Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics
ISSN: 2707-756X
DOI: 10.32996/jeltal
Journal Homepage: www.al-kindipublisher.com/index.php/jeltal

JELTAL
AL-KINDI CENTER FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Examining Teacher-Related Factors in Washback: A Study of Moroccan EFL High-Stakes Examination

Youssef Oufela[1] ✉ Abdallah Ghaicha[2] and Dr. Hassan EL GARRAS[3]
[123]Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics, Department of English, Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences, Ibnou Zohr University, Agadir, Morocco
Corresponding Author: Youssef Oufela, **E-mail**: youssef.oufela@edu.uiz.ac.ma

| ABSTRACT
The current study aimed to investigate the nature of the relationship between the washback effect produced by a national high-stakes examination, currently implemented in the Moroccan EFL context, and three teacher-related factors, namely: gender, academic qualification, and teaching experience. The study adopted a quantitative approach. The data were gathered through a close-ended questionnaire completed by 316 high school teachers. The collected data were analyzed using inferential statistics with SPSS software (version 26). The results of the study revealed that gender and academic qualification had no effect on how teachers perceived the washback effects of the exam on their instructional practices. However, the intensity of the washback effects was to a lesser extent influenced by the mediating factor: teaching experience. The study provides valuable insights into the critical role of teacher experience in shaping washback intensity, which shows that washback from high-stakes tests does not occur automatically as a direct consequence of the test itself. This suggests that teaching experience and other factors may also play a role in mediating washback and hence warrant further investigation. The study offers significant implications for secondary education in Morocco.

| KEYWORDS
Washback effect; instructional practices; gender; academic qualification; teaching experience; washback intensity.

| ARTICLE INFORMATION
ACCEPTED: 16 June 2025 **PUBLISHED:** 30 June 2025 **DOI:** 10.32996/jeltal.2025.7.3.6

1. Introduction

1.1. Background to the Study

Over the last few decades, high-stakes testing has caused a huge discontent, and much of it is fueled by beliefs and assumptions about its consequences and washback effects for all stakeholders in the society (Ahmed and Rahman, 2019; Alqahtani, 2021; Barnes, 2016; Cheng, 1999; Jamila and Kabir, 2020; Kuang, 2020; Onaiba, 2014). Washback is a novel area of research that emerged within the last three decades, and it has been extensively investigated recently. In the field of language education, the influence of language tests which is exerted on teaching and learning is commonly known as "washback" (Bailey, 1996; Ghaicha and Oufela, 2020; Green, 2013). The extent to which an examination influences teachers to adapt or even change their instructional practices to meet its demands and requirements is referred to as "washback intensity" (Watanabe, 2004). These washback effects could be "in an area or a number of areas of teaching … affected by an examination" (Cheng, 1997, p. 43).

Early references in the literature about washback postulated a simple cause-and-effect connection between examinations and their effects on teaching and learning (Alderson and Wall, 1993; Bailey, 1996; Lam, 1994). However, these postulations have been rebutted. Multiple studies (Barnes, 2016; Jamila and Kabir, 2020; Onaiba, 2015a; Onaiba, 2015b; Shih, 2007; Shih, 2009; Watanabe, 2004b) have evidenced that washback is a highly complex and multifaceted rather than a monolithic phenomenon. Its complexity seemingly arises from the interplay of multiple stakeholders and various factors within the social context in which the test operates. In fact, the nature of washback in the classroom is largely determined by the intricate interaction of various factors,

including educational and socio-cultural, that are present within a testing context. Today, there seems to be a consensus among researchers (Ibrahim and Bello, 2020; Dawadi, 2021; Mizutani, 2009; Moradi, 2019; Onaiba, 2015b; Katagiri, 2023; Puspitasari, 2024; Rahman et al., 2021; Sadighi, et al., 2018; Shih, 2009; Spratt, 2005; Watanabe, 2004b; Wall, 2012; among others) that washback is mediated by several factors. This implies the existence of numerous variables that play an active role in the process of test washback. In this regard, Wall (2012) pointed out there are sundry issues that have yet to be resolved, and one of them relates to "the difficulty of separating out the influence of tests from effects of other variables in the educational context" (pp. 83-84).

Oftentimes, even when an examination carries significant consequences, the stakes remain but one among numerous factors that interact within the educational system (Wall 2012). Consequently, it is challenging to tell if the observed changes in teachers' instructional performance or students' learning are a consequence of the test, as what Messick calls "washback per se" (1996, p. 247), or a consequence of other factors operating in the system. According to Watanabe (2004b), Spratt (2005) and Shih (2009), the factors influencing the direction and intensity of washback can be categorized as the following: test factors, personal factors, micro-context, and macro-context factors. Spratt (2005) and Shih (2009) provided a comprehensive summary of the main factors, which are identified by empirical research. This includes teachers related factors, resources-related factors, school-related factors and exam-related factors.

The literature consistently identifies teachers' characteristics as critical factors in shaping when and how washback takes place. These characteristics subsume teachers' beliefs and perceptions, work experience, academic qualifications, educational backgrounds, and training. In his review of numerous empirical studies on washback from high-stakes exams, Spratt (2005, p. 5) highlights "how crucial a role the teacher plays in determining types and intensity of washback, and how much teachers can therefore become agents for promoting positive washback". However, this role may largely depend on various factors, such as teachers' gender, work experience, academic qualification, teaching philosophy, beliefs, attitudes and perceptions (Shih, 2009; Sprat, 2005).

Teacher-related factors are one type of the factor categories that might influence washback effects in educational contexts (Watanabe, 2004). While research on this specific aspect is not extensive, these factors (e.g., gender, qualification and work experience) can still play a role in shaping how individual teachers perceive and respond to high-stakes examinations all over the world.

Studies exploring the relationship between gender and washback are very scant. Employing a descriptive quantitative design approach in their study, Sadighi, et. al., (2018) examined 40 pre-university EFL teachers' perceived washback effects of the University Entrance Exam (UEE). The results revealed that teachers' gender was not a significant factor in changing their views about the effect of UEEs on the preuniversity English textbook ($F(1,33) = 0.004$, $p=.953$). In a similar vein, Onaiba (2014) explored the relationship between the gender of 100 teachers and their perceptions of the washback effects of the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE). Using an independent samples t-test, no significant effect of gender ($p > 0.05$) was reported on the teaching practices, teaching methods and techniques vis-à-vis the new examination. The findings indicated that gender had no direct effect on the degree and kind of washback.

Teacher academic qualification is also believed to be a determining teacher factor of the occurrence and the intensity of washback. Onaiba (2015b) stated that "…the kind of the academic qualification teachers possess is constantly mentioned as an important agent for determining the degree of influence that is brought about by exams" (p. 201). He contended that that qualified teachers are more likely to show less negative effect from high-stakes exams than less qualified or unqualified teachers.

In this regard, Onaiba (2015b) explored the effect of three types of academic qualification (Bachelor of Arts (BA), Bachelor of Education (BE) and Diploma of Teaching (DT) (the independent variables)) on the teaching practices (dependent variable 1), classroom testing practices (dependent variable 2), choice, and use of materials (dependent variable 3) of 100 teachers. A one-way ANOVA revealed that there was a statistically significant effect (at the $p < .05$ level) of — qualification on the first dependent variable and its sub-categories ($F(2,99)=7.38$, $p=0.001$, $F(2,99)=88.91$, $p=0.000$, $F(2,99)=7.55$, $p=0.001$), the second dependent variable and its sub-categories ($F(2,99)=17.51$, $p=0.000$, $F(2,99)=7.37$, $p=0.001$), and the third dependent variable and its sub-categories ($F(2,99)=83.15$, $p=0.000$, $F(2.99)=13.82$, $p=0.000$, $F(2,99)=24.13$, $p=0.000$, $F(2,99)=5.95$, $p=0.004$, $F(2,99)=4.22$, $p=0.017$). Although the three types of qualification had a significant effect on the dependent variables, BE teachers were less affected by the new examination. Conversely, DT teachers were more influenced by the examination than BE and BA. BE teachers are those who acquired enhanced pedagogical skills during pre-service training.

Multiple studies (Tayeb et a., 2014; Wang, 2010) on test washback indicated that teaching experience can influence how test washback impacts teachers. A few research studies (Cheng, 1999; Shohamy, et al., 1996) suggested that teachers' experience is a key factor in explaining why washback affects some teachers but not others. Onaiba (2014) noted that more experienced teachers are better equipped to adjust their teaching methods in response to new tests (BECE), while Shohamy et al. (1996)

found that experienced teachers are more perceptive to standardized testing and tend to align their teaching with test requirements. Similarly, Lam (1994) observed that experienced teachers are less likely to experience negative washback from curriculum changes, as their extensive experience makes them more adaptable and confident in their teaching practices.

Quantitative studies also showed the role of teacher experience in washback effects. For instance, Sadighi, et. al., (2018) revealed that various levels of the teachers' experience were a significant factor in forming the perceptions and attitudes of teachers about the effect of UEE on the pre-university English textbook ($F(3.33) = 133.07$, $p = .000$). In other words, teachers with more teaching experience were found to believe that UEE had a considerable effect on the English textbook. The participants' perception of the main textbook is that it does not follow the goal of the UEEs, which is to prepare the students to pass the test but not to enable them to communicate effectively. In a similar line of investigation, teaching experience has been found to affect teachers' instructional methodology. In this respect, Moradi (2019) revealed a significant difference between professors' perceptions of positive and negative washback, suggesting that their work experience has an impact on how they view these aspects ($t(68) = 4.735$, $p < .001$).

1.2. Research Context

This paper is part of an empirical study that was conducted in the Moroccan context that involved high school teachers currently teaching 2nd Year Baccalaureate classes. The focus of the study was the National Baccalaureate Examination administered by the Moroccan Ministry of Education to grade 12 at the end of Secondary Education. Part of this examination is the National Baccalaureate Examination of English (NBEE), which is designed by the Moroccan National Center of Evaluation and Exams, and it is taken for academic accreditation purposes. It aims at measuring Moroccan EFL students' knowledge and skills in vocabulary, grammar, reading, writing and language functions (The National Baccalaureate Exam Specifications, 2014).

1.3. Rationale and Significance of the Study

There are various motives for conducting the current study. One is purely methodological. A plethora of existing studies conducted on washback are qualitative and exploratory in nature. While these studies (Dawadi, 2021; Katagiri, 2023; Lam, 1994; Puspitasari, 2024; Rahman et al., 2021; Rahman et al., 2023; Shih, 2009; Spratt, 2005; Watanabe, 2004b) have mentioned various factors influencing the washback aspect, they did not analyze the relationships between these factors using statistical methods (Onaiba, 2015). As a result, there is an insistent need for more quantitative research to explore mediating factors, such as gender, qualification and work experience, and investigate the relationships between them. The findings from this research will provide further insight into how the nature of washback from exams can be shaped by variables beyond the exam itself.

Given that the teachers of English in this study come from diverse educational backgrounds, with varying types of academic qualifications and years of teaching experience, this research is deemed important as it explores the extent to which these variables may influence their responses to the current high-stakes public examination (NBEE). Previous washback studies have rarely focused on teacher-related factors, particularly the above variables (Onaiba, 2015b). The gap in this study concerning the relationship between teacher-related variables and the washback effects of the NBEE is a key focus of this study. Therefore, this study aims to address this gap and offer further insights into the issue under investigation.

1.4. Research Questions

The objective of the study is to determine whether three main teacher-related factors influence how teachers perceive the washback effects of the NBEE. The teacher-related variables that are explored in this study are as follows: gender, academic qualification and teaching experience. Therefore, the question that guides this study is the following:

- To what extent do teacher-related factors influence teachers' perceptions of the washback effects of the NBEE on their instructional practices?

2. Methodology

2.1 Participants and Sampling Procedures

Table 1.

Frequencies and Percentages of the Distribution of Teachers' Gender, Academic Qualification and Teaching Experience

		Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	220	69.6 %
	Female	96	30.4 %
	Total	**316**	**100,0 %**

Academic qualification	B. A.	210	66.4 %
	MA.	90	28.5 %
	PhD.	16	5.1 %
Teaching experience	1-5 years	75	23.7 %
	6-10 years	114	36.1 %
	11-20 years	79	25 %
	Over 20 years	48	15.2 %

The total number of the teachers who took part in this study is 316. As table (1) displays, 220 are male teachers, forming approximately 70% of the total percentage while 96 are female teachers constituting around 30%. With regard to academic qualification, the majority of the teachers (66.4%) have a Bachelor of Arts degree (B. A.), around 28.5% of have a Master's Degree (MA.), and 5.1% have a Doctor of Philosophy degree (PhD.). With respect to teaching experience, a relatively significant percentage of the teachers (36.1%) have between 6 and 10 years of teaching experience, 25% have between 11 and 20 years, 23.7% have less than 5 years, and a smaller proportion (15.2 %) have over 20 years of teaching experience.

The process of choosing these participants involved the use of purposive and snowball sampling. In non-probability sampling, "the researcher selects individuals because they are available, convenient, and represent some characteristic the investigator seeks to study" (Creswell, 2012, 145). According to Creswell (2012, p. 146), snowball sampling requires "the researcher to ask participants to identify others to become members of the study". The choice of such approach to sampling was due to the characteristics and availability of the target population. In this study, given the researcher's limited access to a large sample of teacher participants, it was deemed necessary to rely on the support of several inspectors and teachers to send the questionnaire to other participants whom they believe they are willing to take part in the study.

2.2 Data Collection

To serve the purpose of this study, a quantitative research design was employed. Data were collected using a questionnaire that was adapted from (Ramezaney, 2014). The questionnaire was completed by 316 Moroccan High School EFL teachers currently teaching 2nd Baccalaureate Classes to which the NBEE is administered. The questionnaire (Appendix 1) is divided into two main parts with a total of 30 items. The first part comprises 7 items focused on gathering demographic information about the participants. The second part includes 23 items designed to capture data on teachers' perceptions of the washback effect of the NBEE on their instructional practices. Specifically, these items aim to explore teachers' perceived washback effect on five instructional aspects: content of teaching, teaching materials, activities, teaching methods and classroom assessment. These five aspects serve as the main dependent variables in the study.

2.3 Validity and Reliability

Validity is crucial to ensure the credibility and accuracy of research instruments, as it confirms that the data gathered supports the intended interpretations (Creswell and Clark, 2017; Dörnyei, 2007). To enhance validity, this study relied on multiple sources of evidence. This includes reviewing the relevant literature to make sure the questionnaire aligns with existing research and employing expert judgment and pilot testing. The feedback gathered from a small pilot study helped refine the questionnaire's content and ensure its clarity and relevance.

Reliability is defined as when the research instruments and procedures obtain similar responses across different situations (Dörnyei, 2007). Cronbach's alpha coefficient is one of the most commonly used techniques for determining the reliability of research instruments (Pallant, 2007; Straub et al., 2004). Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is useful in measuring internal consistency reliability (Dörnyei, 2007). To ensure the reliability of the instrument, it was important to assess the internal consistency of the items. The data from table (2.) shows that the Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients are acceptable values.

Table 2.

Internal Consistency of Teachers' Questionnaire

Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient	Cronbach Alpha Based on Standardized Items	Interpretation	N of items
.756	.782	Good	23

2.4 Data Analysis

The quantitative data in the questionnaire was coded, stored and analyzed employing Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 26. This software was chosen thanks to its capability to perform a range of statistical operations and techniques, ensuring consistent results (George & Mallery, 2019). The initial step in the analysis involved coding the data. Numerical values were assigned to categorical variables. For instance, gender was coded as Male = 1, Female = 2, teaching experience as 1-5 years = 1, 6-10 years = 2, 11-20 years = 3, academic qualification as B. A. = 1, MA. = 2, PhD. = 3 and so forth. In addition, the Likert scale responses were coded as follows: Strongly disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Undecided = 3, Agree = 4, and Strongly agree = 5).

Both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were employed. The research question involves a number of independent variables (IVs) and dependent variables (DVs) that were examined separately. The independent variables included gender (male and female), academic qualification (B. A., MA., and PhD.) and teaching experience (1-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-20 years, and over 20 years). The effect of the mentioned independent variables was examined on the subsequent dependent variables: 1) content of teaching, 2) materials, 3) teaching methods, 4) activities, and 5) classroom assessment. For each of these dependent variables, the mean of the constituent items was calculated.

Prior to making a choice regarding the most appropriate statistical test for examining the difference between the aforementioned subgroups in the five dependent variables separately, a preliminary analysis was conducted to check the distribution of the data with regard to the key assumption of normality. In this regard, skewness and Kurtosis were calculated. Hair et al. (2010) defined normal data as data with skewness values falling within the range of -2 to +2 and kurtosis values within the range of -7 to +7.

The skewness and kurtosis values for all groups (male and female participants, academic qualifications, and teaching experience) indicated that the distribution of scores across the five DVs is within acceptable ranges, confirming the normality of the data. Consequently, an independent sample t-test was conducted to compare male and female participants' means, while a one-way ANOVA test was used to analyze differences among groups based on academic qualifications and teaching experience. Where significant differences emerged, Tukey's post hoc analysis was employed for further examination.

3. Results and Discussion

This study aims at investigating the assumption that the nature of washback from public examinations (the NBEE as a case study) can be influenced by various factors. These factors may include characteristics of the teacher (e.g., gender, teaching experience, academic qualifications), the context where the exam is administered (e.g., grade level, class size, student proficiency, and motivation), and the exam itself (e.g., its purpose, status, and stakes). However, this study specifically examines the effect of three teacher-related factors: gender, teaching experience, and academic qualifications. These independent variables, as stated earlier, are analyzed in relation to five DVs: 1) content of teaching, 2) teaching materials, 3) teaching methods, 4) activities, and 5) classroom assessment. Each dependent variable represents a key component of instructional practices that may reflect the washback effects of the NBEE.

3.1 Gender

As it is shown in Table 2, none of the five dependent variables (DVs) revealed significant gender differences, with all p-values > 0.05 and 95% confidence intervals containing zero. This indicates a lack of statistical differences between males and females across content of teaching, teaching materials, methods of teaching, activities, and classroom assessment.

Table 3

Results of Independent Samples T-Test for Gender Differences Across the Five DVs

Independent Samples T-Test					
DVs	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference (CI)	
				Lower	Upper
Content of teaching	.29	314	.767	-.12	.17
Teaching materials	1.06	314	.289	-.06	.21
Methods of teaching	.54	314	.588	-.11	.20
Activities	1.47	314	.141	-.03	.25
Classroom assessment	.02	314	.984	-.12	.13

These findings suggest that both male and female teachers perceive the washback effects of the NBEE on their instructional practices in similar ways. This uniformity may stem from commonalities in pre-service training, where both Moroccan male and

female teachers undergo identical programs to become qualified teachers, or from adherence to standardized curricular guidelines such as the national curriculum, white book, exam specifications, syllabus, pedagogical guidelines, ministerial circulars …etc., mandated by Moroccan educational authorities.

Similar studies in other contexts echo these results. Sadighi et al. (2018), for instance, found that teacher gender did not significantly influence opinions on the washback effects of university entrance exams on teaching practices. These findings collectively suggest that unified training and curricula may promote similar practices across genders but might also limit opportunities for individual variation in teaching.

3.2 Academic Qualification

As table (4.) clearly shows, the ANOVA analysis of data revealed no statistically significant differences among the three qualification groups (B.A., M.A., and Ph.D.) across the five DVs, as all p-values exceeded 0.05. For instance, regarding content of teaching, $F(2,313) = .25$, $p = .774$, and teaching materials, $F(2,313) = 1.01$, $p = .365$. This suggests that academic qualifications do not significantly influence teachers' responses to the NBEE.

Table 4.

Results of One-Way ANOVA Tests for Academic Qualification Differences Across the Five DVs

One-way ANOVA Test					
DVs		Sum of Squares	df	F	Sig.
Content of teaching	Between Groups	.19	2	.25	.774
	Within Groups	117.74	313		
	Total	117.94	315		
Teaching materials	Between Groups	.64	2	1.01	.365
	Within Groups	99.66	313		
	Total	100.30	315		
Methods of teaching	Between Groups	.67	2	.84	.432
	Within Groups	125.70	313		
	Total	126.38	315		
Activities	Between Groups	1.12	2	1.61	.201
	Within Groups	109.21	313		
	Total	110.33	315		
Classroom assessment	Between Groups	.092	2	.16	.846
	Within Groups	86.75	313		
	Total	86.84	315		

The lack of statistically significant differences among the three groups can be explained methodologically. In this study, the sampling size of the participant teachers is somewhat disproportionately biased towards teachers with B.As. More specifically, the number of teachers with a B.A. is prevalent, as it constitutes 66.4% compared to teachers with an MA. (28.5%) and teachers with a PhD. (only 5.1%). This is due to the choice of non-probability sampling: purposive and snowball. Therefore, this difference in the sampling size could be the reason why the findings obtained in this respect reflect a lack of statistical difference.

Interestingly, these findings differ from those of Onaiba (2015b), who reported significant effects of qualifications on teaching practices (e.g., $F(2,99) = 7.38$, $p = .001$). Onaiba found that BE teachers were less affected by the new examination. Conversely, DT instructors were heavily influenced by the BECE than BE and BA. (Bachelor of Arts) The latter are those who acquired enhanced pedagogical knowledge in their pre-service training. This contrast in findings may be attributed to contextual or methodological differences, for instance, the sampling techniques employed in both studies.

3.3 Teaching experience

Table 5.

Results of One-Way ANOVA Tests for Teaching Experience Differences Across the Five DVs

One-Way ANOVA Test					
DVs		Sum of Squares	df	F	Sig.
Content of teaching	Between Groups	3.09	3	2.80	.040
	Within Groups	114.84	312		
	Total	117.94	315		
Teaching materials	Between Groups	1.72	3	1.44	.229
	Within Groups	124.00	312		
	Total	125.73	315		
Methods of teaching	Between Groups	1.82	3	2.14	.095
	Within Groups	88.62	312		
	Total	90.45	315		
Activities	Between Groups	1.58	3	1.51	.210
	Within Groups	108.75	312		
	Total	110.33	315		
Classroom assessment	Between Groups	.30	3	.37	.774
	Within Groups	86.53	312		
	Total	86.84	315		

In relation to the third independent variable (teaching experience), the results of one-way ANOVA tests showed no significant differences among the four groups (1-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-20 years, and over 20 years) in terms of materials ($F(3,312) = 1.44$, $p = .229$), activities ($F(3,312) = 1.51$, $p = .210$), classroom assessment ($F(3,312) = .37$, $p = .774$), or teaching methods ($F(3,312) = 2.14$, $p = .095$). However, there were significant differences in the content of teaching ($F(3,312) = 2.80$, $p = .040$).

Table 6.

Results of Multiple Comparisons Between Groups Using Tukey's Post Hoc Test

Tukey HSD					
DVs	(I) Teaching experience	(J) Teaching experience	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Content of teaching	1-5 years	6-10 years	.727	-.3266	.1394
		11-20 years	.799	-.3417	.1636
		Over 20 years	.334	-.1009	.4784
	6-10 years	1-5 years	.727	-.1394	.3266
		11-20 years	1.000	-.2249	.2339
		Over 20 years	.036	.0127	.5520
	11-20 years	1-5 years	.799	-.1636	.3417
		6-10 years	1.000	-.2339	.2249
		Over 20 years	.062	-.0090	.5646

To identify which groups are different in the respective DV, a post-hoc analysis was conducted using Tuckey's test. The results are shown in table (5.). In terms of the content of teaching, only teachers with teaching experience ranging from 6 to 10 years and teachers with over 20 years showed a significant difference (mean difference= $M_{6\text{-}10\ years} - M_{over\ 20\ years} = .28$, $p = .036$). This finding suggests that teachers with teaching experience ranging between 6 and 10 years ($M = 3.39$) are more affected by the NBEE at the level of the content of teaching compared to teachers with over 20 years ($M = 3.11$). This could mean that teachers with moderate experience (6-10 years) may feel greater pressure to focus on the NBEE-assessed content, possibly to improve student performance and scores on the NBEE. In contrast, teachers with over 20 years of experience may have developed a deeper understanding of the curriculum because they became experts in the field, which makes them less reliant on the NBEE-specific content. Consequently, they are less susceptible to negative washback effects.

This finding corroborates Lam's (1994) observation that teachers with more experience are less prone to negative washback from curriculum changes, as their vast experience allows them to be more flexible and confident in their teaching practices. However,

it contrasts with several studies. For instance, Sadighi et al. (2018) found that teaching experience significantly influenced teachers' perceptions of the impact of university entrance exams (UEE) on the English curriculum, with expert teachers believing that the UEE had a considerable effect on what they taught ($F(3,33) = 133.07$, $p = .000$). Similarly, Onaiba (2014) reported that teaching experience had a significant effect on teachers' adoption of new methods and practices. Novice teachers were found to be less affected by exams, whereas more experienced teachers were more influenced by them. This discrepancy in findings may stem from differences in the educational contexts in which these studies were conducted, the exams characteristics and stakes or the methodological approaches adopted in each particular study.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

The results of inferential statistics showed that, unlike gender and academic qualification, teaching experience as an IV has an effect on one of the DVs: content of teaching. In other expressions, teachers with teaching experience ranging between 6 and 10 years are more influenced by the NBEE at the level of the content of teaching compared to teachers with over 20 years. This result appears to contradict Alderson and Wall's washback hypothesis that "tests will have washback on all learners and teachers" (1993, p. 121). However, it aligns more closely with the alternative hypothesis that "tests will have washback effects for some teachers, but not for others" (ibid, p. 121). Overall, these findings seem to substantiate the argument that washback is quite challenging to predict or control, as its nature is determined not just by the tests themselves but by the interaction of multiple influencing factors (Wall, 2012). The results indicate that the intensity of washback is inextricably linked to factors beyond the exam itself.

In light of what has been mentioned above, the results of the current study are likely to have significant pedagogical implications for educational policy, teacher training and professional development in Moroccan EFL context. Policymakers and educational authorities should urgently consider how to support teachers at different experience levels to reduce and mitigate the negative washback effects of the NBEE. For example, mentoring programs or curriculum development workshops might help teachers with moderate experience and also early-career teachers develop a comprehensive understanding of curriculum and language teaching pedagogies to ultimately reduce the over-reliance on test-specific content. Additionally, a culture of collaboration among the teachers should be nurtured and encouraged. In this regard, professional leaning communities can play a vital role where veteran teachers can mentor less experienced colleagues to help them better understand how to effectively implement the curriculum.

5. Limitations and future research

The present study certainly has some limitations. It is very important to acknowledge that of the use of non-probability sampling methods may limit the generalizability of the findings to other populations and contexts (Cohen et al., 2017; Dörnyei, 2007). Nevertheless, the insights derived from this research still remain significant because they contribute to our understanding of the washback dynamics in this context and can serve as a foundation for future studies.

Despite its limitations, this study stands out as one of the few studies that provide empirical evidence of the dynamic role of three teacher-related factors in washback. The findings suggest that teacher experience plays an active role in shaping the intensity of washback, which clearly reveals that the washback effects produced from high-stakes tests is not an automatic or direct outcome of the test alone. This certainly highlights new research avenues that warrant further investigation. Using quantitative research methodologies, future researchers should conduct large-scale studies that focus on other teacher-related factors that were not examined in this study.

Conflict of Interest: The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.
Funding Declaration: This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.
Author Contributions:
Youssef oufela: Conceptualization, methodology, writing – original draft, Data collection, analysis, writing.
Abdallah Ghaicha: Supervision and review & editing

References

[1] Ahmed, R., & Rahman, K. A. (2019). Review of empirical studies of washback in language testing. *BMJ*, 3(1), 150-162.
[2] Alderson, J. C., & Wall, D. (1993). Does washback exist? *Applied Linguistics,* 14(2), 115-129. https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/14.2.115
[3] Alqahtani, F. (2021). The impact of language testing washback in promoting teaching and learning processes: A theoretical review. *English Language Teaching*, 14(7). 21-26. https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v14n7p21
[4] Bailey, K. M. (1996). Working for washback: A review of the washback concept in Language testing. *Language Testing, 13*, 257-279. https://doi.org/10.1177/026553229601300303
[5] Barnes, M. (2016). The washback effects of the TOEFL iBT in Vietnam. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education, 41*(7), 158-174. https://doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2016v41n7.10

[6] Belkbir, R. (2023). The Backwash effect of the national exam on upper secondary Moroccan teaching. *Arbitrer*, *10*(2), 185–195. https://doi.org/10.25077/ar.10.2.185-195.2023

[7] Cheng, L. (1997). How does washback influence teaching? Implications for Hong Kong. *Language and Education*, 77(1), 38-54. https://doi.org/10.1080/09500789708666717

[8] Cheng, L. (1999). Changing assessment: Washback on teacher perceptions and actions. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 15(3), 253-271. https://doi.org/10.1016/s0742-051x(98)00046-8

[9] Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2017). *Research Methods in Education*. Routledge.

[10] Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. Boston: Pearson education.

[11] Creswell, J. W., & Clark, V. L. P. (2017). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research* (3rd Ed.). SAGE Publications.

[12] Curricula Directorate. (2007). *Pedagogical guidelines for English language teaching in high school*. Rabat, Morocco.

[13] Dawadi, S. (2021). Factors influencing washback of a high-stakes English-as-a-Foreign- language test. *The Electronic Journal for English as a Second Language*, 25(3), 1-16.

[14] Dörnyei, Z. (2007). *Research methods in Applied Linguistics: Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methodologies.* Oxford University Press.

[15] George, D., & Mallery, P. (2019). SPSS for Windows step by step: A simple guide and reference. 11.0 update (15th Ed.). Routledge. New York.

[16] Ghaicha, A., & Oufela, Y. (2020). Backwash in Higher Education: Calibrating assessment and swinging the pendulum From Summative Assessment. *Canadian Social Science*, *16*(11), 1–6. https://doi.org/10.3968/11905

[17] Green, A. (2013). Washback in language assessment. *International Journal of English Studies,* 13(2), 39-51. https://doi.org/10.6018/ijes.13.2.185891

[18] Hair, J. F., Black, W.C., Babin, B.J. and Anderson, R.E. (2010). *Multivariate Data Analysis*. 7th Ed., Pearson, New York.

[19] Ibrahim, A., A., & Bello, U. (2020). The Washback effect of WAEC/SSCE English test of orals on teachers methodology in Senior Secondary Schools in Sokoto Metropolis. *English Language Teaching,* 13(1), 180-189. https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v13n1p180

[20] Jamila, F., & Kabir, M., H. (2020). Examining the existence of"Teaching to the Test" at SSC Level in Bangladesh. *Creative Education,* 11, 558-572.

[21] Katagiri, N. W. (2023). How sociocultural factors mediate washback effect: a study of the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination English Language Paper 4. *Language Testing in Asia*, *13*(1). https://doi.org/10.1186/s40468-023-00250-4

[22] Kuang, Q. (2020). A Review of the Washback of English Language Tests on Classroom Teaching. *English Language Teaching*. 13(9), 10-17.

[23] Lam, H. (1994) 'Methodology washback-an insider's view. In D. Nunan R. Berry & V. Berry (eds.) *Bringing about change in language education* (pp. 83-102). Hong Long: University of Hong Kong.

[24] Messick, S. (1996). Validity and washback in language testing. *Language Testing*, 13(3), 241-256. https://doi.org/10.1177/026553229601300302

[25] Mizutani, S. (2009). *The mechanism of washback on teaching and learning*. Ph.D. Thesis. New Zealand: The University of Auckland.

[26] Moradi, E. (2019). The washback effect of final examinations at Payame Noor University on teaching and learning. *Malaysian Journal of Distance Education*, 21(1), 17–42. https://doi.org/10.21315/mjde2019.21.1.2

[27] Onaiba, A., M., E. (2014). *Investigating the washback effect of a revised EFL public examination on teachers' instructional practices, materials and curriculum* (Doctoral Dissertation, University of Leicester). https://hdl.handle.net/2381/28561

[28] Onaiba, A., M., E. (2015a). Impact of a Public Examination Change on Teachers' Perceptions and Attitudes towards Their Classroom Teaching Practices. *Journal of Research & Method in Education*, 5(1), 70-78. https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.1554715

[29] Onaiba, A., M., E. (2015b). Does Teacher`s Kind Of Qualification Account for Washback Intensity of An EFL Examination? *International Journal of Social Science and Humanities Research*, 3(4), 200-214.

[30] Ourf, M. E., & Marjane, D. (2024). The Washback effect of the Moroccan English Baccalaureate examination on teaching practices. *European Journal of English Language Teaching*, *9*(3), 23-38. https://doi.org/10.46827/ejel.v9i3.5480

[31] Pallant, J. F. (2007). *SPSS survival manual: A step by step guide to data analysis using SPSS for Windows*. http://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BA83963567

[32] Puspitasari, M. (2024). Social and cultural factors beyond washback of the National Examination: Exploring the impact of high-Stakes testing in Indonesian Secondary Schools from teachers' experiences and sociocultural factors. *The Qualitative Report*. https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2024.6289

[33] Rahman, K. A., Seraj, P. M. I., Hasan, M. K., Namaziandost, E., & Tilwani, S. A. (2021). Washback of assessment on English teaching-learning practice at secondary schools. *Language Testing in Asia*, *11*(1). https://doi.org/10.1186/s40468-021-00129-2

[34] Rahman, K. A., Rukanuddin, M., Chowdhury, M. S. Y., Ahmed, S., & Seraj, P. M. I. (2023). Recognizing stakeholders and factors mediating washback in language testing. *Education Research International*, *2023*, 1–9. https://doi.org/10.1155/2023/5548723

[35] Ramezaney, M. (2014). The washback effects of university entrance exam on Iranian EFL teachers' curricular planning and instruction techniques. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences,* 98, 1508–1517. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.03.572

[36] Sadighi, S., Yamini, M., Bagheri, M. S., & Yarmohammadi, L. (2018). Investigating pre-university EFL teachers' perceived washback effects of university entrance exams and teaching materials on students'learning objectives and teachers' class performance. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 4(1), 1-16. https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2018.1546448

[37] Shih, C. (2007). A new washback model of students' learning. *The Canadian Modern Language Review,* 64 (1), 135-162.

[38] Shih, C. (2009). How tests change teaching: A model for reference. *English Teaching: Practice and Critique, 8*(2), 188-206. http://edlinked.soe.waikato.ac.nz/research/files/etpc/files/2009v8n2dial1.pdf

[39] Spratt, M. (2005). Washback and the classroom: the implications for teaching and learning of studies of washback from exams. *Language Teaching Research, 9*(1), 5–29. https://doi.org/10.1191/1362168805lr152oa

[40] Straub, D., Boudreau, M. C., & Gefen, D. (2004). Validation Guidelines for IS Positivist Research. *Communications of the Association for Information Systems*, 13(1), 380-427. https://doi.org/10.17705/1cais.01324

[41] Tayeb, Y. A., Aziz, M. S. A., Ismail, K., & Khan, A. B. M. A. (2014). The washback effect of the General Secondary English Examination (GSEE) on teaching and learning. *GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies*, *14*(03), 83–103. https://doi.org/10.17576/gema-2014-1403-06

[42] The Moroccan National Center of Evaluation and Exams. (2014). *The national Baccalaureate Exam specifications: English subject all streams.* Rabat.
[43] Wall, D. (2012). Washback from: *The Routledge Handbook of Language Testing*. Routledge.
[44] Watanabe, Y. (2004a). Methodology in washback studies. In L. Cheng, Y. Watanabe & A. Curtis (Eds.), *Washback in language testing: Research contents and methods,* (pp. 19-37). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
[45] Watanabe, Y. (2004b). Teacher Factors Mediating Washback. In L. Cheng, Y. Watanabe & A. Curtis (Eds.), *Washback in language testing: Research contents and methods,* (pp. 129-147). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc..
[46] Wang, J. (2010). A study of the role of the "teacher factor" in washback. Doctoral dissertation, McGill University. https://escholarship.mcgill.ca/concern/theses/xp68kg62v