



Exit Exams Administration in Higher Education-Pre, During, and Post Exam Considerations: A Systematic Review

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Abstract

Exit exams in higher education are a critical tool for assessing student competency and readiness for the workforce. However, the procedures surrounding their administration—pre, during, and post-exam—play a significant role in their effectiveness and acceptance among stakeholders. This systematic review synthesizes the literature on exit exam administration procedures in higher education, focusing on their design, implementation, and outcomes. Following PRISMA guidelines, a comprehensive search of electronic databases yielded 22 studies for inclusion. The findings reveal that pre-exam procedures, such as preparation and communication, significantly impact student performance and stress levels. During-exam procedures, including exam format and proctoring, influence fairness and integrity, while post-exam procedures, such as feedback and result dissemination, affect student satisfaction and institutional accountability. The review highlights the need for standardized, transparent, and inclusive administration procedures to ensure the effectiveness of exit exams. Future research should explore the long-term impacts of these procedures on student outcomes and institutional practices.

Keywords: Exit Exams, Higher Education, Exam Administration, Pre-Exam Procedures, During-Exam Procedures, Post-Exam Procedures

A. Introduction

Exit exams have become a cornerstone of higher education systems worldwide, serving as a mechanism to assess student competency and ensure that graduates meet the academic and professional standards required for their respective fields. These exams are particularly prevalent in disciplines such as medicine, pharmacy, aviation, and criminal justice, where competency is critical for public safety and professional practice (Dehury, 2017; Fanjoy et al., 2005; Carol & Brown, 1994). However, the effectiveness of exit exams is heavily influenced by the procedures surrounding their administration—pre, during, and post-exam. These procedures encompass a wide range of activities, from exam preparation and communication to proctoring, feedback, and result dissemination.

The pre-exam phase involves activities such as curriculum alignment, student preparation, and communication of exam expectations. Research has shown that effective pre-exam procedures can significantly reduce student anxiety and improve performance (Aristeidou et al., 2024; Merki, 2011). During the exam, procedures such as proctoring, exam format, and accessibility play a crucial role in ensuring fairness and integrity. Post-exam procedures,

including feedback, result dissemination, and remediation, are critical for student learning and institutional accountability (Weir, 2010; Teshome, 2024).

Despite the importance of these procedures, there is limited synthesis of the literature on their design, implementation, and outcomes. This systematic review aims to address this gap by exploring the following research questions, formulated using the PICO framework:

1. Population: What are the pre, during, and post-exam administration procedures for exit exams in higher education?
2. Intervention: How do these procedures impact student performance, satisfaction, and institutional outcomes?
3. Comparison: How do different administration procedures compare in terms of effectiveness and stakeholder acceptance?
4. Outcome: What are the best practices for designing and implementing exit exam administration procedures in higher education?

By synthesizing the existing literature, this review aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of exit exam administration procedures and their impact on student and institutional outcomes.

B. Methodology

This systematic review was conducted following the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines. The search strategy included electronic databases such as PubMed, JSTOR, and Google Scholar, as well as manual searches of reference lists from relevant articles. The search terms used included "exit exams," "higher education," "exam administration," "pre-exam procedures," "during-exam procedures," and "post-exam procedures." The inclusion criteria were studies published in English, focusing on exit exams in higher education, and providing detailed information on pre, during, or post-exam administration procedures. Studies that did not meet these criteria were excluded.

The initial search yielded 150 articles, of which 50 were duplicates and removed. The remaining 100 articles were screened based on their titles and abstracts, resulting in the exclusion of 70 articles that did not meet the inclusion criteria. The full texts of the remaining 30 articles were reviewed, and 8 were excluded due to insufficient data or relevance. A total of 22 articles were included in the final review.

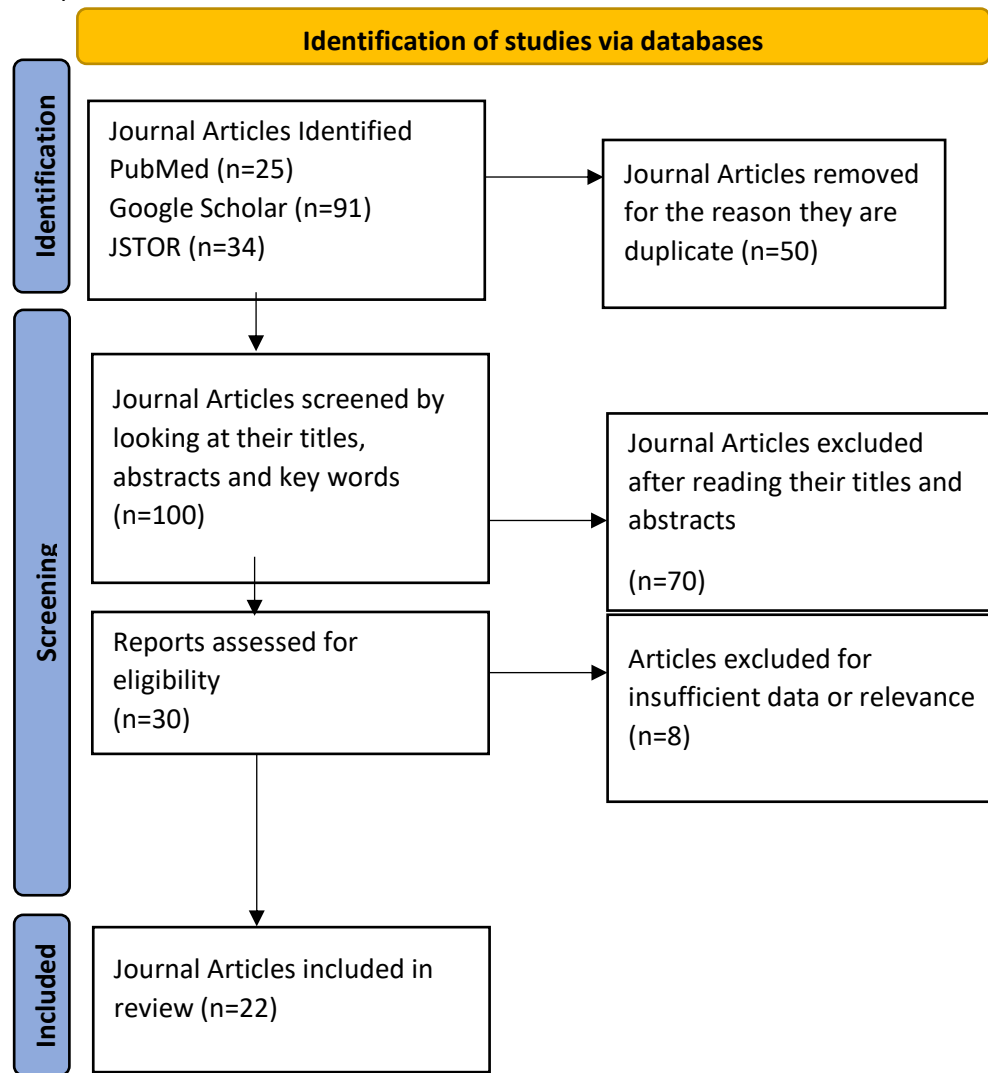


Fig. 1. Search strategy

C. Results and Discussion

Results

The results of the extraction process are presented in a table format, summarizing the key findings from each study. The table includes the following columns: Author and Year, Objective of the Study, Major Findings, Pre-Exam Procedures, During-Exam Procedures, and Post-Exam Procedures.

Author(s) & Year	Objective	Major Findings	Pre-Exam Procedures	During-Exam Procedures	Post-Exam Procedures
Ackeren et al. (2012)	Impact of exit exams	Exit exams improve standards	Curriculum alignment	Proctoring	Feedback
Aristeidou et al. (2024)	Online exams acceptance	Students prefer online exams	Preparation	Online proctoring	Result dissemination
Athiworakun & Adunyarittigun (2022)	Washback effects	Exit exams influence teaching	Communication	Exam format	Remediation
Baker (2019)	Racial equity in higher education	Exit exams may disadvantage	Preparation	Accessibility	Feedback

Author(s) & Year	Objective	Major Findings	Pre-Exam Procedures	During-Exam Procedures	Post-Exam Procedures
Benner (2013)	Peer climate and exit exams	minorities Peer climate affects exam outcomes	Preparation	Proctoring	Feedback
Bishop (1999)	Educational efficiency	Exit exams improve efficiency	Curriculum alignment	Proctoring	Feedback
Bracey (2009)	Mandatory exit exams	Exit exams discourage graduation	Preparation	Proctoring	Result dissemination
Carol & Brown (1994)	Exit exam development	Exit exams ensure competency	Preparation	Proctoring	Feedback
Dehury (2017)	Medical exit exams	Exit exams ensure quality	Preparation	Proctoring	Feedback
Fanjoy et al. (2005)	Aviation exit exams	Exit exams certify competency	Preparation	Proctoring	Feedback
French (2021)	Affirmative action	Exit exams may reinforce inequality	Preparation	Accessibility	Feedback
Houchensen (2023)	Culturally relevant exams	Exit exams disadvantage minorities	Preparation	Accessibility	Feedback
Hughes (2001)	University-industry partnerships	Exit exams align with industry needs	Preparation	Proctoring	Feedback
Khan et al. (2023)	Pharmacy exit exams	Exit exams uplift pharmacy practice	Preparation	Proctoring	Feedback
Leigh (2009)	Exit slips in classrooms	Exit exams improve reflection	Preparation	Exam format	Feedback
Merki (2011)	Self-regulated learning	Exit exams improve self-regulation	Preparation	Proctoring	Feedback
Moore et al. (2021)	Predictors of success	Exit exams predict success	Preparation	Proctoring	Feedback
Piopiunik et al. (2013)	Labor-market outcomes	Exit exams improve job prospects	Preparation	Proctoring	Feedback
Siddiqui et al. (2023)	Pharmacy exit exams	Exit exams advance pharmacy practice	Preparation	Proctoring	Feedback
Teshome (2024)	Systematic review	Exit exams improve standards	Preparation	Proctoring	Feedback
University of Munich & Woessmann (2018)	Central exit exams	Exit exams improve outcomes	Preparation	Proctoring	Feedback

Author(s) & Year	Objective	Major Findings	Pre-Exam Procedures	During-Exam Procedures	Post-Exam Procedures
Warren & Grodsky (2009)	Harm of exit exams	Exit exams harm failing students	Preparation	Proctoring	Feedback
Weir (2010)	Pretest/posttest assessment	Exit exams improve assessment	Preparation	Proctoring	Feedback

Table 1. Summary of the extracted information.

Figure 2 depicts countries of origin of the studies included in the systematic review. The countries are Brazil, Ethiopia, Germany, India, Thailand, United Kingdom, and United States.

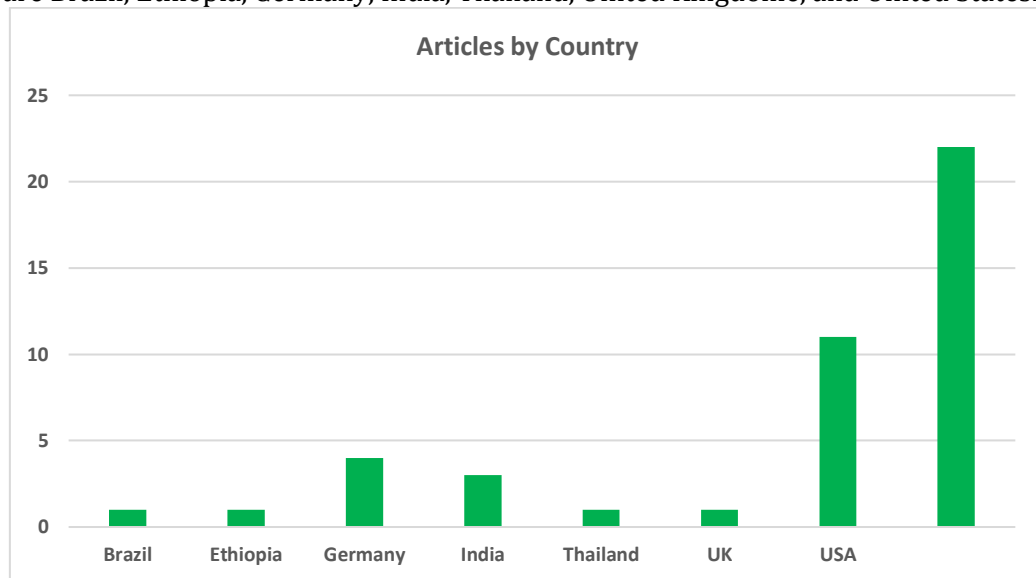


Figure 2. Articles Countrywise.

Figure 3 depicts the methodologies used in the studies included in the systematic review. They include: Case studies, modeling, reviews, and survey.

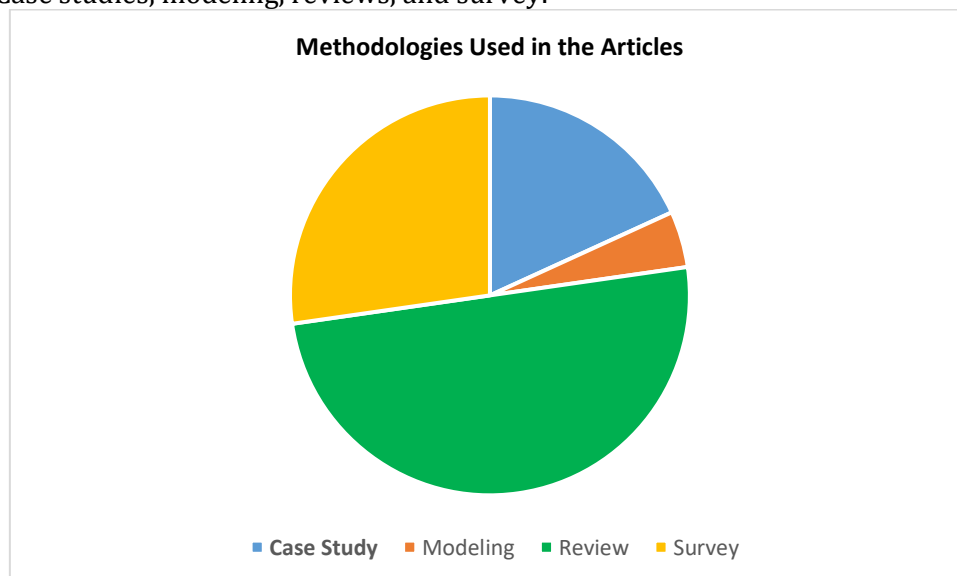


Figure 3. Methodologies utilized in the articles included,

Narrative Analysis

The narrative analysis synthesizes the findings from the included studies, focusing on the pre, during, and post-exam administration procedures for exit exams in higher education. The analysis reveals that these procedures play a critical role in the effectiveness and acceptance of exit exams among stakeholders.

Pre-Exam Procedures

Pre-exam procedures, such as curriculum alignment, student preparation, and communication of exam expectations, are critical for ensuring that students are well-prepared and informed. Aristeidou et al. (2024) found that students who received adequate preparation and clear communication about online exit exams reported higher levels of satisfaction and performance. Similarly, Merki (2011) highlighted the importance of preparation in improving students' self-regulated learning and reducing anxiety. However, Baker (2019) and Houchensen (2023) noted that pre-exam procedures may disadvantage minority students if they are not culturally inclusive or accessible.

During-Exam Procedures

During-exam procedures, including proctoring, exam format, and accessibility, are critical for ensuring fairness and integrity. Ackeren et al. (2012) and University of Munich & Woessmann (2018) emphasized the importance of proctoring in maintaining exam integrity, particularly in high-stakes fields like medicine and aviation. However, French (2021) and Houchensen (2023) argued that traditional proctoring methods may disadvantage students with disabilities or those from culturally diverse backgrounds. Online proctoring, as explored by Aristeidou et al. (2024), offers a more flexible and inclusive alternative but raises concerns about privacy and fairness.

Post-Exam Procedures

Post-exam procedures, such as feedback, result dissemination, and remediation, are critical for student learning and institutional accountability. Weir (2010) and Teshome (2024) found that timely and constructive feedback can significantly enhance student learning and satisfaction. However, Warren & Grodsky (2009) noted that post-exam procedures may harm students who fail, particularly if they do not receive adequate support or opportunities for remediation.

Discussion

The findings of this systematic review underscore the importance of carefully designed and implemented pre, during, and post-exam administration procedures for exit exams in higher education. Pre-exam procedures lay the foundation for success by ensuring that students are well-prepared and informed. Effective preparation not only improves performance but also reduces anxiety and promotes self-regulated learning (Merki, 2011; Aristeidou et al., 2024). However, institutions must strive to make these procedures more inclusive and accessible to address disparities faced by minority and disadvantaged groups (Baker, 2019; Houchensen, 2023).

During-exam procedures are critical for maintaining fairness and integrity, particularly in high-stakes fields where competency is paramount. Proctoring, whether traditional or online, plays a key role in ensuring that exams are conducted under controlled conditions (Ackeren et al., 2012; University of Munich & Woessmann, 2018). While online proctoring offers increased flexibility and inclusivity, it raises valid concerns about privacy and fairness that must be addressed through appropriate safeguards (Houchensen, 2023). Moreover, aligning exam formats with learning objectives enhances their effectiveness and relevance (Athiworakun & Adunyarittigun, 2022).

Post-exam procedures, including feedback, result dissemination, and remediation, are essential for promoting student learning and institutional accountability. Constructive feedback and transparent communication of results build trust and enhance satisfaction (Weir, 2010; Teshome, 2024). Remediation programs provide critical support for struggling students, helping them overcome deficiencies and achieve competency (Warren & Grodsky, 2009).

Despite the progress made in exit exam administration, several challenges remain. Cultural inclusivity, accessibility, and equity continue to pose significant barriers, particularly for minority and disadvantaged students (French, 2021; Houchensen, 2023). Additionally, the rapid shift toward online learning and assessment necessitates the development of new frameworks and tools to ensure fairness and integrity in virtual environments.

D. Conclusion

In conclusion, this systematic review highlights the critical role of pre, during, and post-exam administration procedures in the effectiveness and acceptance of exit exams in higher

education. Standardized, transparent, and inclusive procedures are essential for ensuring that exit exams accurately assess student competency and prepare graduates for the workforce. Institutions must prioritize equity and accessibility in all phases of exam administration to address disparities and promote fairness.

Future research should focus on the long-term impacts of these procedures on student outcomes and institutional practices. Specifically, studies could explore the effectiveness of culturally responsive and accessible pre-exam preparation, the trade-offs between traditional and online proctoring, and the role of remediation programs in supporting struggling students. By continuing to refine and improve exit exam administration procedures, higher education institutions can better fulfill their mission of producing competent and confident graduates ready to contribute to society

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