Assessment in Higher Institutions: Do Students and Lecturers Share Similar Preference?

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Abstract: *This paper aims to understand the assessment preference of Gen Z, a student cohort currently being served in higher learning institutions. It tends to investigate the formative assessment activities preferred by Gen Z, followed by the range of marks for each activity. It also tries to discover their preference for the proportion of mark for formative assessment as compared to final examination. Data was collected from 420 diploma students and 22 lecturers taking (and teaching) management accounting subject in a public university in Malaysia. The values of mode and the frequency were used to achieve the above objectives. In addition, the interview session with students and lecturers was also conducted to gather additional related information. The results revealed that both students and lecturers favor traditional assessment over alternative assessment. In terms of alternative assessments, unlike lecturers, students ranked activities that require higher order thinking last. Both students and lecturers also allocate the highest marks to test and quiz, while other activities are only allocated with the lower range of marks. Majority agreed with the 40:60 ratio with the higher weightage goes to the final examination. This finding somehow contradicts previous finding which suggest that Gen Z prefer coursework rather than examination. The findings of the study might help academicians in designing appropriate assessment activities in order to maximize students learning especially in the field of management accounting. However, this study was conducted on the diploma students who might have different view and perception regarding assessment as compared to bachelor's degree students.*

Keywords: Assessment Activities, Traditional and Alternative Assessment, Millennial Students, Preference, Balanced Graduates.

I. INTRODUCTION

Producing balanced graduates has become the main agenda of every university especially when they are attacked by frequent negative feedback from employers regarding the quality of current graduates. A survey on 472 Malaysian employers revealed that 70% were disappointed with the quality of the "just average" graduates; 26% characterized the graduates as "bad" while only 6% felt that the graduates are "good" [1]. Their main concern is not on academic qualification, but rather, on attitude and communication skills, where 64% of them were disappointed in the graduates' poor command of English. Obviously, employers expect to be supplied with balanced graduates –who scored good results and have the capability to do the job. Due to this, graduates equipped with good leadership and communication skills stand a better chance of being recruited [1]. The author concluded that employers preferred students who held leadership positions and were actively involved in extracurricular activities as such involvement managed to groom their soft skills that turn them into balanced graduates.

Assessment may become a key mechanism that universities may employ in producing balanced graduates [2, 3]. Through assessment, students may be triggered and motivated to give a concerted effort to strive in their learning activities [4] that make learning become more meaningful. It is a key to lifelong learning but unfortunately, many current assessment strategies inhibit this intention [5]. Higher learning institutions focused heavily on students' individual achievement by emphasizing on standardized test or examination at the expense of group achievement. Group work is essential as it helps foster teamwork and inculcate students with necessary soft skills required by future employers [6]. It reflects the negative side of assessment that lead to surface learning which only involves memorization and reproduction [3] with little personal engagement as students regard studying as an unwelcome external imposition [4] while totally leaving out the elements of soft skills development [6].

Adding to the challenge, universities are now serving a unique group of students known as Gen Z, those who were born from 1990s to 2010 or known as digital natives where exposure to internet, social media and mobile systems happen as early as they were born [7].

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Since they are technology-savvy and creative generation, they always prefer to have online activities and online education [8, 9], making them self-learners who prefer online information and learn on their own rather than meeting expert via face-to-face learning [10, 11]. In addition, this Post-millennial generation is also branded as independent generation and always counts on the belief that "anything is possible" which they will try in any way to make things happen [10]. Furthermore, this generation also looks forward to activities that are more practical and encourage development of skills like coursework compared to formal examination [12, 13]. In term of reward, they are very consent to have fair reward for their hard work [13]. Interestingly, as Gen Y or the Millennial is group-oriented, Gen Z turns out to be the individualist [14].

Due to these characteristics, educators need to formulate suitable assessment activities that match the Gen Z preferences in order to effectively produce balanced graduates [15]. Designing assessment activities that suit the students' expectation proves to be challenging [3], especially when academicians are expected to play multiple roles, ranging from being the content expert to developer of life-long learning [16] in a holistic and student-centred learning environment [17]. Research done on appropriate assessment activities that best suit this student's cohort is also lacking in the extant literature [3, 18], specifically, in the area of management accounting [19]. Furthermore, there is still limited empirical evidence on how students prefer to be assessed [3].

Therefore, this paper aims to investigate the Gen Z's preferred assessment activities, together with their range of marks, in the hope that it might shed some light for academicians in designing their curriculum and assessment. It also aims to discover the preferred proportion of mark to be allocated for formative assessment, or coursework, as compared to the summative assessment, or final examination. Simultaneously, lecturers' opinions, as the subject-matter experts, are also sought regarding this matter to allow comparison to be made. Based on students' and lecturers' preferences, this paper ends with a suggestion on the appropriate formative assessment activities, their range of marks and the appropriate proportion of marks for formative and summative assessment over a semester.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Normally, in a university setting, students are assessed via two means, which are (i) formative assessment, which is referred to as continuous assessment or coursework, and (ii) summative assessment, which is normally in the form of final examination given at the end of the semester. The next section briefly elaborates these two types of assessment.

A. Formative Assessment

Formative assessment is a continuous assessment "encompassing all those activities undertaken by teachers, and/or by their students, which provide information to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged" [20]. According to the literatures, formative assessment involves students in the activities, encourages self-assessment and provides feedback which help students to indulge into the activities, easily learn, understand and remember the subject matter besides improving their knowledge level [3, 5, 21]. It consists of several activities commonly used to improve students' achievement and contribute to positive educational outcomes [22] and is also known as coursework by many. In this paper, formative assessment and coursework are used interchangeably.

[3] classified formative assessment into two categories, which are traditional assessment (test and quiz) and alternative assessment (case study, presentation, role play and group work, classroom activities). Both categories have their own advantages and shortcomings as heatedly debated in extant literatures. Next section elaborates on both traditional and alternative assessments.

1) Traditional Assessment

Traditional assessment, normally in the form of test or quiz, has been practiced for as long as education exists. It has become the most common method of assessment for so many generations, even before the Gen Z [23, 24,58,59,60]. [3] highlighted that traditional assessment is still acceptable and preferred by the Millennial, the predecessor of Gen Z . Frequent tests and quizzes are preferred as they forced the students to focus on their study by doing revisions and practices to thoroughly understand what they have learnt [25], besides offering more feedback to improve students' learning [26]. Through grades obtained, students may evaluate their understanding about the subject area [3]. Besides, traditional assessment has been viewed as fair towards individual effort as it focuses on individual achievement [27]. Due to this, students will be more accountable towards their own studies [27] as they are forced to work hard and struggle to get excellent results [3].

However, [28] criticized test and quiz as polluting the learning process by exposing students to learning for the purpose of a particular assessment, just for scoring marks, and not because it is interesting and meaningful for their learning process. They actually lead students to be surface learners where they would only need to memorize and reproduce the information on the examination papers to get a good grade [3]. Consequently, students may be able to get good grades, but the knowledge would not last long. This contradicts the purpose of assessment which should emphasize lifelong learning [5].

2) Alternative Assessment

On the other hand, alternative assessment, such as classroom activities, presentation, case study and field study are favoured by many researchers [for example; 19, 20, 28, 29] due to additional elements that they tend to embed in students. Alternative assessment does not just focus on grades, but it emphasizes more on understanding of the subject areas [3] besides developing many soft skills that give students added values [30], like improved confidence, leadership and social skills [31]. Through alternative assessment, education model may be shifted from teacher-centered to student-centered [5].

Next section discusses various alternative assessment activities commonly practiced at higher educational institutions. For the purpose of this study, they are grouped into three, which are:

a) Classroom Activities

Classroom activities may be spontaneous or planned activities conducted in the class. Through these activities, students would be forced to participate in group or class discussions or games related to their lessons that make learning more active and fun. According to [32], classroom activities, which are usually spontaneous, may encourage teacher-students interaction which emphasize on students' involvement in the activities. Most students prefer to have classroom activities because they encourage students' engagement besides deepening their understanding and lengthening their knowledge retention [28].

In addition, for the educators, it motivates them to think out of the box and become more creative in imparting knowledge to the students [20, 33]. Not only that, educators may gain instant feedback on the students' learning and take necessary actions [32]. However, classroom activities may not be favoured by educators as they are considered tedious since educators are required to put in continuous effort to modify and improve the activities to ensure their effectiveness and to remain enjoyable [19, 32].

b) Project –based Assessment

Project-based assessment (for example, case study, field study and simulated enterprise) has also been debated in many literatures as it develops transferrable skills and competencies that students need in the workplace [3, 4, 28, 31]. It is an assessment that normally needs to be conducted in a group which requires teamwork interaction to succeed.

Case and field studies help students to engage in productive learning activities that help them to practice and apply their knowledge in the real-world context and assist them to enhance several skills such as communication, leadership and critical thinking skills during the completion of tasks given [2, 18, 29]. Students will learn how to implement knowledge gathered, mix and match the ideas with peer, manage to solve problems and make effective decision. Thus, it makes the learning process more realistic and meaningful to the students [3]. Project-based assessment also encourages students to work in team, develops interpersonal relationship and collaborates with each other [18] besides exposing them to the challenges of working in a group [3]. These characteristics, however, do not suit the attributes of Gen Z who are more comfortable working individually [14] as they are more independent and highly technology-savvy [10] , making it easier to look for materials. However, free-riders issue may become a drawback in a project-based assessment [34, 35] that makes some students question its fairness. It is not fair to allocate equal marks to all students if the distribution of tasks is not equally divided. Therefore, it is important to reward marks that match the effort and time spent by the students [36, 37]. In addition, implementing peer-assessment might be a good option in ensuring students' accountability apart from making them more thoughtful and inquisitive resulting in better learning gain [20] and a more structured project work [4].

c) Presentation

Through presentation, students' confidence level may be enhanced through speaking and participating in class [38] resulting in developed communication skills that are important and useful in workplace [3]. They need to equip themselves with attractive presentation skills to effectively deliver the information to the audience. [38] emphasized that presentation will force students to be actively engaged in their learning process as it requires them to be self-regulated learners leading to deeper understanding, besides relegating the free-riders issue. Immediate feedback also can be obtained via presentation if feedback and comments are given immediately after the presentation.

B. Summative assessment

Though there are a number of ways summative assessment can be conducted, but this paper only focuses on final examination that normally takes place only at the end of the semester as it is the most common method employed at higher learning institutions. Hence, it gives more time for the students to get prepared for the assessment. Final examination is also a useful evaluation method that tests problem solving skills, and evaluates how much the students have learned and retained [39, 40], at least up to that particular time. According to [41] final examination will also make the students more prepared for the assessment since it creates a fear of failure among students due to the possible penalty to repeat the subject. In addition, it is also the best method to assess a large group of students due to the clear standards and marking systems, hence ensuring the fairness of grading, as well as avoiding grievance about imbalance assignments derived from different assessment methods [42].

Besides numerous advantages of final examination, there are also negative impacts highlighted in the previous researches. Final examination does not indicate how the students gain knowledge and skill since it only endorses the hierarchy of grades [43] making it inadequate to improve students' learning [42], especially when it is conducted at the end of the semester when all learning has occurred. Therefore, students may not gain much on the opportunity to receive useful feedback and to use the information to make judgments to improve their own learning [44].

In addition, according to [41], the nature of final examination with the focus on 'pass or fail' discourages the use of feedback from the assessment to improve students' learning. This encourages students to focus only on passing rather than to excel. It also gives more attention on students who failed and required to repeat the subject, while discounting students who passed the assessment. In addition, the authors also suggested that there is a need to move away from final examination to enhance and maximize learning. Hence the debate on whether final examination is still necessary persists.

C. Formative and summative assessment: What proportion of mark is appropriate?

What proportion of marks should be allocated to both formative (or coursework) and summative assessments so that students' learning could be optimized? This issue has been debated in the literature [45, 46] but still with no conclusive remarks. Though many admit the importance of formative assessment, but the role played by summative assessment also should not be undermined.

In 1996, [47] reported that most students preferred coursework compared to final examination as it can lead to lifelong learning and improve the learning quality with fair scoring system. About a decade later, [48] discovered that the same finding is still relevant.

As such, between these two assessment activities, students preferred to have more marks awarded to the coursework, in line with a proportion made by [49]. Formative assessment is also found to help weaker students to score better performance as compared to final examination [45, 50]. In such a case, it may help to reduce the performance gap between low and high achievers [46]. Literature basically agrees that formative assessment forces students to continuously learn throughout a semester especially due to the continuous feedback obtained from the lecturers which helps them to focus on improving their weaknesses, as opposed to the final examination which encourages last minute study [3, 45].

On the contrary, formative assessment or coursework is also found to be highly correlated to student exhaustion [51, 52], making students feel that it is burdensome. Sitting for tests, quizzes and completing numerous assignments during the semester make the academic session to be highly compact are identified as major stressors among the students [52]. This had led to undergraduate to often feel stressful due to difficulty in keeping up with academic work while leaving so little time for personal activities [53]. The authors reported that students often feel hectic and not having sufficient rest or sleep in their effort to complete their assignments and tutorials. Therefore, inappropriate allocation of marks for formative assessments or coursework may deprive students of quality time for themselves.

As for the academicians, some prefer final examination as they feel more familiar with the method and confident that it would measure students' knowledge more accurately [54]. In terms of time, supervising and grading formative assessment activities, especially those relating to project-based assignments, would become a burden to the academicians if they have to handle classes in bigger size [55]. Furthermore, the issue of plagiarism is another drawback of assignments that makes academicians feel that awarding marks to students is not worthwhile. Many uttered their disappointment when students can easily copy and paste others people's work and claim it as theirs in completing their assignments [46].

Though existing literatures actively debate about the assessment activities in producing balanced graduates and lifelong learners, but each activity has its own drawback. Educators may propose what are good for students, but students might not like them. On the other hand, students also have their own preference, but educators may not agree with them. Therefore, finding a meeting point between these two parties might provide a useful insight to the educators to further understand their customers – the students that they try to produce to become the balanced graduates that employers are asking for. The next section demonstrates the method employed in this study, followed by the discussion of findings.

III. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Sampling: The population consisted of all 950 fourth-semester accounting students taking the subject of Cost and Management Accounting (CMA) from eight branch campuses of a public university in Malaysia. Out of these eight campuses, 686 students, who have just completed all the three Cost and Management Accounting subjects to obtain a Diploma in Accountancy, were randomly selected from five campuses. As they had undergone the learning and assessment process for all the three subjects, they could provide a better view on how they perceive the continuous assessment. Besides, all 28 lecturers teaching the subject were regarded as subject-matter experts and their opinion was also sought.

Data Collection: Data was collected via two ways - using a questionnaire and also interviews. The questionnaires were distributed to the students from the five branch campuses via respective Lecturer-In-Charge (LIC). 686 questionnaires were distributed and only 446 were returned. However, 26 were discarded due to various reasons, like incomplete or straight lining, thus generating 420 usable responses (61% response rate). As for the lecturers, only 22 were returned which were all usable, resulting to 78.6% response rate. The interview involved five teaching lecturers and ten students. This process is considered vital as it will give some crucial input in explaining some ambiguous issues as well as obtaining additional information that could not be tapped via questionnaire.

Instrument: The questionnaire consisted of two parts: Part A covered demographic information of the respondents, while Part B elicited information on the respondents' preference of the assessment activities. One section invited both students and lecturers to rank their preference accordingly (from 1, as most effective, to 7, as least effective). Seven assessment activities (test, quiz, classroom activities, presentation, case study, field study and simulated enterprise) with a brief description of each were listed so all respondents would share similar understanding. The assessment activities are described as follows:

a. Test - is an individual closed-book written assessment which covers at least three topics to be conducted in a specified limited time;

b. Quiz - is an individual closed-book written assessment which covers only one topic to be conducted in a specified limited time;

c. Case study – a group work where the students are given a case study within the constraint of the syllabus that would require them to come up with the possible solution to the case;

d. Field study – a group work where the students are required to go to a manufacturing business premise, learn about the business operation that is related to the syllabus and later to produce a report;

e. Simulated enterprise – a group work where the students are required to form a simulated manufacturing business. The students are to create a mock manufacturing business that produces at least three products, to come up with details of the business, and all the cost incurred to produce its products. The students are also required to come up with decision-making scenarios which are within the context of the syllabus, and to propose the analysis before they can come up with the solutions;

f. Classroom activity – the activity which consists of either spontaneous or planned activities, where the lecturers and students are free to design their activities, depending on the needs of the students so long as the activities can promote learning through discussion among the students.

g. Presentation – sharing information via presenting in front of class. The students will be graded based on the delivery method, presentation aids used, presentation skill and the feedback given for questions asked.

Students (and lecturers) were to rank their preference of each activity proposed. Respondents were also required to answer open-ended questions on what they felt as the most valuable assessment activities and the reasons behind it. In addition, respondents were required to choose their preferred range of marks for each type of formative assessment (test, quiz, classroom activity, presentation, case study, field study and simulated enterprise) and finally, the proportion of marks that they preferred for formative assessment and final year examination.

Data Analysis: Data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 23. To fulfill the study's objective, the model values of the students' and lecturers' preferences were used to rank the assessment activities. The activity ranked first by majority of the respondents as the most effective would be chosen as No. 1, and the activity

subsequently ranked as the last as an activity least preferred would be chosen as No. 7. The frequency of the preferred range of marks for each type of formative assessment activity was then determined, followed by the frequency of proportion of marks allocated to the formative assessment and final examination. After the survey data was analyzed, analysis on open-ended items were made and interviews were conducted to clarify ambiguous issues encountered that could not be tapped via questionnaire. The results were manually recorded and later used to address the respective issues.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Respondents' profile

Respondents consist of 420 students and 22 teaching lecturers. Majority of the students are female (73.1%) and 62.9% are those who score the CGPA of 3.5 and above. Most of them also prefer management accounting to financial accounting subject with half of the students admit to putting high (50.7%) and moderate (46.3%) effort into the subject. 88.3% expected to get an A for the subject. As for the lecturers, female constitute 81.8% of the respondents. 72.7% of them have been working for at least 10 years, making them experienced lecturers. 59% of them have been teaching management accounting subject for more than ten semesters. **Table 1** depicts this information.

Table 1: Respondents' profile

Respondents	Characteristics		Frequency	%
Students	Gender	Male	113	26.9
		Female	307	73.1
	CGPA	2.49 and below	15	3.6
		2.50 - 2.99	25	6.0
		3.00 - 3.49	104	24.8
		3.5 and above	264	62.9
	More interest	Management Accounting	271	64.5
		Financial Accounting	116	27.6
		Both	14	3.3
	Effort put	Moderate	195	46.4
		High	213	50.7
	Expected grade for the subject	A	371	88.3
		B	49	11.7
Lecturers	Gender	Male	4	18.2
		Female	18	81.8
	Working tenure	5 to less than 10 years	6	27.3
		10 years and above	16	72.7
	Experience teaching MA	1 to less than 6 semesters	6	27.3
		6 to less than 10 semesters	3	13.6
		10 semesters and above	13	59.1

B. The ranking of assessment activities and their preferred range of marks

Borrowing the classification made by Healy et al. [3], formative assessment activities are divided into two categories, traditional and alternative assessments. Analysis was conducted to determine the most preferred assessment activity and their range of preferred marks, respectively. The results are depicted in **Table 2**. Test and quiz fall under the first category while the other five activities best suit the second category. The result reveals that students ranked test and quiz at the first and second, followed by other five

alternative assessment activities of presentation, classroom activity, case study, field study, and simulated enterprise. Though lecturers share the same opinion with regards to test and quiz, but their preferences are not in line with what the students prefer regarding the alternative assessment activities. Lecturers prefer simulated enterprise as their third choice after quiz, followed by presentation, field study, and classroom activity, while case study comes in last.

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Table 2: Students' and Lecturers' Preferred Assessment Activities and their range of marks

Assessment Activities	Ranking		Range of Marks	Students		Lecturers	
	Students	Lecturers		Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Test	1	1	10 - 15%	330	81.3	13	59.1
			16 - 20%	76	18.7	9	40.9
Quiz	2	2	0%	15	3.7	4	18.2
			5 - 10%	387	96.3	18	81.8
Presentation	3	4	5%	215	53.2	11	57.9
			10%	189	46.8	8	42.1
Classroom Activity	4	6	0 - 5%	259	64.8	15	68.2
			6 - 10%	141	35.3	7	31.8
Case study	5	7	5 - 9%	284	74.2	9	52.9
			10 - 15%	99	25.8	8	47.1
Field study / Simulated enterprise	6	5	5 - 9%	284	74.2	12	60.0
	7	3	10 - 15%	99	25.8	8	40.0

Table 2 also reveals that both groups of respondents seem to have the same preference over the range of marks for almost all assessment activities. A further scrutiny indicates that both students and lecturers unanimously select the lower range of marks for almost all activities. The finding somehow supports their preferences explained above. Of course, higher marks should be allocated to their most preferred activities.

With the exception of quiz, both groups believed that quiz is still necessary with the 5 – 10% range of marks as agreed by 96.3% students and 81.8% lecturers, as opposed to 0% (to denote no quiz is necessary) which is favored by only 3.7% students and 18.2% lecturers. Hence, it can be concluded that majority of students and lecturers still opined that quiz, which should consist of only one topic, is still a necessary assessment activity. The range of 10 – 15% mark for one test (which should cover only three topics) is also highly favored by students (81.3%) as compared to lecturers (59.1%). This represents the highest range of mark for all assessment activities preferred by both groups.

It is interesting to note that for all other assessment activities, both students and lecturers preferred the lower range of marks. For examples, 74.2% students and 60% lecturers opined that field study/simulated enterprise is only worth 5 – 9% of marks, suggesting that this is not an important activity to them. Similarly, case study also does not gain popularity among respondents as 74.2% students and 52.9% lecturers felt that it is only worth 5 – 9% of the mark's allocation. Classroom activity is seen as even less important as both groups of respondents (64.8% students and 68.2% lecturers) only prefer a 0 – 5% range of mark, which could imply that 'we do not like classroom activity'. Lastly, presentation is only worth 5% to 53.2% students and 57.9% lecturers though 46.8% students and 42.1% lecturers feel that 10% is more appropriate.

1) Is Traditional Assessment Still Relevant?

It is rather interesting to note that even though students' learning styles have changed over time [56] but the preferred assessment activity still remains the same. With reference to **Table 2**, students' most preferred assessment activity is test, which should cover at least three topics, followed by quiz which covers only one topic. Lecturers share similar views with the students regarding these first two rankings. Obviously, both parties see the importance and convenience of test and quiz which have been widely practiced worldwide. Findings from previous literatures [for example, 3] also demonstrated a similar pattern regarding the Millennial which is also consistent with findings involving Generation X students, who exhibited identical preferences as discovered by earlier researchers 23, 24].

Responses from the open-ended questions explained students' preference for test and quiz. Majority of them stated test and quiz as their most valuable assessment activities, claiming that these activities actually pose a challenge on their knowledge and memories on related topics. This is in line with findings from previous literature [3, 25] as preparation for tests and quizzes force them to struggle hard doing revisions and practices to thoroughly understand what they have learnt, as if they are going to sit for the final examination. Quiz, which is a shorter version of test, is favoured due to similar reasons, especially when only one topic is being tested. Students see it as an *"easy way to score marks"* as they can focus on one particular topic that can *"improve their understanding"*.

Furthermore, student A commented that "*test gives the highest proportion of marks as compared to other assessment activities*" that makes their effort worthwhile. Student B preferred test and quiz as they "*awards marks individually",* implying it as more fair and makes them more accountable for their own learning, which is in line with previous literature [25, 27], especially due to its more objective grading criteria [3, 54]. Lecturers also seemed to agree to the students' comments. This finding demonstrates that Gen Z believes that this assessment activity is still valuable to them though some authors, [like 28] was against test or quiz as it tainted the learning process which resulted in invalid educational outcomes.

From lecturers' point of view, a few lecturers agreed that test and quiz are more objective in grading students that makes is fairer for students.

When interviewed, Lecturer A admitted that preparing and marking for test or quiz is much easier than supervising students' projects. *"We already have a marking scheme, so we can mark the test/quiz more objectively. Then marks obtained by students will signify if the students understand what they have learned, and from there, we can detect weak students that need attention. Once done, the assessment job is over!"*

Considering their similar characteristics, when test and quiz are combined, it would result to 15 – 25% marks of the total marks allocated for formative assessment. This is rather high as the mark is only meant for one quiz and one test. Test and quiz are so similar to final examination, hence the finding indicates that both students' and lecturers' preference for examination-oriented assessment is still so strong even though literatures are now discussing about the need to shift to alternative assessment activities so as to produce more balanced students. [54] also discovered that tests is also still the most preferred assessment activity in Turkey as the academicians believe that they are most familiar with this tool, hence making them feel most confident that this assessment activity could measure the students' knowledge most accurately. This finding somehow contradicts the claim made by [12] and [13] that Gen Z actually prefer project-based assessments as compared to formal test, quiz or examination.

2) Respondents' Perception of Alternative Assessment
It is important to note that most of the alternative assessment activities would involve group work, except for classroom activities, which could either be conducted individually or in groups. Therefore, students' responses to these activities might be biased towards their views of working in groups as their personal experiences, both good and bad, could affect their perception of the activities. Gen Z's disfavor of group work may also affect their responses.

a) Presentation
The students ranked presentation at the third place, while lecturers ranked it the fourth, indicating a little difference between students' and lecturers' preferences. Presentation requires students to present an assigned task to the rest of the class and at the end of the slot, a question and answer session would be conducted. [3] and [38] highlighted that classroom presentation promotes transferrable skills needed at the workplace, especially communication skills which simultaneously boost students' self-confidence, besides inculcating leadership qualities such as delegation of tasks, apart from expansion of knowledge of a topic. Student B noted that she no longer gets jittery to speak in front of the class after frequent class presentation.

Responses from the students interviewed confirmed that preparation for presentation demand them to search for relevant information, which in turn, help them to have better knowledge and understanding of the topic to be presented. *"Group discussion is good for me as I can understand a topic better. It also trains us to work in group – to give and take,"* noted Student E. However, some students interviewed also commented that though they are required to work in group, but they normally divide tasks among them and compile them once they are ready. Consequently, such practice does not contribute much to the improvement of their teamwork or communication skills.

Despite the positive outcomes of presentation and the fact that both groups of respondents exhibited a high preference for presentation as compared to other alternative assessment activities, majority of both groups only agreed to 5% marks to be allocated for presentation. This mark is a little bit too low to reward an effort required to research and prepare for the presentation. In an interview, Lecturer B explained the low mark, *"the presentation is done in a group. They normally prepare the power point slides which are very texty and just basically read the slides. The presentation becomes boring and many of other students just ignore the presentation and tend to their hand phones. They don't learn much from the presentation."*

It is crucial to note that majority of the proposed activities could be delivered and assessed effectively using presentation. The outcomes of case and field studies and simulated enterprise can be presented so as to integrate the necessary skills, like communication skill, along with the mastery of knowledge. Hence, presentation is not a stand-alone assessment activity, but it is to be integrated with other activities to maximize its outcomes. Even though literature provides evidence that presentation would result to a lot of benefits, either to the presenter or the classmates who may obtain new knowledge and learn from other presenters' strengths and weaknesses [30], but its effectiveness would still highly depending on the nature of assignment and marks awarded for the students to feel that it is worth their effort and time spent. Therefore, the aspect of fairness as proposed by [36] and [57] should always be an important consideration.

b) Classroom activity
Classroom activity was ranked the fourth by the students, while lecturers ranked it the sixth. Classroom activity may be spontaneous or planned activities conducted gradually throughout the semester. Students preferred this method compared to other assignments such as field study or case study. A student interviewed said that *"this type of assessment is kind of fun and spontaneous that does not require a lot of preparation. It is also different than other serious assignments and we might have some good time doing it."* This element is important as [27] highly emphasized that assessment activity should be fun and enjoyable which would engage the students learning. Student C commented that *"we can gain immediate feedback from the lecturer, and that is valuable to us."*

On the other hand, lecturers were not in favour of this assessment activity due to its flexibility and ambiguity. Lecturer A expressed her concerns on the ambiguity of the activities as the flexibility could affect the focus of the assessment. Lecturer D was concerned with the documentation aspects as all lecturers need to maintain a teaching portfolio for audit purposes. This is essential as failure to properly document the classroom activities might lead to a 'non-compliance report' during the audit process.

Despite the concerns, some lecturers also gave positive comments. Lecturer C stated that a closely monitored classroom activities would allow students to *"cooperate and tutoring each other to share ideas or knowledge in a classroom setting that encourage discussion and brainstorming."* Consequently, lecturers may benefit from the process,

as they could observe the process and the information obtained could be used to adjust their instructional approach. Literatures showed that assessment activities should evolve and be gradually modified as they would improve students' motivation and engage them in their learning [19, 32]. However, only a range of mark of 0 – 5% is preferred by both students and lecturers for this assessment activity, as if indicating that classroom activity is not that important.

c) Project-based assessments

The distinct difference in students' and lecturers' preferences with regards to assessment methods is further investigated. Based on students' responses, assessment activities requiring higher-order thinking skills, specifically case study, field study and simulated enterprise, were less preferred and ranked at the fifth, sixth and seventh places. On the contrary, the lecturers ranked simulated enterprise as their third choice right after test and quiz, while field study as their fifth choice and case study ranked the seventh.

It is undeniable that these assessment activities necessitate students to brainstorm and perform extensive research. The use of case study requires the students to opt for problem solving strategies to come up with possible solutions to the given case within the constraint of the syllabus. While case study stresses on the use of problem-solving methods, field study exposes students to a world outside their comfort zone. They are to step into an actual business organization related to the course and produce a report based on the visit to the premise. Simulated enterprise is a simulation project where students are required to form a mock or imaginary business. They are supposed to come up with details of the business, all the costs incurred to produce its products, to come up with decision making scenarios which are within the context of the syllabus, and to conduct the analyses before they could come up with the solutions. With the effort required for these activities, it is somewhat unexpected when the range of marks preferred for this activity only falls within the range of 5 – 9%, instead of 10 – 15%, signifying students' reluctance for these kinds of activity.

One student interviewed expressed concerns over these assignments as they would require more effort, time and energy as well as money. At the end of this process, they would be required to present their outcomes, which would require further effort and time. Among these three, simulated enterprise would require higher order thinking skills, greater imagination and creativity through explicit learning of sharing and reflective practices [31]. This might explain their reluctance in preferring these three methods.

Additionally, their reluctance might also be attributed to the necessity of working in groups, which is not preferred by Gen Z [49]. As these assessment activities are required to be done in groups, those with bad experiences might perceive it negatively. Students are often concerned with inability to manage their time and the free-rider issues, as well as the belief that rewards obtained do not take into consideration the effort put in [3]. Student B expressed her concern, *"basically all project-based assignments are done in group. Sometimes it is not fair when some group members do not even contribute but they still earn the same marks. Besides, it is difficult to evaluate my achievement when I have to work in group."*

In addition, it becomes imperative to ensure effort and time required to complete the group project match the marks allocated and its importance in the syllabus content [2, 4]. One student wrote, *"The project takes so much of our time, not worth the mark that we get. It is better to study for test over two or three days and get a 10 – 15% mark."* Student F stated that *"doing simulated study requires me to think so deeply to create a business, to imagine how it is operated and so on. But I don't think I can do that. It is kind of unrealistic...to imagine a situation that I have never experienced"*.

However, lecturers, as the experts in this subject area, believe that such assignments would trigger higher-order thinking skills and prompt more independent research that would turn their students into deep learners, instead of surface learners, as disclosed by a lecturer in an interview. Lecturer D interviewed believed that learning should not be textbook based (which most students never even referred to) but should also occur in the real world where it would be more interesting. This corroborates with previous findings [like, 4, 28]. Students were reported to have more engagement with learning when they learn from the real world as they have the opportunity to apply the theory learned in the real life situations [3].

This study's finding indicated that students did not favour assessments like field study or simulated enterprise that would require them to put in more effort than what was expected of them, even if these types of assessment would turn them into deep learners, conforming to [16] proposition that millennial students have tendency to put high expectations despite little effort put. Instead, they prefer tests or quizzes that they are already familiar with, hence they know what to expect. Respondents from this study indeed showed high expectation, where 88.3% (from Table 1) of them expected to score A for the subject. Tests and quizzes would confine them to their personal comfort zones and being dependent on their individual capabilities rather than on teamwork as it is more manageable.

Findings on preference of formative assessment activities indicate that both students and lecturers prefer traditional assessment, which consist of test and quiz, to alternative assessments (case study, classroom activity, field work, simulated enterprise and presentation) with higher range of marks are allocated for test and quiz. To make the results more meaningful and to offer more insight to the academicians, the focus is now shifted to the proportion of marks between the formative and summative assessment (focusing on final examination).

C. Proportion of marks for Formative Assessment (FA) to Final Examination (FE)

The proportion of marks for formative assessment to final examination (or summative assessment) is still being debated in the extant literatures [45, 46]. What proportion would be most optimum to maximize students learning and turning them into balanced graduates? In this study, both students and lecturers were to choose the proportion that they feel best to maximize the learning outcome. The result is depicted in **Table 3**.

Table 3: Students' and Lecturers' Preferred proportion of marks

Proportion	Students		Lecturers	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
40% FA: 60% FE	273	67.4	12	54.5
50% FA: 50% FE	89	22.0	9	40.9
60% FA: 40% FE	43	10.6	1	4.5

From **Table 3**, both students and lecturers are of the same preference, where more than half of them favoured a proportion of 40:60% where higher percentage goes to final examination. It is also interesting to note that the percentage of students (67.4%) well surpasses that of lecturers (54.5%). However, more lecturers (40.9%) were seen to favour the 50:50% proportion as compared to students (22%) and only 4.5% of lecturers (representing only one) preferred the 60:40% proportion as compared to 10.6% students. Unfortunately, further statistical analysis cannot be carried out to determine if there is any significant difference in both groups' preferences due to the limited number of lecturers. Somehow, this finding demonstrates that both groups preferred to allocate higher marks for final examination instead of coursework, which is against the finding in previous literature that suggests Gen Z prefers coursework over final exam [47, 48, 49] .

This finding seems to contradict the current trend, whereby in the midst of a heated discussion about the need for alternative assessments to be implemented so as to produce balanced graduates, but the respondents in this study are still showing a higher tendency towards final examination, which can be categorized as a traditional assessment. Though coursework or formative assessment is said to contribute to higher average marks for students [45, 50] and higher graduates quality [48] but literature also evinced that formative assessment also resulted to high student exhaustion [51]. Students may be burdened with too much assignment if they are to be assessed with alternatives assessments, especially if they are also actively involved with co-curricular activities that are said to equip them with soft skills required by potential employers. To unearth this issue, interviews were conducted with both students and lecturers.

Many of the interviewed students preferred a 40:60% proportion with final examination is allocated a higher percentage. Unanimously, they agreed that the most important reason is due to exhaustion and time management. Student C said, *"doing assignments or projects take so much of our time. Just imagine when we are taking six subjects, and each subject requires us to do a project that contributes 20%. Most of the time, we do not have time for ourselves, we sleep very late at night, we don't have enough rest. It is very stressful and it affects us emotionally,"* which is in line with findings by [53] and [51]. Student D added, *"sometimes we have to go out of campus to do our assignment. That would cost us money. We are living on very tight budget and final examination doesn't cost us a single cent."* Student A continued, *"we grow up in an examination-oriented culture. Since school, we were trained to appreciate examinations. It challenges our mind individually. So, that's why I feel that final examination is more important and valid."*

Not only that, basically students agreed that final examination makes them more focused on studying, especially with the allocation of study week which allows them to be more prepared. They agreed that studying for final examination makes them more understand what they have learned as discovered by [25]. However, 10.6% students preferred a 60% mark for formative assessment as compared to 40% for final examination. These students believed that formative assessment enables them to score higher marks which is in line with previous literature [45, 50]. Student E stated that *"since we work in group, our burden becomes less. Not only that, it makes me learn and think more, rather than just study for test. Teamwork also encourages me to think more critically and contribute ideas to complete the tasks."* 54.5% lecturers agreed with the 40:60% ratio, while another 40.9% preferred the 50:50% ratio for formative assessment to final examination. Lecturer A explained, *"I agree with the 40:60% ratio since final examination provides more time for students to focus on their study and score the subject. Though it is riskier, but students are normally more focused. Furthermore, marking for final examination with question paper and marking scheme provided by the faculty also makes my job much easier,"* which is in tandem with the research findings by [42]. Lecturer E further added, *"We are teaching diploma students here. Hence the 60:40% proportion is less appropriate as these students are still in the transition period from schools to university life. They are so used to exam when they were in schools, so final exam of 60% suits the diploma level before they pursue their bachelor's degree, at which I think, 40% mark for final exam is more appropriate."*

Lecturer B continued, *"To supervise a project-based assessment, it takes a whole semester! You have to constantly discuss with students, which is normally done outside the class period. There is not just one group of students; it can go up to six groups if you have one class of 30 students. Just imagine, if you have to teach four classes of 30 students each?! 24 groups to be supervised!! On top of that, as a lecturer, your job is not all about teaching and supervising only. You have to do research and to publish. You have to do some administrative tasks. You are also expected to function in some ad-hoc committees, like to organize conferences, to generate income, etc. With the teaching load of 14 hours/week, please tell me how I could squeeze more time on supervising and grading the projects?"* Obviously, multiple roles played by the academicians would put the constraint of implementing project-based assessments as also discovered by [42] and [55].

In conclusion, assessments should be balanced, considering the students' study time as well as lecturers' working time. Not all subjects should require the employment of alternative assessment, depending on the learning outcomes of the subjects. Faculty should clearly determine which subjects should employ alternative assessment; while some others may employ traditional assessment.

A proper combination of formative assessment and final examination will also ensure that students reap the most benefit from their learning. Besides, considering the students' level is also necessary so that it matches their maturity.

V. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH RECOMMENDATION

The finding of the study revealed that tests and quizzes are highly preferred by the students and are still seen relevant by lecturers since those assessments take into consideration the individual's effort in preparing for tests and quizzes, as well as strengthening students' theoretical aspect. Both students and lecturers allocate the highest marks to test and quiz, while other activities are only allocated with the lower range of marks. However, considering the time and effort needed to accomplish the alternative assessments satisfactorily, marks allocated for test and quiz should be lower to make way for higher proportion of marks be allocated to other types of assessment especially activities that require higher-order thinking. Though majority of students as well as lecturers agreed with the 40:60 ratio with the higher weightage goes to the final examination, but for the diploma level students, the percentage of formative assessment (coursework) is suggested to be increased, may be up to 60%, particularly in management accounting subject. The higher percentage for coursework is proposed in the hope that it may help to reduce the performance gap between low and high achievers, as mentioned by [46]. Conclusively, the assessment will not only be an instrument for learning, but it will also prepare the students to be balanced graduates as it equips and enhances various skills among them.This research was conducted on diploma students who are still under the influence of the exam-oriented culture that might distort the result, causing bias to the finding. Hence, future research conducted on bachelor's degree students, or other field of study, might contribute a more meaningful finding which may allow comparison to be made. Besides, future research could also investigate detailed characteristics of feasible alternative assessment activities suitable for Gen Z, so that detailed implementation mechanism could be mapped out. Students also might be asked to assess the current assessment activities so that universities or faculties know where they stand in the eyes of the students.

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