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ASSESSING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SESLOAF OBJECTIVES IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF DISTRICT LARKANA: GAPS, BARRIERS, AND CHALLENGES

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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
SESLOAF, formative Assessment, Student Learning outcomes (SLOs)	This study examines the implementation gaps, barriers and challenges of Sindh Education Student Learning Outcome Assessment Framework (SESLOAF) in public secondary schools of District Larkana. SESLOAF standardizes assessment practices and integrates instructional, curricular, and assessment objectives to align with student learning outcomes SLOs. By utilizing qualitative approach this study is grounded in an interpretivist paradigm with a subjective understanding of context using phenomenological design to understand participants' lived experiences. The data was collected using in-depth semi-structured interviews from purposively sampled 14 participants (head teachers, teachers and students) from targeted population. Braun & Clarke's model (2006) was applied for thematic analysis and the themes were further triangulated with document analysis of two official assessment reports including PAT 2021-22 & ASPIRE 2023 report. The findings of this study reveals that their exists partial awareness of SESLOAF framework among educationists followed by many constraints such as overcrowded classrooms, short classroom periods, infrastructural inefficiencies, overloaded syllabi Etc., all these leave no room for successful implementation of effective assessment practices. The study also revealed that their existed a complete absence of PD on assessment programs that creates a hesitant environment within teachers to adopt assessment practices. Further monitoring mechanisms lead by head of institutes could not substitute targeted capacity building in teachers and students also suggested modern forms of assessments to be conducted in their daily classrooms however, there was perceived lack of assessment literacy in teachers. Likewise document analysis of different assessment official reports further verified a misalignment between SESLOAF objectives and actual students and teacher achievement scores. This study contributes to evidence based district level literature confirming assessment maladjustments and further recommends strengthening SESLOAF based trainings across province, assessment monitoring setups, revision of SLOs in curricula and use of accessible formative strategies and digital tools. Apparently, this study encourages further future studies on relevant implementation gaps and itself provides a ground for assessment practices at local levels.
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Introduction

The assessment initiatives taken by Sindh government aim to serve as quality measures for students' performance and institutional capacity building. However, practically there remains huge gaps in its implementation and developmental role at ground levels (Government of Sindh, 2018). Recent evidence from the Pakistani educational context similarly indicates a mismatch between assessment policies and their practical application, suggesting that assessment initiatives may not achieve their intended improvement and accountability functions without adequate teacher support and contextual adaptation (Shah et al., 2024). In Sindh majorly summative assessments dominate the landscape within examination system and is often considered a high stake assessment in nature that focuses certifications and recognitions rather than improving the learning outcomes (Government of Sindh, 2018). While summative assessment provides evidence for judging students' achievement and supporting quality assurance and decision-making, formative assessment facilitates continuous feedback, instructional improvement, and active student participation in the learning process (Zeng et al., 2024). Later the establishment of NEAS (National Education Assessment System) at federal level and as response to assessment challenges and gaps National Large-Scale Assessment (NLSA) under PEACe (Provincial Education Assessment Centre) in 2008 was introduced to evaluate system level learning, this was developed within the Sindh Education Sector Reform Program (SES RP) with support of World Bank to improve learning outcomes through assessment. (NEP, 2017) To standardize and benchmark student assessment system in 2011 World Bank's project Systems Approach for Better Education Result (SABER) was introduced across three main domains: classroom assessments, examinations and large-scale assessments. SABER analysis suggests key policy recommendations including teacher access to curricular documents, detailed classroom assessment, guidelines and institutionalization of effective assessment data to stakeholders (World Bank, 2011). Despite so many initiatives taken by the Government of Sindh, many Large-Scale Assessments (LSAs) have been confined to only a reporting function (Fakirmohammad et al., 2021). As a response to the above challenges in assessment system Sindh introduced Sindh Education Student Learning Outcome Assessment Framework (SESLOAF) as a standardized outcome-based assessment framework that reduces reliance on summative examinations, and works on the principle of alignment between curricular framework and student learning outcomes (Government of Sindh, 2018). This study aims to assess major gaps & barriers in the implementation of SESLOAF. It was introduced in 2015 by PEACe ((Provincial Education Assessment Centre) under DCAR (Directorate of Curriculum, Assessment & Research), an initiative taken by Sindh Government with the technical support from British Council (DCAR & PEACe, 2015). It is considered a part of bigger educational reform and a huge initiative which aims at improving the quality of assessment plus standardization of learning outcomes in the Sindh province (Government of Sindh, 2015). The main aspect of SESLOAF is its high weightage on formative assessment as a mechanism for promoting classroom related practices and enhancing student participation. (Mohammad and Saeed, 2017) assert that formative assessment modifies classroom practices by switching attention from grading to learning improvement. SESLOAF highlights SLOs as the basic unit of assessment, assuring that what is taught, measured and learned remains

consistent across subjects and classes. (Shah et al., 2022) supports that SESLOAF guides appropriate ongoing and authentic standardized assessment practices that endorses instructional improvement in student performance. The main objective of SESLOAF is to enhance the standardization of assessment mechanism and make it more comprehensive that links student examination ultimately with performance and content standards outlined in given curriculum (Government of Sindh, 2015).

Problem Statement

The Sindh Education and Literacy Department introduced SESLOAF (Sindh Education and Literacy Outcome Assessment Framework) as a policy mechanism intended to align classroom assessment practices with student learning outcomes. Many large scale assessments consistently show persistent low scoring and poor achievement of students in Sindh reveals a substantial gap between the framework's intended outcomes and the real-time educational outcomes being observed on the ground (Ahmed & Shamsi, 2015). This disconnect between policy design and classroom-level implementation raises critical questions about how SESLOAF is actually being understood, applied and what specific gaps, barriers, and challenges are undermining its effectiveness. This implementation gap remains particularly under-examined at the district level, especially in context-specific settings such as Larkana. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the mechanism of SESLOAF implementation within secondary schools of District Larkana, with a specific focus on identifying its practical gaps, barriers, and challenges.

Research Objectives

- To analyze students' perception about teachers' current assessment techniques with relation to SESLOAF assessment practices.
- To examine the role of head teachers' in achieving SESLOAF objectives with their academic supervision
- To analyze official reports on SESLOAF, Sindh Government with reference to initiatives and objectives.
To identify challenges and barriers are faced by teachers in applying SESLOAF based assessment strategies.

Research Questions

- How do students perceive teachers' current classroom-based assessment techniques in relation to SESLOAF's assessment practices?
- What role head teachers play in achieving SESLOAF objectives through their academic supervision?
- What do official reports on SESLOAF, Sindh Government suggest with reference to SESLOAF's implementation initiatives and achievement of its objectives?
- What challenges and barriers teachers face in applying SESLOAF based assessment strategies?

Literature Review

Assessment challenges in Sindh

Many research studies point out challenges in implementation of provincial level assessment initiatives similar to SESLOAF. such as (Ahmed & Shamsi, 2022) insists that even though a lot of assessment initiative such as PEACe, SAT, ASER exist, uneven teacher assessment training, limited assessment literacy, lower feedback, textbook teaching and lack of resources hinder meaningful attainment of SLOs. Province of Sindh is continuously facing assessment issues discussed widely in local researches, particularly pertaining to teachers' competencies, lower formative activities and lack of modern assessment approaches (Sahito et al., 2024). The study conducted by (Sahito et al., 2024) in the context of IBA Sukkur School and community colleges identifies that School leaders at elementary level consider summative activity as a main theme of assessment rather than alternating to continuous assessment techniques that support learning. Their findings also acknowledge how crucial formative assessment is, while considering its practical integration in daily routines. Further their study discusses absence of professional growth, huge class sizes and work burden further reduces effective implementation of assessment tasks. As a finding of this study assessment remain at a distance from instruction loosening its role in outcome-based student learning.

Policy-Practice Gaps in Assessment

In context of Sindh, assessment policy framework intends to bring better learning outcome, achievement scores, and utilization of evidence to make better decisions, the policy intent is clearly visible from the province dependency on a large skill testing, however the classroom realities do not reflect that intent (Ahmed & Shamsi, 2022). They describe that public schools in the Sindh are shaped by large scale assessment reports which consistently indicate low student performance create an alarming situation for policy practice gap. They further argue that consistent low score of students is due to textbook driven teaching, teachers limited assessment literacy and teachers' inability to develop standardized or higher order assessment in a resource constrained environment. They frame that policy practice gap already exists; therefore, they recommend conceptualizing assessments that transform focus to formative and meaningful strategies that directly support learning outcomes and instructional balance (Ahmed & Shamsi, 2022). At the ground level this policy practice gap becomes even clearer when teachers are examined in accordance with learner oriented assessment (Sahito et al., 2024). They studied elementary mathematics teachers and indicated that teachers have a limited understanding of assessment for learning (AFL), confines them to only usage of summative examinations and restrict use of continuous feedback cycles and focused assessment routines.

Comparative Insights: Local vs International Evidence

In the outer premises of Sindh, studies endorse assessment practices when implemented with supporting patterns, often lead to increased learning outcomes- one such example found in the

study of (Zafar et al., 2025) demonstrated that students manifesting formative assessment had significantly positive achievement levels than those assessed only combatively. The accommodation of formative assessment in both national and global contexts overtime demonstrate many positive effects on student skill development, achievement, motivation, and participation where teachers are sufficiently supported with required material (Ahmad, 2020). Moreover, many studies demonstrate that contextual factors also influence assessment practices.

Formative assessment is continuously shaped globally as assessment for learning (AFL) aligned with instruction and regulating student learning processes rather than only to grade their achievement (Parmigiani et al., 2025). In context of Pakistan, public universities student from Sindh perceives formative assessment as part of evaluation however weakened by undefined criteria, weak transparency, and limited timely feedback, unclear communication of classroom expectations, which underscores assessment validity at classroom level (Ahmad et al., 2021). Comparatively, an international study in Italy at secondary level on meta-aggregation in Mathematics education assumes the need for formative assessment as necessary and emphasizes on strengthening routinely techniques and consistency, while in the context of Sindh local evidence highlights administrative problems including criteria, clarity, fairness and transparency as a resistance to effectiveness.

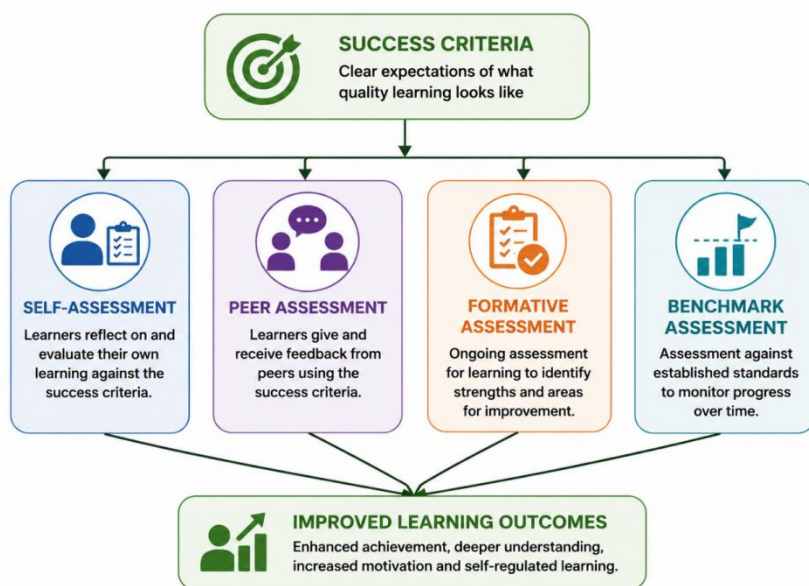
From a global perspective of United States evidence in mathematics education, formative assessment is perceived as a planned, continuous evidence based interpretation to instructional response cycle in which teachers and students both evidence to create betterment of learning and build self-directed learners (Lolkus et al., 2022). Contrastingly, local evidence from Sindh points that students experience formative assessment as unreliable when criteria are undefined, transparency is compromised, and assessment communication is misunderstood (Ahmad et al., 2021).

Research Gaps

The chapter clearly identifies policy framework existence like SESLOAF is not enough for implementation in ground realities, the realities are not studied and addressed, particularly district Larkana based specific evidence is limited. A major gap found was that very few studies focus particularly on district Larkana, even though the literature review aims is to build a base for analyzing implementation barriers and gaps. That missing linkage matters more because without it, reforms are only hanging over reporting cycles rather than learning improvement cycles driven by local evidence used in classroom feedback. It's found that there is little research on the teachers', students' & head teachers' perceptions regarding SESLOAF. Another gap is methodological the literature review argues for qualitative research on exploring teachers, students, and head teachers experience regarding implementation challenges and hinders SESLOAF's objectives in daily practices. So, the gap is not about SESLOAF existence but how it actually operates in ground realities district wise, in real classrooms settings.

Theoretical Framework

This study is defined with the help of Assessment for Learning theoretical framework (Black P. & William D, 1998). Which highlights the contribution of formative assessment in advancing student learning outcomes with the help of consistent feedback and instructional practices. AFL states that assessment should be operated as crucial part of teaching & learning process rather than only a device for measurement.



Methodology

Interpretivism Paradigm

This study follows an interpretive approach in which each individual is believed to have a different perception and interpretation of truth. In such case, meaning making is derived from a specific social context and is considered to be multi-purposive and generalizable to specific context (Cohen et al., 2011). This research study aligns interpretive paradigm for the principles presented above, since it asserts that social reality is not universal but context-based and time-bound and person based and focuses on the interpreting subjective world of human reality formation.

Qualitative Method

The qualitative research (Creswell, 2013) method will be followed during this study, which allows to study individuals in indepth that provides several gains for this study. This study is conducted to create an accurate portrayal of the educationists' beliefs and practices in assessments and students

perceptions within secondary schools of Larkana to contribute a more meaningful depiction of participants' practices, challenges, gaps and barriers in assessment.

Phenomenological Design

A phenomenological research design is often used in field of educational research when the aim is to explore and understand individuals experience as a particular event in practical setting (Creswell, 2013). In the current study, phenomenology was viewed as most fitting approach because the study seeks to explore "lived experiences" of principal stakeholders concerning the gaps, barriers, and challenges in implementing SESLOAF at secondary schools in Larkana.

Targeted Population

Targeted population of this study includes the principles across High schools of district larkana, their teachers and students studying in present day scenarios. Here is the specific figure mentioned of public secondary schools in district Larkana.

Head Teachers: 56

Teachers: 1,186 (845 male, 341 female)

Students enrolled: 40,520

Sample

The sample for this study was taken from accessible population by using researchers' oral inquiry of participants who met the criteria of this research. The study continued data collection until a thematic saturation point was achieved and researchers got themes formed. The participants included (3 head teachers {1F,2M} 6 teachers {3F,3M}, and 5 students {2F,3M}) from both urban & rural settings, for this qualitative study which met the saturation point for formation of themes during this study.

Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling is employed to select participants on the basis of factors such as, Teaching Experience, Teaching Level, SESLOAF assessment literacy for head teachers and teachers. Familiarization with assessment, Students' class/level would be criteria For students. The purposive sampling would increase the validity of results by accommodating diversity of population.

Research Tools Used

Semi-Structured Interview

In this study, the semi-structured interview served as a core qualitative method to generate richer explanations of assessment implementation in Sindh's classrooms & institutions. Selected participants were invited to person-to-person semi-structured interviews to provide responses, clarify meanings, and supply concrete examples of assessment routines e.g., test design, feedback, and SLOs fulfilment.

Document Analysis

This study adopted a qualitative thematic content analysis approach to document review, following Bowen's (2009) iterative process of skimming, reading and interpretation. Each document, PAT 2021–22 reports, and Aspire/SESLOAF program report, was first skimmed to gain an overview of its structure and scope, then read closely to identify recurring patterns related to student learning outcomes, assessment quality, and implementation gaps.

Data Analysis

The Thematic analysis was used for data analysis from Braun and Clarke's model (2006). Thus, study also went through document analysis of official assessment reports of Sindh provincial level examination taken by provincial assessment institutes.

Theme 1: SESLOAF as a Structured yet Partially Implemented Assessment Reform

Teacher Perspective: Teachers acknowledge the importance of SESLOAF as an effective tool for SLO based assessments that indicate students' strengths and weaknesses and creates a room for improvement "**T4** *It is Very necessary learning cannot be measured at fixed times, partially goals are achieved. With this students and parents know weaknesses and areas of mastery*". Teachers explained a vast range of assessment practices including formative, summative and diagnostic, while continuous assessment was inserted into daily routines through daily homework checking, oral questioning, weekly and monthly tests there upon many interactive methods such as brainstorming and group presentations were used to reinforce learning "**T4** *Question bank, MCQ-based weekly tests, fair copies, short tests, presentations, oral questioning, recalling previous day's lesson*". Many intervals based and recap based techniques such as reviewing previous day's work and retesting before new topics indicate an effort to ongoing assessment and responsive activity rather than a single point assessment (**T6** *Verbal assessments, reading, tests; interval-based assessments in last period only*).

Student Perspective: Students indicated that the assessment being conducted with them included multiple forms spanning from written, oral, reading test, presentations, questioning, monthly and weekly exams "**S5** *Teachers give explanations, testing, monthly testing, oral questions*" and there is active engagement through these assessment practices. Students evidence daily monitoring of

homework by class teacher (*S3 "Teacher does every day checking of assignments"*). however few perceive test as only a source for grading rather than actual improvements (*S1 "Yes, tests are used only for marking/grading"*) at the meantime students noticed periodically strategical changes in their teachers after their assessments "*S3 They change methods, revise, and reteach*" which indicate teachers show visible reflective practice.

HM Perspective: Head teachers recognize and acknowledge importance of SESLOAF as an important assessment framework that intends to align assessment with student learning "*H3 "I am well aware it is a framework guiding assessment according to SLOs and has brought proper structure to student testing"*". Their perspective suggests that even though it is largely a new concept with limited implementation. Where the concept of this framework is applied it has brought structured to designing of question papers, fixing percentage of different types of items including MCQ, CRQ, ERQ and it is supported by previous assessment and post assessment activities outcomes "*H1 Framework for student assessment; before it, teachers lacked test formation knowledge. Our School has implemented it by deciding question techniques to achieve SLOs*", "*We set CRQ and ERQ percentages; formative, summative, pre-reading assessment and brainstorming practice; constructive feedback and question paper analysis is required from teachers*. Likely respondent links this structured approach to many achievable gains in students' confidence knowledge and handwriting "*H2 It's very important; leads to handwriting improvement, confidence, and knowledge gains*".

Theme 2: Lack of Professional Development but with Corrective Feedbacks

Teacher Perspective: Teachers report getting confidence from different self-directed resources such as YouTube and usage of AI and students observation of grasping content "*T1 IPD makes confident, YouTube sources for guidance no any CPD yet I feel very confident about results*") Teachers indicated that a competitive classroom climate reinforces confidence and most of the teachers suggest that feedback is delivered both positively with reward technique such as praise, clapping, appreciation and negative feedback for correction of behavior and academics too "*T1 Avoids negative feedback & focuses on positive feedback*" and the feedback is given on both oral & written channels "*T4 Rewarding used personally; written and oral feedback given; clapping; competitive students are followed as role models; negative feedback sometimes given*. In the absence of any structured training or CPD program teachers plan lessons and design SLOs by themselves and they personally rely on informal staff meetings "*T4 Assessments in textbook are aligned; I add own assessments additionally; predefined SLOs are kept in mind; textbook SLOs are somewhat against ground realities*".

Student Perspective: Students indicate support by given tangible rewards such as medals, cups and other forms of reinforcement such as written feedback on fair copies and praise "*S3 Appreciation, clapping, reward, medals, cups*. Many students report that teachers always elaborate topic before teaching it and revise prior lessons to build consistency "*S2 Teachers always elaborate before teaching*", "*S4 our teachers ask from prior lessons*") and they also indicate that teachers change methods sometimes and also do repeated teaching where needed however

there was a little perspective difference of a single student who suggest inconsistency in teachers preparedness before teaching lesson.

HM Perspective: From the HM point of view professional development is blend of informal discussion and external training programs “**H1** *No formal training is given only office meetings held. I make teachers aware of SSF Subject Support Forum and NPSTPS training arranged*”. head teacher suggested that quality assurance and monitoring are maintained through regular checking of lesson plans question papers review before exams classroom visits and observations are done “**H3** *Lesson plans are checked regularly, question papers are reviewed before exams and classroom visits are made by me*”) they create a reporting system for communicating teachers changes in student progress “**H2** *Teachers are told to check assignments and submit reports*”). Altogether these mechanisms are a collective substitute for lack of trainings while still providing a way out to keep tied to SESLOAF “**H1** *Teachers are asked to give constructive feedback; I personally analyze question papers together*”.

Theme 3: Factors leading impediments in SESLOAF implementation

Teacher Perspective: Teacher identify bunch of structural barriers spanning from short periods, huge class sizes, infrastructural problems such as dangerous ceilings, heavy syllabus related issues “**T2** *Proper infrastructure not available; overcrowded class; dangerous ceiling; time management issues*” including a perceived misalignment between textbook SLO and ground realities and an over loaded course that often goes incomplete likely resource limitations and student readiness are a further pressure to teaching delivery “**T4** *High student strength, unsatisfactory results, time shortage due to vacations; no formal trainings are given I use own resources*”, Therefore many teachers make their own SLOs and assessment techniques they use also result in change of their strategy for focused, age appropriate and meaningful learning.

Student Perspective: Students suggest that they get involved when learning is done through games, presentations and story based assessments all of which they link with increased confidence “**S2** *through gaming*”, “**S4** *Presentations; confidence increases*”) and they suggest for more practical and experimental based learning and students believe technological usage including YouTube and AI tool such as Chat GPT can support formal instruction “**S5** *Lecture methods, reading, uses of YouTube help me better understand the topic*”. in the meantime noise and the way language is presented or cited are barriers (**S1** *noise is barrier*, **S4** *Language is made difficult and changed*) and therefore students think that a thorough preparation can reduce these slight obstacles.

HM Perspective: Head Teachers point to the lack of training programs that causes resistance to change among some teachers which results in a barrier to SESLOAF adoption “**H1** *Teachers without training show hesitation in implementation*”. Heavy workload lead to rushing in assessment planning and syllabus is compounded with pressure and limited stationary resources further constrain the implementation practices “**H3** *Syllabus pressure is the biggest barrier; formal training is irregular and stationery & printing resources sometimes are limited*”. These

barriers suggest reinforcing the training programs across both general teaching and SESLOAF based specific response.

Findings of the Study

Finding 1: Recognition of SESLOAF with Uneven Implementation

The respondent of this study across four public schools in district Larkana cumulatively acknowledged SESLOAF's importance, respondents believe that it is standardized framework for achieving SLO based outcomes. Likely, PAT report were below 50% benchmark set by assessment centers and the ASPIRE report suggests that once cycle training is not enough to produce high level assessment literacy that SESLOAF demands

Finding 2: Lack of Professional Development

There exists a critical gap among teacher and head teacher in relation to any sort of SESLOAF related formal training. The participants rely on either informal office meetings or self-directed learning using own resources to carry out daily classroom teaching and learning. Although head teacher takes many monitoring steps iyet all these efforts could not successfully become substitute for targeted training. This was further confirmed by ASPIRE 2023 report where teachers given a single cycle training still indicated knowledge gaps.

Finding 3: Organizational Resource Barriers & Implementation Constraints

Head teachers and teachers constantly identified many structural barriers that reduce way towards systematic SESLOAF delivery. Many structural constraints such as overcrowded classrooms with huge student ratios, short classroom periods which are insufficient for assessment activities likely physical infrastructure creates a fearful environment and shortages of resources lead to insufficiency of assessment practices and the classes overloaded by Syllabi all collectively result into rushed assessment and prevent SESLOAF effective implementation. Additionally, a huge percentage of the schools uses concept of multi grade teaching due to staff & classroom shortages therefore outcome aligned approach of assessment is not possible (PAT, 2021).

Finding 4: Official Assessment Reports & Province Wide Assessment Incompetence

The PAT report highlights alarming scores of students in different language subject cumulatively below 30% which is even lower than 50% of the benchmark set by assessment centers. Against this ASPIRE report offers optimistic counter points indicating that targeted SESLOAF training was carried out with the teachers of four districts and it does produce significant gains, but yet there was certain knowledge gaps left due to its single cycled nature of training.

Discussion

Across the schools sampled in Larkana, teachers, students, and head teachers consistently recognised SESLOAF as an important framework for aligning assessment with SLOs, yet implementation was applied only partially and inconsistently from one classroom to another. This is consistent with broader evidence (Ahmed and Shamsi, 2022) report that Sindh's assessment policy is clearly articulated but rarely translates into consistent classroom practice, producing a persistent policy-practice gap. Low scores in the PAT 2021-22 report, together with the finding that one ASPIRE training cycle raised understanding to only partial proficiency, reinforce that awareness is not equivalent to embedded use. Viewed through Assessment for Learning (AFL) framework (Black & Wiliam, 1998), which treats assessment as integral to teaching rather than an isolated measurement event, this indicates that SESLOAF has so far reached only the recognition stage of AFL rather than genuine day-to-day formative use.

A second, closely related finding is the almost complete absence of structured professional development on SESLOAF, leaving teachers to rely on informal staff meetings and self-directed resources, while head teachers substitute lesson-plan checks and classroom visits for genuine capacity-building. This mirrors (Sahito et al., 2024), who found that the absence of professional growth opportunities and heavy workloads weaken teachers' ability to move beyond summative testing. The ASPIRE 2023 report shows that even after formal training, self-evaluation data still revealed lagging areas. AFL, argue that formative assessment depends on teachers' capacity to interpret evidence of learning and adjust instruction accordingly; without sustained professional development, teachers lack the pedagogical repertoire that AFL assumes.

A third finding concerns the structural and resource barriers, overcrowded classrooms, short periods, unsafe infrastructure, overloaded syllabi, and widespread multi-grade teaching, repeatedly cited as obstacles to systematic assessment. These barriers echo above studies which identify resource-constrained environments and large class sizes as central reasons why Sindh's teachers default to textbook-driven, summative assessment. Interpreted through AFL, these conditions undermine the theory's core assumption that teachers and students have the time and space for continuous feedback.

A final finding is that although students experienced varied assessment methods, they largely perceived assessment as a mechanism for producing grades rather than feedback for improvement, corroborated by the PAT report's finding of misalignment between SESLOAF's objectives and students' actual scores. This parallels (Zafar et al., 2025) and (Parmigiani et al., 2025), who show formative assessment produces stronger gains only when used explicitly as feedback, while (Ahmad et al., 2021) found Pakistani students often experience assessment as opaque and grading-focused. This contradicts AFL's central premise that assessment should actively shape and regulate learning rather than merely certify its endpoint.

Conclusion

This study explores the implementation barriers and gaps of SESLOAF in secondary public schools of District Larkana encountered by the respondent, including head teachers, teachers and students. The results of this study were triangulated with the official provincial assessment reports. SESLOAF is a standard based assessment framework that holds great potential to transform the quality of assessment in Sindh, it majorly emphasis on use of formative assessments that are SLO aligned, and provides pathways to structured assessment tools such as item development templates, rubrics and TOS & their alignment with assessment for learning (AFL) theoretical framework, this all positions SESLOAF as a reliable instrument for classroom based instructional improvements. However, the findings of this study clearly indicate that SESLOAF's potential is truly unrealized in Larkana's public schools and across much of Sindh. The framework implementation is inconsistent having structural clumsiness and a continuous absence of any sort of professional development that is necessary to embed SESLOAF into daily classroom teaching and learning. Teachers work within very stressing conditions such as deteriorating infrastructure, resource limitations, overloaded syllabi & huge classroom ratios and so on which makes framework guided assessment practices suffer deliberately. Students experience assessment as a grading mechanism rather than a tool for learning betterment. Assessment data constantly serves as prime reporting element which is not utilized for diagnostic or transformative purpose and this pattern was identified by a researcher in the literature (Fakirmohammad et al., 2021).

The AFL provides a better understanding of SESLOAF's practices. The ideas of AFL principles are undermined by results of this study due to institutional and structural conditions. Unless these conditions are addressed SESLOAF will remain only a policy document of significant importance but with limited implementation. Summing up, SESLOAF implementation in public schools of Larkana is uneven and feeble. The framework objectives are widely known but are incomplete and insignificantly applied. The progress is achievable as demonstrated by ASPIRE training outcomes but the significant progress requires multicycle teacher development support and resource allocation. The findings of this study provide situational and practical basis for recommendation that follow

Recommendations

- ◆ SE&LD and PEACe should initiate a multi-stage cascade training program in public secondary schools of District Larkana.
- ◆ Stakeholders should establish district-level monitoring through regular reporting, field observations, and teacher assessments for improvement rather than judgement.
- ◆ PAT, NAT, and other large-scale assessment data should inform curriculum, textbooks, and teacher training.

- ◆ Schools should improve basic infrastructure, reduce class sizes, and eliminate multi-grade teaching to support effective SESLOAF implementation.
- ◆ Curriculum review should align textbook SLOs with students' grade-level abilities and classroom realities.
- ◆ Schools should promote co-designing of assessments through sharing and reviewing question papers and rubrics.
- ◆ Teachers should gradually adopt simpler AFL strategies and progress toward higher-level assessment practices.
- ◆ Teachers should use digital tools such as video tasks, online quizzes, and feedback platforms, including group-based activities where internet access is limited.
- ◆ Future studies should use valid tools such as the Assessment Literacy Inventory (ALI) to establish baselines and identify geographic variations for CPD and training.

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