



Assessing Students' Perceptions Toward Self-Assessment and its Impacts on their Critical Thinking

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ABSTRACT

Self-assessment plays a fundamental role in measuring students' success, as it enables them to reflect on their performance, development and improve their learning. This study sought to understand how students felt about self-evaluation and to measure their perceptions and its effects on critical thinking. The targeted population was all the students of public universities in Pakistan, who were selected through convenient sampling. A questionnaire consisting of a four-point Likert scale that was administered to select 460 respondents of BS, Masters and M.Phil. The statistical package for social sciences software was used to examine the data that was collected. Mean score and standard deviation were calculated. The primary findings of the research indicated that critical thinking enhances learning, develops capacity for decision-making, and helps in solving problems in pupils. It has been shown that self-assessment helps students understand more effectively how to recognize and address their own learning challenges. The students consistently recognized that self-reflection improved their comprehension of the material covered in class. More research should expand on the findings of this study in order to improve students' critical learning outcomes and make use of self-assessment as a teaching tool.



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1. Introduction

Self-assessment is frequently viewed, either explicitly or implicitly, as a personal, self-directed reflection on individual performance. An important component of the education sector is self-assessment of knowledge and skill acquisition (Jamrus & Razali, 2019). Research studies on self-assessment has shown a substantial link between enhanced student performance and self-assessment (Jamrus & Razali, 2019). Self-assessment has been broadly discussed in the subjects of education sector during the past few decades. Researchers have consistently focused on it as a factors which are influencing students' academic performance (Crisp et al., 2015). Given how active and energetic students nature in higher education, it is important to examine at how student self-assessment contributes to the development of critical thinking skills in students, which is important for their success in a diverse areas of life (Ghanizadeh, 2017). Self-evaluation is a challenges the criticism of traditional assessment patterns. One of the tests that students can use to explore, develop, and evaluate how well

they function in relation to the self-assessment (Stan, 2021). According to researchers, self-assessment may encourage students and motivate to track their progress, which enables them to modify their own learning methods for better performance (Kotirde & Yunos, 2015).

Panadero and his associates have carried out experimental studies on standards-referenced self-assessment, in which sets of evaluation criteria or rubrics are shown as questions (Brookhart & Chen, 2015). Self-assessment is basically the ability to observe one's own development and to obtain specific goals (Jamrus & Razali, 2019). Self-evaluation will help you to assess your personal growth and development and when learners come to know the ways to self-assess, they can make themselves better in learning (Harris & Brown, 2018). Proficient individuals have debated that self-judgement also helps learners concentrate completely on all aspects of educational progress. By doing this, they get the opportunity to take their abilities and skills to the next level of success. Conversely, in spite of the bundles of existing literature about the positive impact of self-assessment on an individual or learner's critical thinking, still there is a need for more research (Kafri, 2022). With the help of self-assessment, students come to know about their characteristics, traits, abilities, skills, and personal opinions and when assessed the self thoroughly, students will be able to make these abilities, performance and behaviour much better (Duckworth & Yeager, 2015). It is because the previous studies had explored a strong connection and link between the self-assessment and the development of the students' performance (Yan, 2020).

Critical thinking skills are crucial in both personal and educational contexts, as they enable individuals to solve problems, contribute to society, and make informed decisions. In learning activities, critical thinking helps individuals identify relevant and useful information, evaluate it effectively, and make better decisions (Brackett & Katulak, 2013). These skills also protect individuals from accepting unverified claims and ideas. Therefore, the educational environment should prioritize enhancing students' critical thinking abilities, particularly in subjects like natural science. Natural science education, in particular, should aim to foster these skills. Critical thinking can be stimulated and developed through various educational processes and activities, such as promoting social interaction among students during the learning process and incorporating critical thinking experiences into the curriculum (Young, 2020). Encouraging practical experience in critical thinking is also essential. Additionally, methods like using classroom questioning techniques, problem-based learning, concept mapping, and cooperative learning can contribute to the development of critical thinking skills. Numerous experts have explored the enhancement of critical thinking, including research that focuses on improving these skills through the use of media and learning models (Swart, 2017).

In the field of education, in the process of learning, students need to know what they are learning and what knowledge and skill they have gained (McGuire et al., 2015). By doing this, students will not only be able to critically analyze their behaviour, attitude, knowledge, and performance but they will also come to know about their preferences (Nardi, 2018). So there are bundles of opportunities for leaders to know about their good and bad sides with the help of self-judgement in the course of learning. There is a positive sense of competition among learners as they try to make tier performance better. Consequently, they work on their weakness to achieve a higher level of growth (Ainscow, 2015).

2. Literature Review

Self-assessment, a process where students evaluate their own learning progress and performance, has been widely recognized as an effective tool for promoting reflective practice and fostering greater student autonomy (Brown et al., 2015). Critical thinking is a crucial aspect of both academic achievement and lifelong learning. It is the ability to evaluate, synthesize, and analyze information in a methodical and logical way. Self-assessment is associated with learners' engagement in measuring their learning, primarily their achievements and learning outcomes, according to Birjandi and Bolghari (2015) peer assessment and cooperative learning are closely linked with each other (Topping, 2017). This approach enhances student interaction and emphasizes the importance of teamwork. It is also a choice for integrating both assessment and instruction. Research highlights specific advantages associated with the guiding principles of peer and self-assessment (Ndoye, 2017).

Brown and Hudson (2012) claim that the guiding principles of self- and peer assessment provide multiple advantages (Brown & Harris, 2016). Self-assessment is one of the more recent methods of evaluation that language learners employ to investigate, enhance, and understand their functionality (Huang, 2016). Due to its vital role in keeping students' concentration, motivation, engagement, accountability, and self-direction, self-assessment has been hailed as an effective evaluation technique for language learners (Özönder, 2025). One of the key objective and crucial learning outcomes among students is critical thinking. It is an ability for independent thinking and problem-solving. It plays a significant role in both professional and personal lives. In the current job market, it is one of the most desired skills that employers are looking for (Stigler, 1962). According to reports, employers today place a strong emphasis on educational institutions' students' critical thinking and analytical reasoning skills because they will be their future workers (Mhinga, 2013).

Despite the literature's strong emphasis on the value of critical thinking, its precise conceptualization and application are not as well defined (Lai, 2011). It's interesting to note that research has shown that faculty leaders desire to encourage critical thinking and acknowledge its value, but many are unsure of how to do it. As a result, teachers cannot agree on the definition, significance, and uses of critical thinking (Case & Wright, 1997). But according to popular belief, critical thinking essentially consists of a person's attitude and orientation, analytical and problem-solving abilities, ability to apply a range of viewpoints and general knowledge of their own presumptions, metacognition skills, and thought processes (Hyytinen et al., 2014).

The connection between critical thinking and students' attitudes, perceptions, and academic performance has already been studied. Critical thinking has been identified as the learning result in numerous studies, but it has also been used as a predictor in other settings (Butler et al., 2017). The educational system is designed to exemplify grades and memorization. As a result, learning to think critically is becoming more and more popular as a way to improve grades through topic memory. On the contrary, scholars have determined that critical thinking is one of the most important components of the results, but it is also a difficult skill to teach (Nadri & Azhar, 2017). Critical thinking has been the subject of several studies, but its practice and instruction have always been contentious and challenging. The impact of students' self-assessment on their critical thinking skills is being examined in this study in an effort to fill the current gap in empirical data on the use of critical thinking in relation to self-evaluation and its effect on students' critical thinking abilities. The current study aims to determine how students feel about self-evaluation and to measure how students perceive things and how it affects their ability to think critically.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Population and sampling

The study's population comprised all students enrolled in Punjab, Pakistan's public universities. The study involved 460 students from Bahauddin Zakariya University in Multan and The Islamia University of Bahawalpur. To choose the pupils, a convenient sampling technique was applied. In survey research, this sampling technique is helpful for gathering data based on respondents' willingness and ease of availability.

Table 1: Sample size of the study

Sample	Gender	Total
Students	Male	230
	Female	230
	Total	460

Table 1 shows that 230 male students were selected from population. Similarly, 230 female students also included in this study. Both 230 male and 230 female respondents were selected by convenient sampling technique from the whole population.

3.2 Research Instrument

A closed-ended questionnaire comprising 24 items was developed to explore students' perspectives on the use of self-assessment to enhance critical thinking. Data were collected quantitatively using a 4-point Likert scale, where responses were categorized as follows: 4 for strongly agree, 3 for agree, 2 for disagree, and 1 for strongly disagree.

3.3 Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

A pilot study was conducted to ensure the validity and reliability of the questionnaire. Two experts assessed its content validity, reviewing the Likert scale, item alignment, clarity, and structure. Based on their feedback, improvements were made. Reliability was tested with 46 randomly selected university students, of whom 38 (82%) responded. Cronbach's Alpha was calculated for each construct, resulting in an overall coefficient of 0.962, indicating high internal consistency. With the instrument validated and reliable, data collection for the main study began.

4. Data analysis and Interpretation

The collected data was systematically entered into SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) for comprehensive analysis. SPSS was used to calculate key statistical measures, including the mean score and standard deviation for each item in the questionnaire.

Table 2: Students' perceptions towards Self-Assessment

No	Item	SA	A	DA	SDA	Mean	S.D.
1	Students are encouraged to take on learning responsibilities through self-assessment.	234 (50.9)	138 (30.0)	75 (16.3)	13 (2.8)	2.8630	.96380
2	Self-assessment minimizes the workload for teachers in terms of assessments.	185 (40.2)	130 (28.3)	136 (29.6)	9 (2.0)	3.0674	.87933
3	Self-assessment encourages in-depth comprehension of the subject's material.	342 (74.3)	79 (17.2)	25 (5.4)	14 (3.0)	3.6283	.72526
4	Students who self-assess are more prepared for their future plans.	253 (55.0)	154 (33.5)	48 (10.4)	5 (1.1)	3.4239	.72059
5	An effective way for pupils to get performance feedback is through self-assessment.	330 (71.7)	84 (18.3)	33 (7.2)	13 (2.8)	3.5891	.74586
6	Students can provide feedback on their own learning through self-assessment.	217 (47.2)	170 (37.0)	48 (10.4)	25 (5.4)	3.2587	.85331
7	Self-assessment improves in pupils' strengthening of their judging abilities.	185 (40.2)	160 (34.8)	85 (18.5)	30 (6.5)	3.0870	.91766
8	Self-assessment allows me to reflect consciously on what is wrong.	143 (31.1)	171 (37.2)	132 (28.7)	14 (3.0)	2.9630	.84839
9	Self-assessment allows me to identify the aspects I need to improve upon	234 (50.9)	138 (30.0)	75 (16.3)	13 (2.8)	3.2891	.83828
10	Self-assessment helps me to be honest with myself	408 (88.7)	43 (9.3)	09 (2.0)	00 (00)	3.8478	.49694
11	Self-assessment forces me to identify the standards I have to achieve at each level	199 (43.3)	87 (18.9)	146 (31.7)	28 (6.1)	2.9935	.99780
12	Self-assessment is useful for developing critical thinking skills	304 (66.1)	83 (18.0)	73 (15.9)	00 (00)	3.5022	.75407

According to data 80.9% of respondents agree, and 19.1% disagree to the Item 1. The mean score is 2.8 indicate that according to respondents, mostly Students are encouraged to take on learning responsibilities through self-assessment. In Item 2, 68.5% of respondents agree, and 31.6% disagree. The mean score is 3.0 indicate that according to respondents, mostly students says that Self-assessment minimizes the workload for teachers in terms of assessments. In Item 3, 91.5% of respondents agree, and 8.4% disagree to the statement. The mean score is 3.6 indicate that according to respondents, mostly students' agree that Self-assessment encourages in-depth comprehension of the subject's material. According to data 88.5% of respondents agree, and 11.5% disagree to the Item 4. The mean score is 3.4 indicate that according to respondents, mostly students said that self-assess are more prepared for their future plans. Item 5, 90% of respondents agree, and 10% disagree. The mean score is 3.5 indicate that according to respondents, mostly students says that an effective way for pupils to get performance feedback is through self-assessment. According to data 84.2% of respondents agree, and 15.8% disagree to the 6 Item. The mean score is 3.2 indicate that according to respondents, mostly Students can provide feedback on their own learning through self-assessment. According to data 75% of respondents agree, and 25% disagree to the statement 7. The mean score is 3.0 indicate that according to respondents, mostly said that Self-assessment improves in pupils' strengthening of their judging abilities. In Item 8, 68.3% of respondents agree, and 31.7% disagree to the statement. The mean score is 2.9 indicate that according to respondents, mostly students said that Self-assessment allows me to reflect consciously on what is wrong.

Table 3: Students' perceptions and its impacts on critical thinking

No	Item	SA	A	DA	SDA	Mean	S.D.
13	I can take valuable lessons from my mistakes.	256 (55.7)	126 (27.4)	69 (15.0)	9 (2.0)	3.3674	.80698
14	I can change my objectives to reflect changing situations.	152 (33.0)	121 (26.3)	137 (29.8)	50 (10.9)	2.8152	1.01545
15	When new information is discovered, I can change my mind.	164 (35.7)	155 (35.7)	69 (15.0)	72 (15.7)	2.8935	1.06005
16	I am able to ignore useless information.	348 (75.7)	85 (18.5)	19 (4.1)	8 (1.7)	3.6804	.63662
17	I can realize how much I have learned.	160 (34.8)	96 (20.9)	94 (20.4)	110 (23.9)	2.6652	2.6652
18	It can accept my mistakes.	158 (34.3)	123 (26.7)	100 (21.7)	79 (17.2)	2.7826	1.09690
19	I understand that the process of critical thinking is lengthy.	65 (14.1)	119 (25.9)	125 (27.2)	151 (32.8)	2.2130	1.05318
20	I can identify my errors.	74 (16.1)	13 (2.8)	151 (32.8)	222 (48.3)	1.8674	1.06735
21	I can ask question from myself the way I study.	79 (17.2)	106 (23.0)	87 (18.9)	188 (40.9)	2.1652	1.14089
22	It helps me analyze how much I have learned.	224 (48.7)	171 (37.2)	51 (11.1)	14 (3.0)	3.3152	.78839
23	I can take positive lessons from achievement.	327 (71.1)	91 (19.8)	38 (8.3)	4 (0.9)	3.6109	.67534
24	I can overcome on my learning deficiencies.	305 (66.3)	87 (18.9)	54 (11.7)	14 (3.0)	3.4848	.81769

Based on the findings as in Item 9, 89.9% of respondents agree, and 19.1% disagree. The mean score is 3.2 indicate that according to respondents, mostly students said that Self-assessment allows me to identify the aspects I need to improve upon. According Item 10, 98% of respondents agree, and 2% disagree mean score is 3.8 indicate that according to respondents, mostly students said that Self-assessment helps me to be honest with myself. 84.1% of respondents agree, and 15.9% disagree to the Item 11. The mean score is 3.5 indicate that according to respondents, mostly students said that Self-assessment forces me to identify the standards I have to achieve at each level. According to data 84.1% of

respondents agree, and 15.9% disagree to the Item 12. The mean score is 3.5 indicate that according to respondents, mostly students said that Self-assessment is useful for developing critical thinking skills.

According to data 83.1% of respondents agree, and 17% disagree to the Item 13 mean score is 3.3 indicate that according to respondents, mostly students said that we can take valuable lessons from my mistakes. In Item 14, 59.3% of respondents agree, and 40.7% disagree. The mean score is 2.8 indicate that according to respondents, mostly students said that we can change our objectives regarding situations. According to data 90.9% of respondents agree, and 9.2% disagree to the Item 15, mean score is 2.8 according to respondents, mostly students said that when new information is discovered, we can change our mind. 94.2% of respondents agree, and 5.8% disagree to Item 16. The mean score is 3.6 indicate that according to respondents, mostly students said that with the help of critical thinking we are able to ignore useless information.

Based on the findings as 55.7% of respondents agree, and 44.3% disagree to the Item 17. The mean score is 2.6 indicate that according to respondents, mostly students said that we can realize how much we have learned. According to data 61% of respondents agree, and 38.9% disagree to the Item 18. The mean score is 2.7 indicate that according to respondents, mostly students said that with help of critical thinking we can accept our mistakes. According to data 85.9% of respondents agree, and 14.1% disagree to the Item 22. The mean score is 3.3 indicate that critical thinking helps me analyze how much we have learned. 90.9% of respondents agree, and 9.2% disagree to the Item 23. The mean score is 3.6 indicate that with the help of critical thinking we can take positive lessons from achievement. 85.2% of respondents agree, and 14.7% disagree to the statement. The mean score is 3.4 indicate that according to respondents with the help of critical thinking we can overcome our learning deficiencies.

In Item 19, 40% of respondents agree, and 60% disagree. The mean score is 2.2 indicate that according to respondents, mostly students disagree that the process of critical thinking is lengthy. In Item 20, 18.9% of respondents agree, and 81.1% disagree mean score is 1.8 indicate that according to respondents, mostly students disagree that they can identify their learning errors with help of critical thinking. According to data 40.2% of respondents agree, and 59.8% disagree to the Item 21. The mean score is 2.1 indicate that according to respondents, mostly students do not ask question from their self the way they study.

5. Discussion

The research examines the effect of self-assessment on university students' critical thinking and learning skills (Khoiriyah et al., 2015). The findings indicated that most students viewed self-assessment as a beneficial activity that contributed to the improvement and development of their critical thinking and learning abilities. Existing literature supports these findings, showing that self-assessment helps students effectively recognize both the strengths and weaknesses of their coursework, while also encouraging active participation in their learning process (Panadero et al., 2016).

Self-assessment made the students believe unconditionally that how it has a good impact on their critical thinking skills. The findings also proved that, instead of being judged by others, when students evaluate themselves, they come to know the facts about themselves better than anyone else. Relevant scholarly works came to the conclusion that not only critical thinking, but self-evaluation also enables students to use their skills and information for the development in the field of teaching (Nadri & Azhar, 2017). Other established research also proved that self-assessment is helpful in boosting the learning pathway of students (Aricò & Lancaster, 2018). Participants showed a strong agreement about the positive link between the development of their learning ability and critical thinking skills. They affirmed that there exists a close linkage between critical thinking and their ability to make informed choices in the process of learning. Not only the learning process, but critical thinking also influences the beliefs and assumptions of the students as well as their competence to explore problems encountered in learning (Brookfield, 2011).

As self-evaluation and critical thinking are directly linked to each other so self-judgement improves critical thinking and because of these students are able to participate

actively in the learning journey (Smaoui et al., 2024). Just like self-evaluation plays a key role in critical thinking, critical thinking plays an important role in the accomplishment or achievement and setbacks or failures of the learners. Previous scholarly publications gave suggestions that either it is success or failure, both play important roles in the improvement of critical thinking and ability and both motivate the learners to move forward and achieve good manners in their life journey (Aricò & Lancaster, 2018). This research also came on the results that the goals of the learners also have a strong positive connection with critical thinking. Just like previous studies showed how students adjust their goals because of critical thinking, according to their environment which in return helps them to achieve their desired outcomes (Seli, 2019).

6. Conclusion

The study aimed to evaluate students' perceptions of self-assessment and its effect on their critical thinking and learning skills, leading to several important conclusions. Students' critical thinking skills were first shown to be significantly improved by self-assessment. Students developed increased analytical skills through reflective evaluation of their learning, which helped them become more capable of independent thinking and problem-solving. The majority of students had a positive opinion of self-assessment and recognized it as a useful tool for improving their learning. They appreciated the freedom it gave them to control their academic development, enabling them to recognize their advantages and disadvantages and modify their study strategies accordingly. Self-assessment also helped students adapt their goals, according to the study. Students were able to realign their goals to match evolving needs and aspirations by reflecting on their academic success and circumstances, which supported continuous academic advancement. Additionally, students perceived self-assessment as a helpful tool for feedback that helped them comprehend how they performed, which motivated them to improve their learning methods and, ultimately, their academic results.

Furthermore, students' judgment and decision-making abilities were greatly improved by self-assessment. Students were able to make better judgments about their academic choices by critically evaluating their own learning, which promoted greater reflection and analysis the two essential components of critical thinking. The findings highlight how crucial it is to include self-assessment techniques in schools since they encourage reflective learning, aid in self-control, and greatly improve academic achievement. The study also indicates that more research in this area is necessary. Future studies ought to investigate how self-assessment affects different student demographics, such as those from diverse academic fields or cultural backgrounds, to provide a deeper understanding of its broader relevance. It would also be beneficial to conduct longitudinal research on the long-term impacts of self-assessment on academic performance and critical thinking.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that self-assessment is an effective tool for improving learning and critical thinking abilities. Self-assessment contributes significantly to the growth of individual and reflective learners by promoting self-reflection, self-regulation, and performance improvement. It is advised that school systems use self-assessment mechanisms to support students' development and academic achievement.

7. Recommendations

The effectiveness of self-assessment and its impact on students' critical thinking skills can be enhanced by taking into account a number of ways. First and foremost, teachers should give students clear instructions and well-organized rubrics so they may effectively assess their own work. Providing lessons on efficient self-assessment techniques can boost students' self-esteem and improve the impartiality of their assessments. Fostering a positive mindset toward students' self-evaluation is also crucial. Teachers can help students understand its significance by emphasizing how it promotes academic success, critical thinking, and personal development. Students can be further encouraged to actively participate in the self-assessment process by receiving constructive criticism and positive reinforcement. Students' critical thinking and metacognitive awareness can also be improved by integrating reflective techniques into the curriculum. Students can better assimilate their self-evaluations and improve their analytical abilities by being encouraged to reflect on their

learning experiences through techniques like peer reviews, reflective papers, and conversations. Furthermore, students will be able to develop the habit of self-assessment and continue to strengthen their critical thinking skills if it is incorporated into routine classroom activities rather than being restricted to once tasks.

Giving prompt feedback on self-evaluations is also essential. To ensure accurate assessments and help students improve their evaluative abilities, teachers should provide constructive criticism on their self-evaluations. Furthermore, encouraging a growing mindset in which errors can be seen as teaching opportunities rather than failures can allay students' concerns about making wrong judgments of themselves and promote increased process engagement. By enabling students to hone their evaluative skills and engage in deeper reflection on their learning, peer-assisted self-assessment can also be extremely beneficial in the development of critical thinking. Finally, the long-term impacts of self-assessment on academic performance and critical thinking should be the main focus of future research. This will assist to clarify the ways in which self-assessment supports cognitive development and provide ideas into strategies that optimize its advantages. Teachers can strengthen the importance of self-assessment in encouraging critical thinking and more independent reflective learning by putting these suggestions into practice.

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