational deficiencies. In this study, the mid-term grades in Arabic language and Social Studies were 31% and 39%, respectively. This indicates that the mid-term grades of the students in these courses could not predict well their final grades and had a low determining role. The formative assessment in these courses was not given as much importance as it should be during the educational process. This is because continuous assessment is an approach that focuses on the teacher's mere attention from the end of the learning activity to the learning activity process. While looking at expectations, this approach focuses on how expectations are met regarding learner performance. When the teacher becomes aware of the learner's learning quality and distance from expectations and goals during the continuous assessment, there is an opportunity to change the method (Boston, 2002). As one of the important components of teaching, continuous assessment in the classroom is important and directly affects learning learners. Continuous assessment of the teaching and learning process seems essential. It must be admitted that in our education system, continuous assessment has been implemented incompletely for a long time (Kiamanesh, 2003). A review of the assessment literature shows that continuous assessment is very small. On the other hand, middle and high school teachers do not conduct continuous assessments scientifically and, in some cases, ignore them. Also, some teachers do not have enough experience in continuous assessment and do not know what can be assessed (Adib et al., 2016). Despite its desirable goals and pivotal role in improving learning and increasing the quality of education, continuous assessment in practice faces several problems. Continuous assessment facilitators, i.e., teachers, who play an important role in teaching-learning and achieving learning objectives, have different experiences and perceptions of it.

Data Sharing and Data Availability

The data relating to the results of this study are available upon request from the corresponding author.

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Conflict of interest

None.

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Ethics statement

None.

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Table 1

Frequency/percentage distribution of the studied sample by grade

Grade	Frequency	Percentage
Seventh	14	18.66
Eighth	25	33.34
Ninth	36	48
Total	75	100

Table 2

Frequency/percentage distribution of mid-term and final grades of students by a lesson in the sample

Course	Frequency	Percentage
Arabic	72	33.33
English	67	30.66
Social Studies	78	36
Total	217	100

Table 3

Mean distribution of mid-term/final grades of first high school in the sample

	Mid-term grades		Final grades	
First high school	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
	17.66	3.119	16.70	3.883

Table 4

Mean distribution of mid-term/final grades by grade in the sample under study

Grade	Mid-term grades		Final grades	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Seventh	18.47	3.463	17	2.781

Eighth	17.10	2.670	15.58	3.305
Ninth	17.75	2.238	17.89	2.903
Total	17.77	3.081	16.82	2.606

Table 5

Mean distribution of mid-term/final grades of Arabic course by grade in the sample

Course	Grade	Mid-term grades		Final grades	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Arabic	Seventh	17.57	2.737	15.14	3.585
	Eighth	17.04	3.605	14.48	4.107
	Ninth	17.44	3.064	17.50	2.964
	Total	17.35	2.089	15.71	2.570

Table 6

Mean distribution of mid-term/final grades of English course by grade in the sample

Course	Grade	Mid-term grades		Final grades	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
English	Seventh	19.17	0.868	19.12	0.819
	Eighth	16.90	2.516	16.90	3.225
	Ninth	18.01	2.339	18.38	1.655
	Total	17.84	3.260	18.13	3.118

Table 7

Mean distribution of mid-term/final grades of Social Studies by grade in the sample

Course	Grade	Mid-term grades		Final grades	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Social Studies	Seventh	18.67	1.234	16.73	2.043
	Eighth	17.36	2.547	15.38	3.042
	Ninth	18.04	2.381	17.79	2.374
	Total	17.80	2.238	16.54	2.310

Table 8

Comparison of Rudehen's first high school students' mid-term and final grades

Variable	Pearson's correlation coefficient	Sig.	R^2	No.
Continuous/final assessment scores	0.644	0.000	0.352	217

Table 9

Comparison of mid-term and final grades of students in Arabic course

Variable	Pearson's correlation coefficient	Sig.	R^2	No.

Continuous/final assessment scores	0.911	0.000	0.312	217

Table 10

Comparison of mid-term and final grades of students in seventh grade Arabic

Variable	Pearson's correlation coefficient	Sig.	R^2	No.
Continuous/final assessment scores	0.742	0.000	0.310	217

Table 11

Comparison of mid-term and final grades of students in eighth-grade Arabic course

Variable	Pearson's correlation coefficient	Sig.	R^2	No.
Continuous/final assessment scores	0.693	0.000	0.413	217

Table 12

Comparison of mid-term and final grades of students in ninth grade Arabic

Variable	Pearson's correlation coefficient	Sig.	R^2	No.
Continuous/final assessment scores	0.808	0.071	0.373	217

Table 13

Comparison of mid-term and final grades of students in English course

Variable	Pearson's correlation coefficient	Sig.	R^2	No.
Continuous/final assessment scores	0.666	0.200	0.511	217

Table 14

Comparison of mid-term and final grades of students in the seventh grade English course

Variable	Pearson's correlation coefficient	Sig.	R^2	No.

Continuous/final assessment scores	0.412	0.190	0.501	217

Table 15

Comparison of mid-term and final grades of students in the eighth grade English course

Variable	Pearson's correlation coefficient	Sig.	R^2	No.
Continuous/final assessment scores	0.735	0.090	0.441	217

Table 16

Comparison of mid-term and final grades of students in the ninth grade English course

Variable	Pearson's correlation coefficient	Sig.	R^2	No.
Continuous/final assessment scores	0.162	0.305	0.509	217

Table 17

Comparison of mid-term and final grades of students in Social Studies

Variable	Pearson's correlation coefficient	Sig.	R^2	No.
Continuous/final assessment scores	0.699	0.000	0.390	217

Table 18

Comparison of mid-term and final grades of students in the seventh-grade Social Studies course

Variable	Pearson's correlation coefficient	Sig.	R^2	No.
Continuous/final assessment scores	0.909	0.000	0.311	217

Table 19

Comparison of mid-term and final grades of students in eighth grade Social Studies course

Variable	Pearson's correlation coefficient	Sig.	R^2	No.
Continuous/final assessment scores	0.719	0.000	0.372	217

Table 20

Comparison of mid-term and final grades of students in the ninth-grade Social Studies course

Variable	Pearson's correlation coefficient	Sig.	R^2	No.
Continuous/final assessment scores	0.849	0.088	0.331	217