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RESEARCH ARTICLE

EXPLORING HISTORY & SOCIAL SCIENCE TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVE TOWARD FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT USED IN CLASSROOM FOLLOWING THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM 2021

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Abstract

Recent educational reforms in Bangladesh, including the National Curriculum 2021, have highlighted the importance of formative assessment (FA) in enhancing student learning. However, little is known about how History and Social Science (HSS) teachers at the secondary level perceive and apply FA. This qualitative study explored the perspectives and practices of ten HSS teachers from six schools in Dhaka, Narayanganj, and Munshiganj using semi-structured interviews and reflexive thematic analysis. Findings revealed that teachers viewed FA as a multifaceted process involving interactive strategies like communication, collaboration, and real-world applications. Despite recognizing its benefits, teachers faced challenges such as large class sizes, institutional barriers, and resistance from students and parents. The study recommended targeted training, ongoing professional development, and teacher collaboration to enhance FA implementation under the new curriculum.

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Introduction:-

Education is a dynamic field, which is constantly evolving to meet the needs of a changing world. Technological advancements, globalization, and social transformations demand a shift from traditional memorization-based learning to a system fostering critical thinking, problem solving, and adaptability. New educational framework has emerged in Bangladesh's secondary schools, which goes into implementation in 2023. This represents a significant turning point. This curriculum promotes a competency-based approach focusing on experiential learning alongside social constructivism and connectivism. It prioritizes a student-centered learning approach that utilizes formative assessment (FA) for continuous improvement in learning outcomes (Bangladesh Ministry of Education, 2021). FA is a powerful tool that provides ongoing feedback to students, helping them identify their strengths and weaknesses, and adapt their learning strategies to achieve better results (Black & Wiliam, 1998).

However, the previous assessment practices in Bangladesh focused heavily on summative assessments through high-stakes exams (Begum & Farooqui, 2008). That approach provided a limited snapshot of student learning and created pressure on students to perform well on a single test rather than focusing on ongoing development. The current curriculum prioritizes that students are no longer passive recipients of information but rather active participants in the learning process (National Curriculum Framework, 2021). The focus shifts from teacher-directed instruction to

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creating environments that cater to individual student needs and learning styles. In this transformative context, the integration of formative assessment practices has emerged as an important aspect, especially in fields that address the complex web of human history and social structure. For students in grades 6 and 7, the majority (60%) of their evaluation is determined by formative assessments that occur during learning. The national curriculum 2022 advocates for diverse assessment methods such as observation, portfolios, reflective and process-based assessment, continuous assessment, peer assessment, stakeholder assessment, and technology-based assessment. Implementing a new curriculum demands innovative assessment methods (Pastor, 2011) which requires prioritizing ongoing formative assessment over final summative evaluation and dedicating more resources to monitor and to support the student progress. While FA offers numerous benefits, including improved student learning outcomes and self-regulation skills (Black & Wiliam, 1998), research suggests a gap between policy and practice in Bangladeshi classrooms (Ahmed, 2014). This gap is particularly concerning for history and social sciences (HSS) subjects. FA implementation in Bangladesh often focuses on general subjects, with limited exploration of specific challenges and opportunities in HSS classrooms (Arrafii & Sumarni, 2018). HSS subject requires a blend of skills like critical thinking, historical analysis, and source evaluation. Teachers' lack in-depth training on effective FA strategies specifically for HSS subjects could lead to FA practices that are superficial or fail to promote deeper learning skills (Aziz, 2015).

In the context of the National Curriculum 2021, which sets the stage for educational objectives and expectations, it is essential to understand how history and social science teachers perceive and apply various forms of assessment practice. This study uncovers the distinct aspects that influence teachers' decisions, practices, and challenges when integrating formative assessment strategies in the classroom. This lights on how teachers adapt formative assessment strategies to the unique demands of History & Social Science, as highlighted by the different approaches needed compared to other subjects (Bennett, 2018). Studies by Stiggins (2002) and Black et al. (2003) are among the works in the literature that emphasize the value of professional development in enhancing teachers' comprehension and use of formative assessment. Uncovering teachers' perspectives on formative assessment can support the development of targeted professional development efforts to address specific needs identified in research. This research will provide valuable insights to policymakers, schools, teacher trainers, administrative body, practitioners and the teachers themselves.

Research questions

The research questions focus on exploring the perspectives of teachers regarding formative assessment in history and social science classrooms as well as the challenges they face in implementing effective formative assessment strategies.

1: How do teachers perceive the formative assessment strategies in history and social science classroom?

1) 2: *What challenges do social science teachers encounter in implementing formative assessment strategies?*

Literature review

Formative assessment is a cornerstone of effective teaching and learning. An ongoing process allows teachers to monitor student progress, identify strengths and weaknesses, and adjust instruction accordingly. W. James Popham coined the term "formative assessment" in the 1960s (OECD, 2013). It refers to a wide range of methods teachers use to continuously evaluate student understanding, learning needs, and academic progress throughout a lesson, unit, or course (Popham, 2008). In contrast to summative assessments that measure learning at the end (like final exams), formative assessments are "in-process" and guide instruction (OECD). Formative assessment has been recognized as an important element in improving educational outcomes (Black & Wiliam, 1998). Research highlighted its role in promoting student engagement, understanding, and the development of critical thinking skills (Sadler, 1989; Hattie & Timperley, 2007). By addressing learning gaps early and providing targeted support, teachers can help students overcome challenges and experience success. This fosters a sense of confidence and motivation to continue teach (Butler, 2018). Formative assessment supports the development of students' self-regulation skills, encouraging them to take ownership of their learning (Nicol, 2006). Teachers use formative assessment information to make timely adjustments to their instructional strategies, ensuring that teaching is responsive to students' needs (Sadler, 1989). Black and Wiliam (1998) emphasized the crucial role of feedback in formative assessment. Topping's (1998) research on peer assessment stressed the significance of student involvement. Active participation in assessment processes empowers students to engage in self-directed learning and take ownership of their progress. Boud and Falchikov (2006) discussed the need for teachers to adjust their strategies based on formative assessment data. This adaptive approach allows instructors to tailor their methods to address individual student needs. Problem-based learning methods can enhance comprehension and close achievement gaps in students' learning when properly integrated with formative evaluation (Bottage et al., 2007). This makes them useful in teaching and learning.

Conversely, Black and William (2011) emphasized how crucial it is for teachers to ask insightful questions in order to facilitate the implementation of formative assessment. Novak's (1990) worked on concept mapping advocates for the use of diverse assessment tools. Employing various methods, such as quizzes, concept maps, and peer assessments, provided a comprehensive understanding of student learning.

2) *The teacher's perspective plays an important role in implementing formative assessment. Research showed that teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and understanding of assessment had a significant impact on their instructional practices (Pajares,1992).Research suggested a link between teachers' expertise in formative assessment and their ability to utilize it effectively in the classroom. Experienced teachers with deeper understanding can employ a wider range of assessment strategies and interpret student data more effectively (Black & William,1998).Exploring these perspectives is important for understanding how formative assessment is integrated into history and social science education.Teachers' attitudes toward formative assessment may be influenced by emotional experiences in the classroom (Kagan, 1992).Cross-cultural differences influence teachers' perspectives on formative assessment. The study provided that cultural backgrounds shaped teachers' expectations, interpretations, and strategies related to formative assessment (Harlen, 2007). Cultural contexts and educational philosophies can also shape teacher perceptions. For example, teachers from cultures that emphasize recital learning and teacher-centered instruction might require additional support in adapting to formative assessment practices that prioritize student engagement and self-reflection (Cheng ,2013).By learning from each other and engaging in reflective practice, teachers can refine their approaches(Brookhart ,2008). The dynamic nature of teachers' choices based on student needs, learning objectives, and classroom dynamics is important for formative assessment (William, 2007).*

Table 1

Aspects of Formative Assessment

	Where the learner is going on	Where the learner is right now	How to get there
Teacher	1.Clarifying learning intentions and criteria for success	2.Engineering effective classroom discussion, questions, and learning task that elicit the evidence of learning	3.Providing feedback that moves learner forward
Peer	Understanding learning intentions and criteria for success	4.Activating students as instructional resources for one another	
Learner	Understanding learning intentions and criteria for success	5.Activating students as the owners of their own learning	

Note. Adopted from “Developing the Theory of Formative Assessment” by P. Black and D. William, (2012), *Assessment and Learning*, p. 209. Copyright 2012 by Sage Publications.

Table 1 presents a sequential numbering of various aspects, where 1 leads 2 and so forth, as outlined by Black et al. (2003). Consequently, formative assessment encompasses five key aspects: clarifying understanding and sharing learning intentions and criteria for success, effective questioning and classroom activities, descriptive teacher feedback, peer-assessment, and self-assessment. William and Thompson (2007) further expounded that these five key aspects aligned with formative assessment principles, covering curriculum philosophy, classroom discourse, interactive whole-class teaching, feedback, collaborative learning, reciprocal teaching, peer-assessment, metacognition, motivation, interest, attribution, and self-assessment.

Although formative assessment has many benefits, its implementation is not free from its challenges. Hurdles mentioned in the literature include time constraints, lack of resources, and variability in interpretation of evaluation practices (Stiggins, 2004). Teaching history and social sciences presents unique challenges due to the nature of the content and skills emphasized. Despite the documented pedagogical benefits of formative assessment strategies, teachers face a variety of pedagogical challenges when implementing formative assessment in science education. These educational challenges include classroom size, lack of physical and material resources, accessibility and suitability of support materials for learners and teachers, languages of learning and teaching, and parental involvement (Black & William, 1998; Black & William, 2011). Nakabugo (2008) found that when introducing

formative assessment in large classes, teachers provided fewer activities and exercises to reduce the burden of marking, at the expense of continued use of appropriate teaching strategies.

On another practical level, Okongo et al. (2015) argued that teachers should be provided with sufficient teaching and learning resources to ensure the effective implementation of formative assessment; it recommends that more resources should be allocated to access and procurement of physical and material resources to ensure meaningful implementation to enable formative evaluation. Parent involvement is another challenge History and Social Science teacher’s face when incorporating formative assessment into classroom practices. Ntekane (2018) found that parents in rural areas were often unable to develop strong bonds with schools, and some parents are illiterate and can only communicate in their native language, making science education more difficult and challenging. Unable to participate actively in formative assessment activities such as homework and assignment.

The curriculum in Bangladesh has adopted a competency-based education system aligning with global trends. Competency is viewed as a combination of knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes. If a learner can perform in a particular context using a combination of required knowledge, skills, and attitudes or qualities, values, morality, and so on, then they can be considered as competent in that context (Kennedy & Hyland , 2009).

3) *Gaps in the Current Literature*

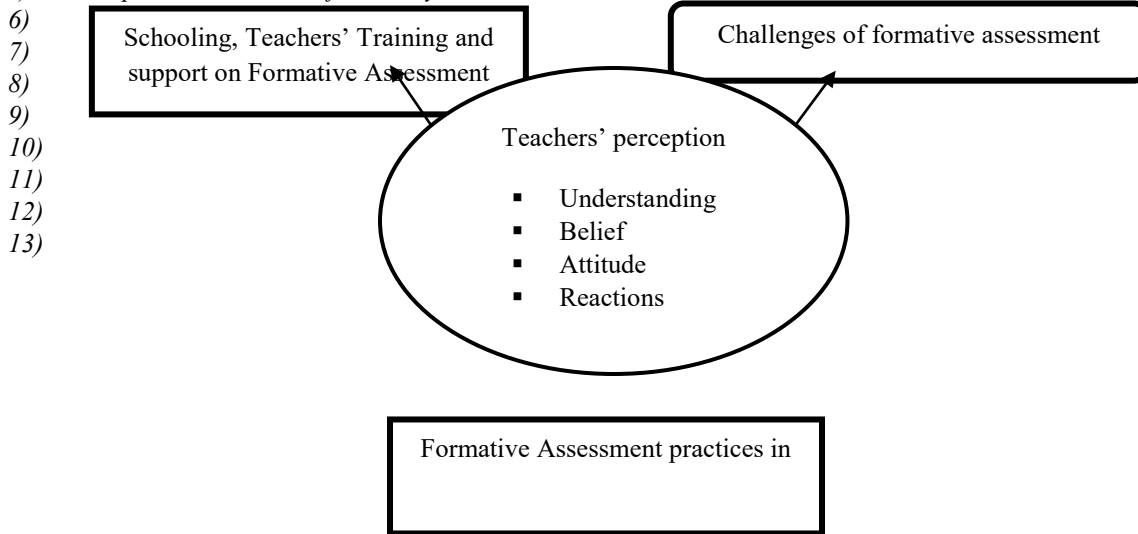
Although existing research provides valuable insights there are also gaps that require further investigation. There is a growing body of research on formative assessment (FA) practices in general, and a focus on Bangladesh's educational system. There seems to be a gap regarding the specific implementation of FA within history and social science (HSS) subjects under the recently introduced National Curriculum Framework 2021 (NCF 2021). Studies explored the overall effectiveness of FA in Bangladesh or compare different FA techniques without delving into subject-specific considerations. Research on FA implementation focused on core subjects like math or language arts, neglecting the unique challenges and opportunities for FA in HSS subjects. To conduct this research, I had gone through journals, articles, books, national curriculum, formative assessment guideline etc.

Conceptual framework:

This framework serves as a roadmap for the study, illustrating the interconnected relationships influencing teachers' beliefs about formative assessment. It highlights the various factors that collectively shape these beliefs and the subsequent influences on classroom assessment practices.

4) *Figure 1*

5) *Conceptual Framework of the study*



The conceptual framework presented in Figure 1 outlines the intricate relationships influencing teachers' beliefs. First, it illustrated a unidirectional relationship where schooling, accumulated personal and classroom experiences, as well as training and support collectively shaped teachers' beliefs. Second, the framework depicted interconnected relationships between teachers' beliefs and two key factors: professional coursework barriers and classroom formative assessment practices. Within this framework, internal factors—teaching experience, gender, and educational background—were identified as elements shaping teachers' beliefs as well. Research by Pettit (2011) supported the idea that years of teaching experience affect the beliefs of mainstream teachers in the United States.

Educational background also plays a significant role, as highlighted by studies conducted by Richards et al. (2001) and Narathakoon et al. (2020), emphasizing the influence of teachers' schooling background and experience on their beliefs. Additionally, gender differences as indicated by Li's study (1996) are recognized as having some effect on teachers' belief.

Research Methodology

The study followed an interpretive qualitative research design, as suggested by Merriam and Grenier (2019). McMillan and Schumacher (2010) posited that a qualitative study is meant to be descriptive and interpretive in nature. An interpretive qualitative approach was used because the researcher wanted to capture the experiences of history and social science teachers who have passed through formative assessment practice in classrooms under the national curriculum 2022 since the beginning of 2023. This study aimed to understand how teachers make meaning of formative assessments, how they interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meanings they give to their educational experiences. The methodological matrix is given in the following table.

Table 2

Methodological Matrix

Research Questions	Type of research	Data collection tool	Sampling technique	Data analysis
i. How do teachers perceive the formative assessment strategies for students' engagement and learning outcomes in history and social science classroom?	Qualitative	10 interviews	Purposive sampling	Thematic analysis
ii. What challenges do social science teachers encounter in implementing formative assessment strategies?	Qualitative	10 interviews	Purposive sampling	Thematic analysis

The research focused on secondary schools within the Dhaka division of Bangladesh. Schools were chosen from three districts within the division: Dhaka city, Narayanganj district, and Munshiganj district. These locations were selected for their convenience and their relevance to the research objectives.

Table 3

Data sources of the Study

Data Source	Number of secondary schools	School status	Total participants	School wise participants
Teachers	Total schools = 06 Dhaka city =02 Narayanganj district =02 Munshiganj district =02	i. Government secondary school -02 ii. Autonomous secondary school-02 iii. Non-govt. secondary school -02	Total=10	i. Government secondary school teachers -04 ii. Autonomous secondary school teachers -02 iii. Non-govt. secondary school teachers -04

The participants for this study were all history and social science teachers from secondary schools in the Dhaka division who currently teach under the competency-based curriculum. However, the research involved six different schools within the division. A sample of 10 teachers were selected from these schools. These schools were chosen to represent a variety of types, including public, private, and autonomous institutions. The teachers were all involved in teaching history and the social sciences in secondary schools. The participants provided reliable information on the pedagogical strategies they use to integrate formative assessment into their classroom practice.

Sampling technique

This study utilized a combined sampling strategy employing elements of both purposive sampling and convenience sampling (a non-probability technique). The research aimed to gather in-depth information on how teachers implement formative assessment (FA) for history and social science subjects within the competency-based curriculum. Purposive sampling ensured the selection of teachers with extensive knowledge and experience in using FA practices for these specific subjects (Merriam, 2009). Convenience sampling was incorporated strategically due

to practical constraints such as distance and time limitations (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Schools were chosen based on their proximity to the researcher facilitating data collection. Within these conveniently located schools, teachers were selected purposively based on their experience and expertise in FA for history and social science. This ensured that participants possessed the desired characteristics relevant to the research topic, namely, the ability to offer detailed insights on integrating FA within the new curriculum (Shank & McQueen, 2005). This combined approach aligns with the viewpoints of several researchers. Creswell (2014) acknowledged the practicality of merging purposive sampling with convenience sampling when resources or time is limited. Furthermore, Teddlie and Yu (2007) suggested using convenient sampling strategically alongside purposive sampling to gain initial access to participants and then refine the sample based on desired characteristics.

Data collection tools

The Researcher conducted semi-structured interviews on teachers asking predetermined questions through face-to-face meetings and phone calls. The 13 semi structured questions were formed focusing on the research questions. These questions consisted of three simple demographics questions, such as gender, field of study and academic status, mainly to determine whether demographics played a significant role in teachers' perceptions on formative assessment at the school. Nine questions were designed to gauge teachers' overall perceptions toward formative assessment from different perspectives as well as five questions related to challenges they face in this domain.

Data Analysis

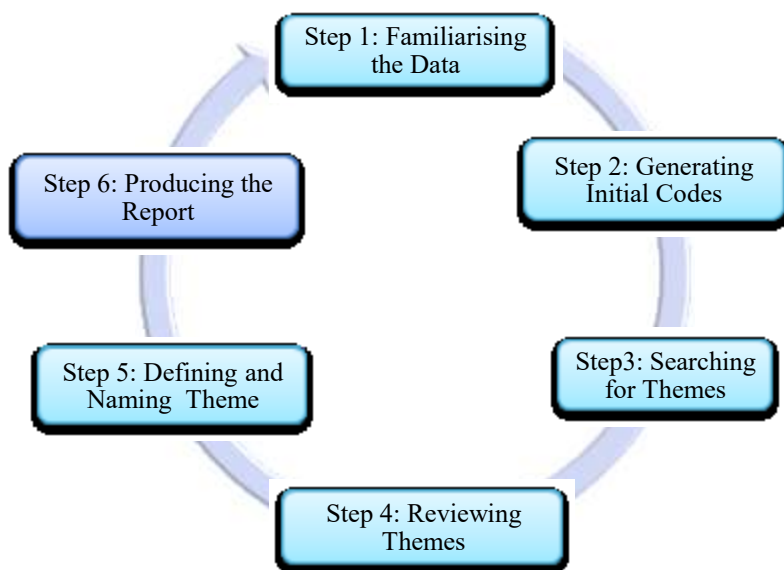
This study employed thematic analysis, a qualitative research method for identifying and analyzing recurring themes within the data (Creswell, 2018). Specifically, a reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was chosen. This approach ensured a respectful and nuanced analysis of the qualitative data derived from the teachers' interviews, allowing the exploration of their perceptions of formative assessment practices in history and social science education.

The six-phase analytical process

RTA is a six-step process that guides researchers in identifying, analyzing, and interpreting themes within qualitative data. The six-phase framework is given in figure.

Figure 2

Six-Phase Framework of Thematic Analysis



II. NOTE. ADAPTED FROM BRAUN AND CLARKE (2006).

To facilitate the coding and thematic analysis process, NVivo software was utilized.

Phase one: Familiarization with the data

To gain a thorough understanding of the interview data, I employed a two-step process. First, I actively listened to each recording twice. This active listening allowed becoming familiar with the overall flow of the conversations and key points raised by the participants. Following this, each interview was transcribed manually immediately after listening. After transcribing all the interviews, I delved deeper into the data by reading each transcript multiple times.

During this close reading, I started to notice early trends emerging within the participants' responses. Additionally, I documented any potentially interesting passages that might warrant further exploration. I also began to document my initial thoughts and feelings about the data and the analysis process itself.

Box -1

Example of a part of preliminary notes taken during phase one

- Several teachers express a clear understanding of formative assessment, while it seems this term is not clear enough to others.

- More empathize was give on practical oriented work by most of the teachers.

- Time constraints and lack of resources were mentioned frequently as challenges in implementing Formative assessment practices effectively.

- Teachers report using a variety of formative assessment methods.

- A strong desire for more professional development opportunities on effective formative assessment strategies is expressed by all teachers.

- Lack of available training and support and the dearth of the recognition of teachers' effort regarding the implementation of formative assessment in classroom.

Phase two: Generating initial codes

Preliminary coding iterations were performed using NVivo software. This facilitated the coding process by allowing me to assign codes to specific sections of the text and link them together. This streamlined process ensured efficient coding and minimized the risk of duplicate codes. Both semantic and latent coding were used. No attempt was made to favor semantic encoding over latent encoding or vice versa.

Through multiple iterations of coding and reviewing the transcripts, the researcher was able to identify patterns and emerging themes within the data (see Box 1 for an extract of the preliminary coding). Codes that did not appear to contribute meaningfully to the themes were discarded as the analysis progressed.

Box 2

Extract of Preliminary Coding

I engage the class through communication techniques that is; discussion begins before introducing the topic [C1]. The classroom experience is exploratory, encouraging students to collaborate in groups and engage in practical activities [C2]. Visualization, including video presentations and image sharing, is integral to the teaching approach. Both group and individual assignments are given, Groups are formed through dynamic methods like tossing, ensuring all students, including backbenchers and high-performing ones, get leadership opportunities [C3]. Teamwork stands out as highly effective, allowing students to analyze and consult within the group. Single work tends to be less engaging for students [C4]. In feedback session, Teacher -students are working simultaneously and the teacher is conducting a variety of activities through a more dynamic presentation, speech, debate [C5].

In this way, the dataset was fully coded and codes were collated in order to examine the patterns within the data and the diversity of the positions held by participants.

Phase three: Generating themes

This phase begins when all relevant data elements had been encoded. This involved combining multiple codes with similar underlying concepts or data characteristics into a single code. Similarly, certain codes emerged as representing overarching narratives within the data and were promoted as subthemes or even themes (Braun & Clarke, 2012).

Box 3

Theme Generation

Extract	Codes	Themes
I engage the class through communication techniques that is.....	[C1] Pre-instructional Discussion.	Active Learning Environment
In feedback session, Teacher - students are working simultaneously and the teacher is conducting a variety of activities through a more dynamic presentation, speech, debate [C5].	[C2] Collaborative and Activity-Based Learning	
	[C3] Dynamic Group Formation	
	[C5] Interactive Feedback Sessions	
	[C4] Effective team work	Inclusive and Engaging Group Work

Active learning environment theme encompassed codes C1, C2, C4, and C5. It highlighted on creating a classroom environment that promotes active engagement from students. Strategies like pre-instructional discussion, collaborative activities, and interactive feedback sessions encouraged participation and deeper understanding. The finding that students find group work more engaging (C4) further supported this theme.

Code C3 (dynamic group formation) suggested a dedicated effort to create inclusive and diverse learning groups. This potentially led to a sub-theme under "Active Learning Environment" that explored the benefits and challenges of specific group formation method (e.g., tossing) in promoting participation and leadership opportunities for all students.

Phase four: Reviewing potential themes

At this phase, it is common to find that some candidate themes did not function well as meaningful interpretations of the data or not provide information that addresses the research questions. Some of the constituent codes or data items that inform these themes were incongruent and required revision. The researcher conducted a recursive review of the candidate themes in relation to the coded data items and the entire data set focusing on the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Phase five: Defining and naming theme

During this phase, the analysis comprised two review levels. In Level 1, the focus was on examining the relationships between data elements and codes that influenced each theme and subtheme. Moving to Level 2, potential subtopics were assessed in relation to the dataset, evaluating how well they could interpret the data concerning the research question. Following Braun and Clarke's approach, addressing Patton's (1990) "double standard for judging categories" involving internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity was deemed helpful in answering these crucial questions.

Trustworthiness

In qualitative research, trustworthiness refers to the "degree of confidence readers can place in the findings of the study" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Establishing trustworthiness is especially critical in this domain as qualitative research methods rely heavily on the interpretation and analysis of data, often derived from interviews (Creswell, 2014). The researcher used multiples ways to increase the trustworthiness of the study. These were as follows i. peer review examination ii. Maximum variations iii. Audit trait.

- i. Peer review examination: The researcher sought feedback from respected supervisor, two course-mates and some colleagues with expertise in the field of formative assessment. Their review on methodology, data analysis, and interpretations helped identify potential biases or misinterpretations. Their feedback ensured the research aligned with established practices in the field.
- ii. Maximum variations: Purposefully selecting participants from diverse backgrounds (public, private, and autonomous schools; varying experience levels; different locations within Dhaka) allowed to capture a broader range of perspectives.
- iii. Audit Traits: This research included a thorough explanation of the steps, techniques, and decision points made throughout the study's execution for transparency. This allowed other researchers to assess potentially the validity of this study's conclusions.

Ethical considerations

The study received approval from school head teachers to interview teachers. A detailed explanation of the research goals, topic, potential risks and benefits of participation, and how the data would be used was provided to all participating teachers. All participating teachers provided informed consent after receiving clarification. Participation was voluntary, and teachers were assured anonymity and confidentiality throughout the interview process. Pseudonyms were used for all participants in transcripts. Interview data was stored securely on a password-protected laptop. No potential conflicts of interest were identified in this research.

Limitation

- The study had a limited sample size, potentially compromising the generalizability of the findings to a broader population of history and social science teachers.
- The study focused on some specific regions of Dhaka division.
- The study was conducted within a limited period.
- The study relied on self-reported data from teachers or subjective interpretation of their experiences.
- The study primarily focused on teachers' perspectives, overlooking the valuable insights that students could provide regarding their experiences with formative assessment.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

The information about the participating teachers' demographics provided context for interpreting the findings and helped to consider how individual characteristics might influence their perspectives on formative assessment practices.

Table – 4

Demographic Profile

Participants no	Gender	School's location	Teaching experience	Education qualification
T1	Female	Munshiganj	5 years	MSC
T2	Female	Munshiganj	16 years	MSS
T3	Female	Dhaka south	9 years	MA
T4	male	Dhaka north	4 years	MSS
T5	Male	Narayangonj	12 years	MA
T6	Female	Narayangonj	3 years	BA
T7	Female	Munshiganj	7years	BA
T8	Male	Narayangonj	6 years	MSS
T9	Male	Munshiganj	14years	BSS
T10	Male	Narayangonj	23 years	MSC

The study involved ten participants, consisting of an equal number of female and male teachers. This gender balance ensured diverse perspectives, which were represented in the analysis. The participants came from schools located in various districts within Dhaka division: Munshiganj, Narayangonj, Dhaka North, and Dhaka South. The teachers possessed a wide range of teaching experience, ranging from 3 to 23 years. This diversity in experience offered insights from both novice and experienced practitioners on formative assessment throughout their careers. The majority of participants hold Master's degrees (MSC and MSS), indicating a strong educational foundation. However, there were also teachers with Bachelor's degrees (MA and BA) and one participant with a Bachelor of Social Science (BSS) qualification. Thus, the demographic profile of the participants displayed a diverse group of teachers with varying experiences, locations, and educational backgrounds.

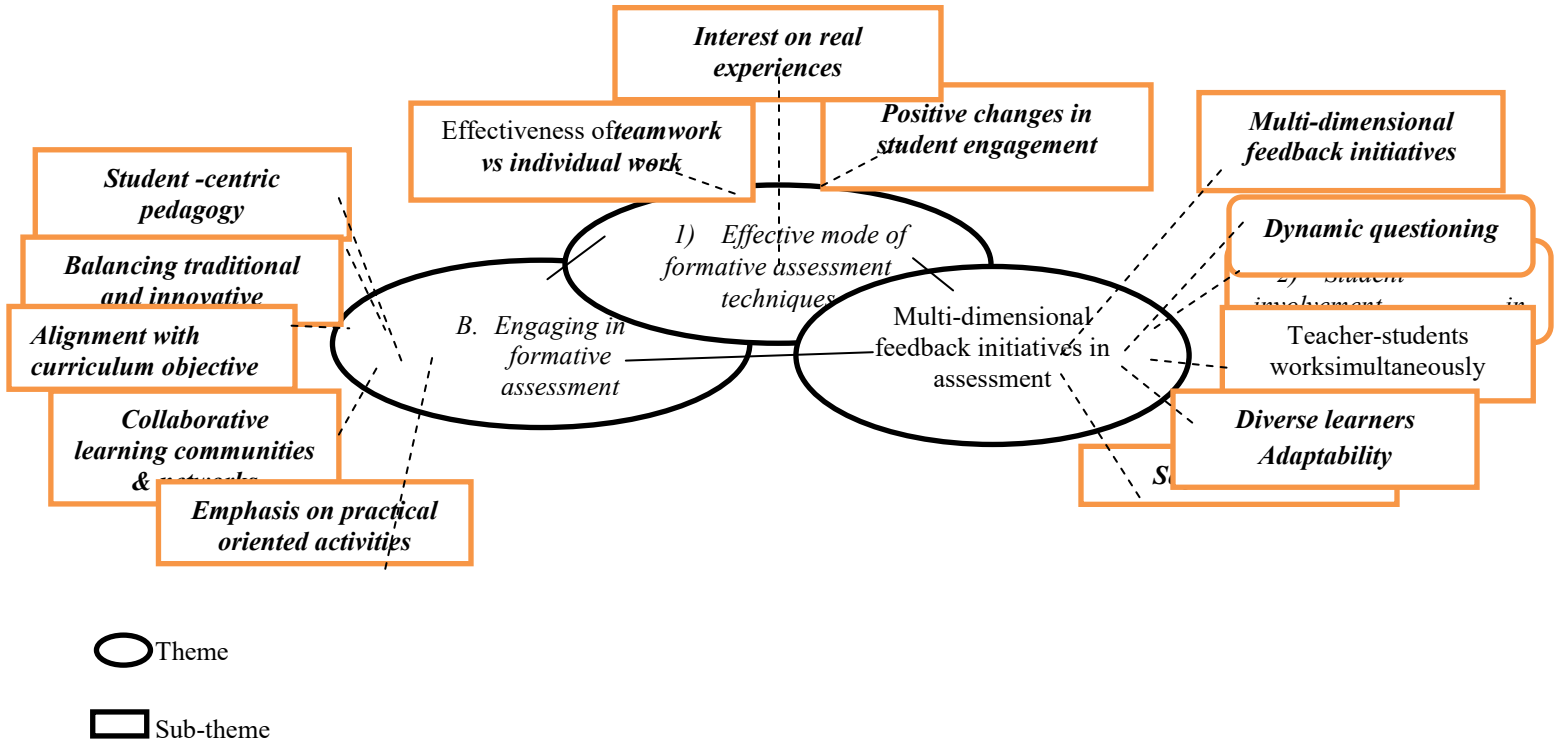
Thematic Maps:

The focus has shifted from the interpretation of individual data items within the dataset, to the interpretation of aggregated meaning and meaningfulness across the dataset. The coded data were reviewed and analyzed as to

combine different codes according to shared meanings so that they formed themes or sub-themes. This involved collapsing multiple codes that shared a similar underlying concept or feature of the data into one single code. At this point in the analysis, the researcher assembled codes into sub-themes and themes. A thematic map of the themes is presented in Figure 3

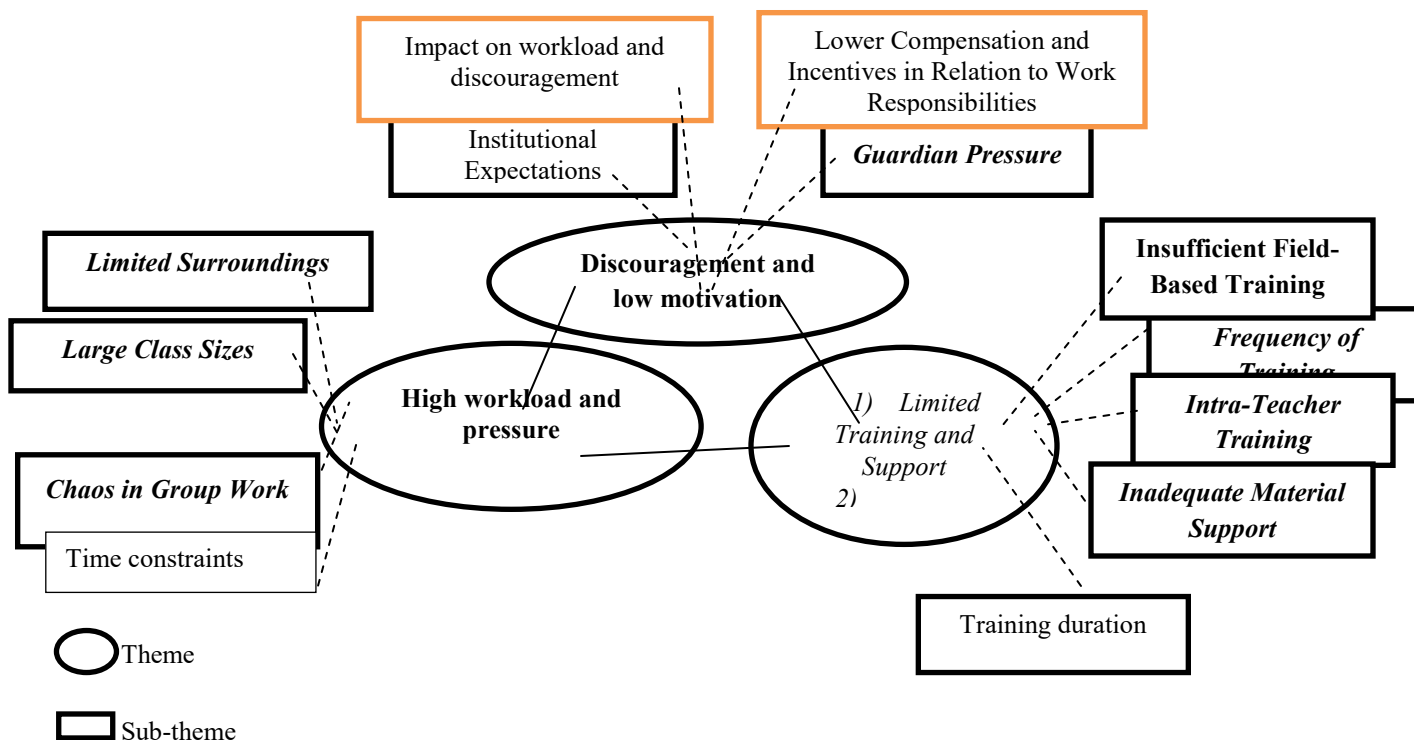
Figure 3

Thematic Map for Research Question 1



A. The theme “Engaging in formative assessment strategies” was clearly definable, with constituent coded data presenting five concurrent narratives. These narratives were constructed as five separate sub-themes, which emphasized the involvement of the **Student -centric pedagogy**, **balancing traditional and innovative approaches**, **Alignment with curriculum**, **Collaborative learning communities & networks** & **Emphasis on Practical Oriented activities** respectively. In this way, other two themes were constructed and connected with each other.

Figure 4
Thematic Map for Research Question 2



Themes for Research question I

Teachers, as a facilitator, navigate the intricate landscapes of historical narratives and societal dynamics, employing diverse strategies to assess students' understanding and critical thinking skills. The perception towards formative assessment in History and Social Science classrooms is multifaceted encompassing a variety of pedagogical approaches. This exploration delves into the insights provided by educators who enact formative assessment strategies in these domains. These perceptions collectively contribute to the understanding of how formative assessment is conceptualized, embraced, and navigated within the area of History and Social Science education.

B. Theme -1: Teachers' understanding and engaging in formative assessment strategies

Most of the teachers described the concept of formative assessment by using strategies to gather information on student understanding throughout the lesson. This involved asking questions, observing student interactions with activities, or using short quizzes. This aligns well with the definition of formative assessment curriculum. A teacher's response exemplified formative assessment-

"Feedback is taken through asking questions. This allows me to see if they understand the concepts throughout the lesson, not just at the end." (Focus on Ongoing Feedback).

Here, the teacher describes using questioning as a tool to gather information about student learning throughout the lesson, which is a core principle of formative assessment.

Some teachers did not provide a formal definition, but their responses revealed an implicit understanding of formative assessment through descriptions of specific practices. Another quote from a teacher is considered -

"Formative assessment helps me see if students can analyze historical events or identify different perspectives on social issues. It helps me adjust my teaching strategies to address any gaps in understanding." (Emphasis on Social Science Learning)

Thus, some defined it broadly as "checking for understanding," while others elaborated on its role in informing instruction.

Those teachers who did not get training were giving vague answers and most terms were not clear to them. Hence, the researcher had to collect the information in indirect way by giving more details clarification.

A majority of the teachers expressed their positive experiences about this perspective. Teachers integrated formative assessment into history & social science teaching using a variety of teaching strategies such as communication techniques, group work, video and image visualization, and individual and group activities. Teachers applied practical teaching strategies and use photographs, posters, and projectors. Teachers emphasize integrating historical context into formative assessment, using artifacts, primary sources, and historical events to assess students' understanding, critical thinking and skills. An important element was the group activities carried out in groups of 7-10 students with different academic abilities. Emphasis was placed on explaining activities to people who may have difficulties. This sentiment is encapsulated in the following excerpt

Classes are conducted using various material such as poster images in the light of practical experience and in the light of environment or familiarity. Various activities are conducted in groups of 7 to 10 with good and weak students mixed. Group activities are more given and explained to those who understand less. Individual activities are given for homework.

However, participants stated that they preferred individual work to group activities, suggesting differences in student engagement due to different assessment approaches. Participants introduced topics to students with no prior knowledge and emphasized that understanding will be achieved at the end of the lesson. This observation is reflected in the following excerpt.

Students do not know the topic beforehand. Finally understand what they have learned. When I asked students, what did we learn today? The students raise their hand and give the answer. In this way, others also understand if they have any confusion. Classes are conducted through group and individual activities, sharing images, videos and pdf.

At the end of the lesson, students participated in an interactive summary where they shared what they learned which promotes understanding throughout the class. Debates and discussions are perceived as crucial components of formative assessment in history and social science education. Teachers find that these activities promote critical thinking, analysis, and communication skills. Other pedagogical strategies that were used by the teachers included discovery learning, cooperative learning, differentiated instruction and inquiry-based learning.

1) Theme -2: Efficient mode of Assessment Techniques

The use of multimedia, posters, and real-world examples (e.g., fieldwork, case studies) engaged students and enhanced their interest in social science subjects. The participants found that providing real experiences and hands-on learning were effective in assessing students' understanding of social science concepts. **That was**, Practical works were deemed more important, and students enjoyed them more, as the following excerpt demonstrates.

Giving real experiences. Demonstration or hands-on learning of features are more effective.

In another word, the participants found that real events, real work, and sharing pictures and videos were effective assessment techniques, especially when combined with group work. **In urban setting**, Teachers found teamwork to be more effective, fostering easier analysis through group consultations. This approach contrasts with single work, which students might find boring. These sentiments are reflected in the following excerpt.

Teamwork is more effective because they can analyze more easily by sitting together and consulting within the group. Students often feel boring while doing single work.

In contrast, in the rural area, Practical knowledge, especially teaching close to nature, was deemed more effective. However, there is less interest in-group work, and students tend to prefer individual work, as the following excerpt illustrates.

Students of grade 6 & 7 are less interested in-group work. Only group leader works hard in a group activity. Single work is more. They are not matured yet to write in organized way in many chapters.

Theme-3: Multi-dimensional feedback initiatives in assessment

Teachers revealed a spectrum of pedagogical strategies used to facilitate effective feedback mechanisms. These strategies included a combination of formative assessments, peer evaluations, and personalized interactions. Many teachers emphasized the importance of creating a supportive environment where students feel comfortable seeking and receiving feedback. Teachers provided feedback in dynamic sessions where teacher-students worked simultaneously. Activities included dynamic presentations, speeches, debates, and a variety of consultative processes. Effective feedback involved activities like bringing tree verse to class to show how to protect natural diversity and sharing video footage from fieldwork. Direct experiences from nature captivated students' interest.

Students are using both multimedia and posters to present various things in the classroom such as bring treetops to protect natural diversity and video footage showing where the students went to do field work. Students get a lot of interest in these subjects working with direct nature brought from the very origin. The students are more curious about fieldwork or case studies.

Feedback initiation involved students discussing among themselves and asking self-directed questions. The teacher asked questions, observed individual, and group works, fostering a multi-dimensional feedback approach. At first, they discuss themselves. Then they ask themselves questions. After that, teacher ask questions. Alternatively, one presents the topic. I take feedback through observing individual works or group works and talking to each student.

The participant corrected mistakes made by students during the feedback process. Feedback was provided by selecting both expert and weak students and asking them questions. This approach allowed for a targeted and varied feedback process. Feedback was obtained through asking questions, indicating an interactive feedback process. Group activities were highlighted as particularly fruitful in eliciting feedback from students. Group activities and self-questioning were identified as fruitful methods to gather effective feedback. According to participants-

Group activities and asking themselves questions are more fruitful to get feedback.

Teachers reported noticeable positive changes in student engagement and learning outcomes attributed to effective feedback mechanisms. Students exhibited increased motivation, a deeper understanding of subject matter, and a greater sense of responsibility for their own learning. The incorporation of constructive feedback into the teaching process contributed to a more dynamic and interactive classroom environment.

Themes for research question II:

Challenges encountered by history and social Sciences teachers

Perception toward barriers at institutional and individual levels, including workload and lower salary, reflected the subjective interpretations and attitudes that individuals hold regarding challenges within their professional environments. This perception could vary widely among employees based on their unique experiences, roles, and perspectives.

2) Theme -1: Challenges in Implementation

Teachers faced challenges, including explaining assessment decisions to guardians and occasional resistance from students expecting favorable evaluations. The participants identified a challenge related to the large class size, particularly facing issues when working in groups. The excessive number of students in crowded classrooms created challenges for teachers to offer personalized attention, leading to a decline in the quality of education and an increase in workload pressures.

Challenges were noted in conducting group work due to chaos in the classroom setting, with students talking more and creating disruptions. Maintaining order in-group work was identified as a tough aspect. This sentiment is expressed in the following passage.

There are many types of chaos in conducting group work. There are no classroom settings for group work. Students talk more and make chaos in-group activities. Hence, it is tough to maintain.

A challenge was identified in the limited availability of surroundings to relate to the topics covered in the curriculum.

3) Theme-2: Barriers at the Institutional Level

Many educational institutions faced challenges in providing sufficient resources, teaching materials, and technological support, hindering effective teaching.

Guardian pressure was identified as a significant barrier, stemming from a lack of awareness about students' learning activities in class. This sentiment is encapsulated in the following excerpt

Guardian pressure have to face a lot. Guardians do not know what students are learning or doing in class, so a misconception is created among guardians that students are not learning. And all activities of students are completed in class so there is so homework. so parents feel that the students are moving away from the study. In this case, the teachers have to counsel the parent a lots.

Teachers in private schools noted institutional pressures as these schools operate like businesses, prioritizing the maintenance of quality indices.

I have to answer to the guardian why I gave a student a square sign as a performance indicator. Sometimes students become violent that sir I have to give good symbol. The students think that I am paying the teacher so the teacher is obliged to listen to me. Private schools are like business organization and they do not want the quality of index to decrease. so there is a pressure on the teachers.

Teachers often experienced excessive workloads, including lesson planning, grading, and administrative tasks. This led to burnout and negatively affected the quality of teaching. Insufficient acknowledgment of teachers' efforts and achievements demotivated educators, affecting their commitment to providing high-quality education. According to one teacher's statement-

Consistently monitoring performance indicators using three symbols (□ ○ △) poses a challenging task on a daily basis, significantly increasing the workload. However, our salaries did not experience a sufficient increase. Many educators faced financial challenges due to lower salary structures, affecting their overall job satisfaction and motivation. The absence of performance-based incentives and rewards contributed to a lack of motivation among educators, affecting their commitment to continuous improvement.

Many teachers are not from the social science background but conduct history and social science class. Therefore, they face problem in conducting subject related topics especially which needs specialized subject knowledge and investigative work experiences.

The combination of high workload, low compensation, and limited support led to teacher burnout, negatively affecting the quality of education provided. These barriers contributed to high turnover rates in the teaching profession, making it challenging institutions to retain experienced and qualified educators.

A significant issue was observed that a considerable number of social science teachers lacked a background in research and were not specifically trained in history and social sciences. Consequently, they encountered challenges when tasked with conducting investigative work related to history and social science subjects, as these tasks demanded research skills that they found challenging and struggle to execute effectively.

In rural schools, participants noted that the majority of the schools possessed only one projector, specifically allocated for ICT classes. Consequently, History & social science teachers lacked dedicated projectors for their classes, leading them to resort to using mobile phones for video or audio playback and relying on poster activities. This situation posed challenges and impeded the smooth conduct of their work. While urban schools did not encounter issues related to the availability of projectors.

4) Theme -3: Training and Support Needs

Teachers expressed a need for extensive training, suggesting a minimum duration of six months for effective formative assessment implementation. Frequent training was deemed necessary, with a suggested frequency of at least once every six months. Teachers stressed the importance of field-based training and proposed sending at least one teacher to another country for observation as a beneficial training approach. Intra-teacher training was considered necessary, highlighting the importance of taking feedback from teachers before launching any training initiatives. This sentiment is encapsulated in the following excerpt.

Frequent training is necessary- at least once within 6 months. Intra -teacher training is also necessary and taking feedback from teacher before launching any training.

Lack of proper material support was felt, for example in the rural school, there is only one projector for ICT class, therefore history and social science teachers hardly got access to projector to conduct their class in projector. In this case if institutions or the government provided associated materials that would be beneficial. Workload has been increased in new curriculum than previous curriculum but salaries do not increase to compensate hence teacher felt discourage to implement formative assessment properly.

Findings

- ❖ Participants emphasized the continuous and dynamic nature of formative assessment, utilizing diverse pedagogical strategies such as communication techniques, group work, video and image visualization, and individual and group activities. Practical teaching strategies were prevalent, incorporating materials like images, posters, and projectors.
- ❖ Real experiences and hands-on learning were identified as effective assessment techniques, particularly when combined with group work or teamwork.
- ❖ Participants observed increased student interest in practical and natural work compared to theoretical work. This result suggests that students' preferences may be shifting towards active and applied learning experiences. In the suburbs, students are less interested in-group work. Participants noted increased student interest in hands-on nature-related work, highlighting the effectiveness of hands-on learning approaches.
- ❖ Teachers implemented a variety of feedback mechanisms, including formative assessments, peer evaluations, and personalized interactions. A supportive environment was emphasized, where students felt comfortable seeking and receiving feedback.
- ❖ Teachers observed positive changes in student engagement and learning outcomes, attributing them to the incorporation of constructive feedback into the teaching process.

- ❖ Challenges were identified in conducting group work due to chaos in the classroom setting. Large class sizes posed difficulties, particularly in conducting group work, leading to issues of chaos and disruptions in the classroom setting.
- ❖ Teachers faced challenges in explaining assessment decisions to guardians and occasional resistance from students expecting favorable evaluations.
- ❖ Institutional challenges included limited availability of resources, teaching materials, and technological support, hindering effective teaching.
- ❖ The limited availability of projectors in rural schools, with a single projector designated for ICT classes, hinders social science teachers from conducting classes effectively. As a result, they resort to alternative methods such as using mobile phones for audio and video play and relying on poster activities, which compromises the seamless execution of their teaching activities.
- ❖ Guardian pressure, stemming from a lack of awareness about students' learning activities, emerged as a significant barrier.
- ❖ Teachers experienced excessive workloads, including lesson planning, grading, and administrative tasks, contributing to burnout.
- ❖ Lower salary structures and insufficient incentives demotivated educators, affecting their commitment to continuous improvement.
- ❖ The significant finding is that a substantial portion of social science teachers faces challenges due to their lack of research background and specialized training in history and social sciences. This limitation hinders their ability to conduct investigatory work associated with the chapters of this subject.
- ❖ Teachers expressed a need for extensive training, suggesting a minimum duration of six months for effective formative assessment implementation. Frequent training and intra-teacher training were deemed necessary, highlighting the importance of feedback from teachers before launching training initiatives.

Discussion

The study found that teachers utilized diverse formative assessment strategies, such as questioning, group work, and practical activities, which aligns with the National Curriculum's emphasis on continuous assessment and active learning (MoE, Bangladesh, 2021). This finding resonates with prior research by Black and Wiliam (1998) and Bangert et al. (2003), who highlighted the effectiveness of these strategies in promoting student engagement and understanding. The participants in the study highlighted a variety of pedagogical strategies, ranging from the use of multimedia resources to practical-oriented approaches. This diversity aligns with the literature emphasizing the importance of varied instructional methods in social science education (Darling-Hammond, 2017). Incorporating multimedia elements not only caters to diverse learning styles but also enhances the engagement and comprehension of historical and social concepts (Wineburg, 2001). The emphasis on practical knowledge aligns with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which posits that learning is most effective when situated in real-world contexts (Vygotsky, 1978). Teachers described using various strategies throughout the lesson to gather information about student understanding, such as group work, presentations, and fieldwork. This aligns with the core principle of formative assessment, which is ongoing evaluation for learning improvement. This finding resonates with contemporary educational philosophies that advocate for experiential learning. The integration of hands-on experiences and real-world applications aligns with the principles of constructivism, emphasizing active student participation in the learning process (Piaget, 1950). The emphasis on nature-oriented and practical learning experiences emerged as a notable theme. Connecting social science education to real-world scenarios and experiences aligns with contemporary educational theories emphasizing contextual and experiential learning (Cohen et al., 2018). Nature-oriented pedagogy not only makes abstract concepts tangible but also fosters a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness of historical events and societal dynamics (Gruenewald, 2003). The varied assessment techniques employed by teachers align with the principles of differentiated instruction (Tomlinson, 2001). The teachers emphasized the participation of student through various activities, which differ from traditional assessments

that placed more emphasis on individual performance in a test setting. Acknowledging diverse learning styles, teachers engage students through multimedia presentations, group activities, and individual assignments. This aligns with Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, recognizing that students possess different strengths and preferences (Gardner, 1983). The student-centered approach to feedback aligns with the principles of formative assessment as a tool for enhancing learning rather than merely measuring it (Black & Wiliam, 1998).

A recurring challenge identified by participants was the management of group work, exacerbated by the constraints of large class sizes. The study identified challenges related to large class sizes, limited resources, and teacher workload, hindering effective implementation. This aligns with the research by McMillan (2007) and Tymms and Gipps (2000), who highlighted how these factors can create obstacles to implementing innovative teaching practices. Research indicates that collaborative learning can significantly benefit students' cognitive and social development (Johnson & Johnson, 1994). However, challenges in implementing effective group work strategies highlight the need for tailored classroom management techniques and potentially smaller class sizes to optimize the benefits of collaborative learning. The challenges related to class size and group work management underscore the need for innovative pedagogical strategies. Research by Blatchford et al. (2003) suggests that effective group work management contributes to positive student outcomes. Institutional barriers, including a lack of resources and technological support, align with broader discussions on educational equity and resource allocation (Baker & Ferris, 2011). The findings resonate with the broader literature on the influence of parental expectations on education (Epstein et al., 2019). The teachers are facing pressure from guardians who expect good grades and view teachers as obligated to fulfill their demands. This pressure might stem from a perceived importance of traditional assessments and grades for students' success, contrasting with the focus on continuous improvement and diverse learning experiences in formative assessment. Effective communication between teachers and parents is crucial in addressing misconceptions and fostering a collaborative learning environment. Schools and educators should consider implementing transparent communication strategies to bridge the gap between home and school. Teacher burnout resulting from high workloads and lower salaries resonates with existing literature on teacher retention and job satisfaction (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). The need for fair compensation and performance-based incentives aligns with studies emphasizing the role of motivation in teacher effectiveness (Lavy, 2015). The study identified that some teachers lacked formal training in formative assessment, influencing their understanding and implementation. This aligns with the findings of Adedoyin and Owolabi (2016), who emphasized the need for professional development programs to equip teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills for effective formative assessment practices. Teachers expressed a desire for longer-term and field-based training opportunities. This suggests a need for a deeper understanding of formative assessment practices and their effective implementation within the national curriculum.

Implications

The implications drawn from the findings of this study extend to various stakeholders in the field of education, including teachers, policymakers, institutions, and researchers. These implications aim to guide improvements in formative assessment practices, address challenges faced by educators, and enhance the overall quality of education in History and Social Science classrooms.

5) Conclusion:

6) *Participants' experiences provide valuable insight into the challenges, successes, and preferences associated with formative assessment in social science education. The study delves into the distinct realm of teachers' perceptions toward formative assessment enacted in History and Social Science classrooms, unraveling intricate pedagogical strategies, challenges, and their broader implications. The findings offer valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and researchers, shaping the discourse on formative assessment practices in these academic domains. The study illuminates the diverse pedagogical approaches employed by teachers for formative assessment. These strategies underscore the dynamic nature of formative assessment in engaging students with historical narratives and societal dynamics. Challenges in formative assessment implementation are elucidated. The study highlights the prevalence of burnout among educators, emphasizing the need for comprehensive support structures and recognition of teachers' contributions. Policymakers are urged to revisit educational policies, focusing on resource allocation, incentive structures, and institutional support. Future research should delve into specific assessment practices in History and Social Science classrooms, contributing to evidence-based best practices. Overall, the study illuminates the intricate dynamics of formative assessment practices in History and Social Science classrooms. By acknowledging the challenges, embracing diverse pedagogical approaches, and*

fostering a supportive educational environment, stakeholders can collectively contribute to the continual enhancement of education in these critical academic domains.

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