



Exploring the Relationship Between Primary School Teachers' Perceptions and Practices of Formative Assessment in Maldivian Primary Schools

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Published Online: 04 August 2025	This research explores the perception and implementation of formative assessment among primary school teachers in the Maldives. The study involved 316 teachers in a structured questionnaire survey using a quantitative research approach. The findings indicated that teachers consider formative assessment crucial in promoting self-awareness, strengths and weaknesses, and cultivating a growth mindset among students. The study also revealed that teachers' instructional practices were closely aligned with their positive beliefs. However, the study also identified improvement areas, particularly self-assessment opportunities during assignments. The research established a strong and statistically significant positive correlation between teachers' perceptions and practices, emphasizing the importance of nurturing positive beliefs in advancing the effective implementation of formative assessment in the classroom. The study's findings could inform the development of targeted professional development strategies and collaborative platforms in primary education. Future research should consider cultural and contextual factors and examine the impact of formative assessment on student outcomes.
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INTRODUCTION

Primary education is the foundation of a child's academic journey, and it plays a vital role in the overall development of a country (United Nations Educational, 2006). It gives students the necessary knowledge and skills to succeed in higher education and future careers. Moreover, primary education significantly impacts a country's economic growth, social stability, and well-being. Students who receive a quality primary education are more likely to become active and responsible citizens, contribute to society, and positively impact their communities. (United Nations Educational, 2006). How students are educated and evaluated profoundly impacts the quality of education they receive. Globally, formative assessment has emerged as a crucial teaching tool that has revolutionized the student learning experience and improved teaching methodologies (Lui & Andrade, 2022; Sebatane, 1998).

In 2014, the Maldives took a step forward by incorporating formative assessment as the primary teaching approach for primary grades (Shakeel, 2014). This approach was combined with a contemporary curriculum that prioritizes student-centered learning and ongoing feedback to promote the education of students. This innovative approach has successfully provided a conducive learning environment that caters to the individual needs of every student (Eachempati &

Ramnarayan, 2019). It has also helped teachers evaluate their student's progress and adjust their teaching methodologies accordingly (Zlabkova et al., 2021).

Overall, the Maldives' education system serves as an excellent example of how modern teaching approaches can transform the quality of education and contribute to the development of a country (Di Biase, 2018). The education system of the Maldives has undergone multiple reforms in recent years (Ministry of Education & Ministry of Higher Education, 2019a). This has been done to improve the quality of education and align it with global standards (UNESCO, 2018). As per the Ministry of Education's report of 2019, these reforms have successfully brought about significant changes in the system.

One of the most notable transformations occurred in 2014 when a new curriculum was introduced (Shakeel, 2014). This curriculum emphasizes active learning, critical thinking, and skill development (Di Biase & Maniku, 2021). The objective was to move away from the traditional teaching methods, focusing solely on memorization and rote learning (Di Biase & Maniku, 2021). The new curriculum aimed to promote a more interactive and engaging learning experience for the students (Di Biase, 2017).

As part of this overall transformation, formative assessment techniques were incorporated into the teaching

process (Ministry of Education, 2019b). These techniques were designed to improve the overall teaching and learning experiences. Teachers could adapt their teaching styles through consistent and regular feedback to better suit individual students' needs (Rakoczy et al., 2019). This approach ensured that students received personalized attention and could progress at their own pace (Lui & Andrade, 2022).

According to Leenknecht et al. (2020), formative assessment is an ongoing process of gathering evidence about students' learning throughout instruction. Its main objective is to provide feedback to both teachers and students, enhancing the learning process and guiding teaching decisions (Lui & Andrade, 2022). This method, as explained by Schildkamp et al. (2020), goes beyond giving grades and concentrates on identifying the strengths and areas of improvement for students. The introduction of formative assessment practices in the Maldivian primary education system aimed to create a more inclusive and student-centered learning environment (Shakeel, 2014).

The decision to integrate formative assessment in Maldivian education was based on substantial evidence showing the benefits of continuous feedback on student learning. Research has consistently shown positive effects on student achievement, motivation, and self-regulation (Allal, 2020; Fatmawati et al., 2021; Makkonen & Jaquet, 2020; Schildkamp et al., 2020). Additionally, formative assessment aligns with modern educational theories, such as constructivism and socio-cultural theories, highlighting active engagement, meaningful learning, and collaborative learning ((Dongyu & Wanyi, 2013). Using formative assessment, primary school educators in the Maldives aimed to create an environment where students can develop their cognitive and metacognitive skills while fostering social and emotional development (Di Biase, 2018).

The successful implementation of formative assessment practices in Maldivian primary schools depends heavily on primary school teachers. These educators play a crucial role in shaping the nation's education system, and their perspectives and practices regarding formative assessment are vital in determining its effectiveness. This study explores the relationship between primary school teachers' views on

formative assessment and their actual practices in Maldivian primary schools. The research seeks to answer three key questions:

1. What are the perceptions of formative assessment among teachers in primary schools?
2. What formative assessment practices are currently used by primary school teachers?
3. Is there a significant relationship between primary teachers' perceptions and their formative assessment practices?

1. METHOD

1.1. Research Design

This study employed a quantitative design to explore how primary grade teachers in Maldivian schools perceive and practice formative assessment. This methodology was selected to systematically collect numerical data, providing objective insights into our research questions. (Creswell, 2012).

1.2. Participants

The research study population consisted of teachers from government primary schools, as the curriculum in private schools differed. According to the Statistics Foreword (2020) on Schools, the total student demographic in the Maldives was 88,025, spread across 459 schools. The educational landscape included state-owned, community, and private schools, but this study specifically focused on government primary grade teachers and students.

A stratified random sampling technique was employed to determine the research sample size. With a total population of (N=3131) teachers, as indicated in the MOE (2023) on Schools, the research sample size was calculated to be 355 using the Morgan table. Stratification was based on geographical regions, and schools were selected randomly within each region. The sample size of schools was selected from the six regions of the Maldives: North, North Central, South, South Central, Central, and Male, where the total number of primary schools is 181.

1.2.1. Selection of Schools

Based on Yamane's formula and the online tool, a sample size of 36 schools out of a total of 181 schools was determined to be appropriate for this study.

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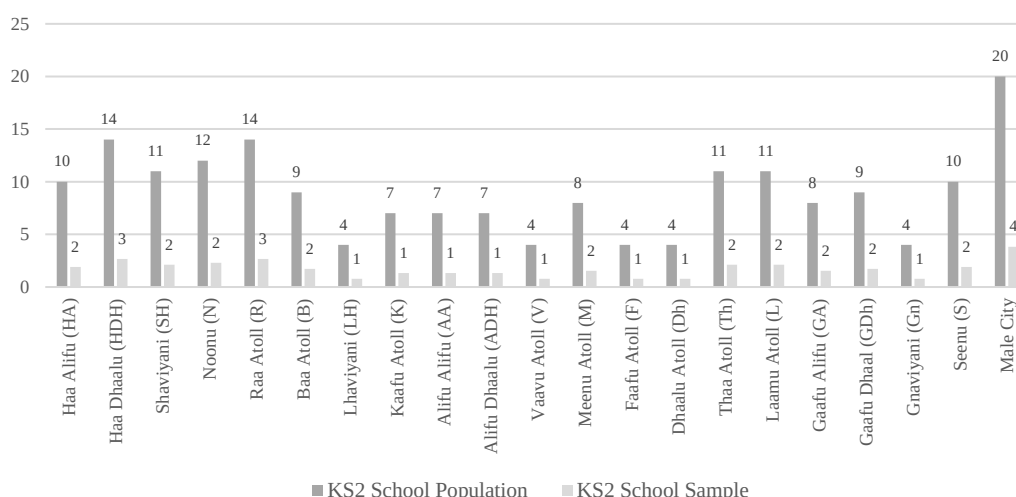


Figure 1: Population and Sample of Schools

Figure 1 illustrates the proportionate allocation of schools among the selected atolls in each region, proportionally based on the percentage of the total number of schools in each atoll.

1.2.2. Selecting Teachers for Survey

According to the Morgan Table, for a population of 3000 and 3500, samples of 341 and 351 were recommended, respectively. Therefore, it was concluded that a sample size of 355 was accurate.

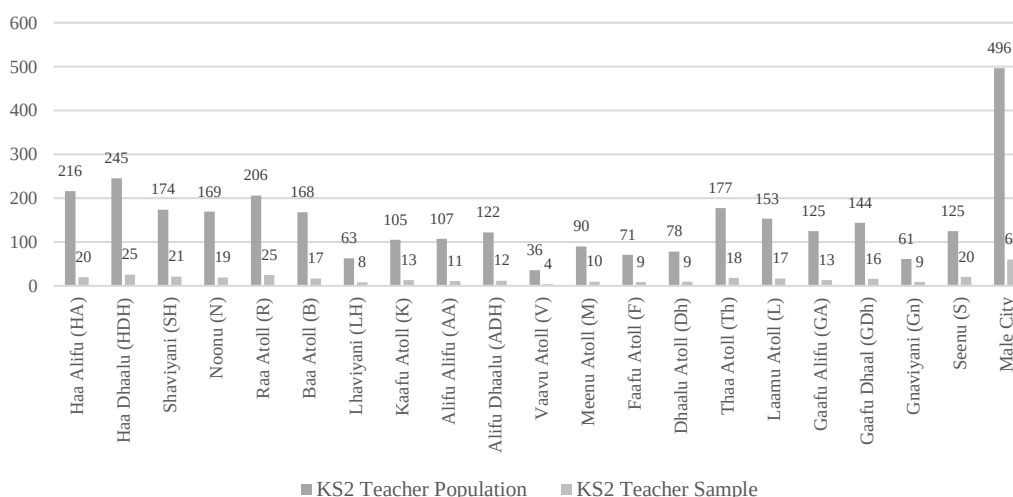


Figure 2 Population and Sample of Teachers

Figure 2 illustrates the proportionate allocation of teachers to each atoll in each region. After selecting the teachers from each stratum, based on the proportionate allocation, the next step was distributing these teachers among the selected atolls in each region. This was done proportionally based on the percentage of the total number of teachers in each atoll (Refer to Appendix B).

1.3. Instruments

1.3.1. Teachers' FA questionnaire

To develop the questionnaire for "Exploring Teachers' Perspectives and Practices of Formative Assessment in Primary Schools in Maldives," the researcher adopted statements from Fatmawati et al. (2021) and Hai (2021) (Refer to Appendix A). Respondents were asked to express

their level of agreement with the provided statements using a five-point Likert scale. This scale was chosen for its subject-centered nature and suitability for quantifying attitudes and experiences (Tullis & Albert, 2013). In addition to the FA items, the questionnaire included items about teacher background characteristics: years of teaching experience, level of classes taught (grade 1 to 6), gender, and educational qualification. The survey questionnaire was sent to 355 active teachers electronically for this survey. 316 teachers responded, making it an 89% response rate. Throughout the research process, ethical standards were upheld. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and their anonymity and confidentiality were strictly maintained to safeguard their rights and privacy.

Table 1: Reliability Analysis on Formative Assessment Questionnaire

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
Formative Assessment Perception (FAPE)	.969	7
Formative Assessment Practice (FAPR)	.938	7
Overall	.966	14

Table 1 shows the reliability analysis on the Formative Assessment Perception (FAPE) and Formative Assessment Practices (FAPR) scales within a formative assessment questionnaire.

Scale FAPE, which consists of seven items, demonstrated an exceptionally high level of internal consistency with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.969. This strong coefficient indicates a significant correlation among the items within the scale. It suggests that the items collectively and consistently measure the underlying construct, making FAPE a reliable tool for assessing teachers' perceptions of formative assessment.

Scale Formative Assessment Practices (FAPR), comprising seven items, displayed commendable internal

consistency with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.938. This high coefficient underscores the reliability of the scale. It suggests that the items within FAPR consistently measure the construct of formative assessment practice, making it a valuable instrument for evaluating teachers' formative assessment practices.

The overall Cronbach's Alpha for the entire questionnaire, which combines both Scale FAPE and Scale FAPR, is 0.966. This high value suggests that the questionnaire is very reliable. The items from both scales are consistent within each scale and exhibit strong consistency when combined, indicating a high level of internal consistency for the entire questionnaire.

2. RESULTS

2.1. Descriptive statistics

Table 2: Descriptive Information

Demographic Data	N
Age	
Below 20 years	2
20 to 25 years	28
26 to 30 years	59
31 to 35 years	59
36 to 40 years	79
Above 41 years	85
Gender	
Male	39
Female	273
Years of Teaching Experience	
Less than 3 years	64
4 to 8 years	97
9 to 15 years	81
Above 16 years	69
Educational Qualification	
Diploma or below	21
Bachelor's Degree	185
Master's Degree	106
Doctoral Degree	0
Other (Please specify)	0
Grade Level Taught	
Grade 1	49
Grade 2	34
Grade 3	53
Grade 4	40
Grade 5	36
Grade 6	100

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The Table offers a comprehensive overview of the demographic characteristics of the study participants. Regarding age, the majority falls within the 31 to 40 age range, with significant representation in the above 41 years (n=85) and 26 to 30 years (n=59) categories. Conversely, the age groups below 20 years (n=2) and 20 to 25 years (n=28) have fewer participants. Gender distribution indicates a predominantly female participant group (273 females and 39 males). Regarding teaching experience, there is a relatively balanced distribution across the categories, with noteworthy participants in the 4 to 8 years (n=97) and 9 to 15 years (n=81) groups. Educationally, most participants hold bachelor's

degrees (n=187), followed by those with Master's degrees (n=106). In contrast, a smaller proportion holds diplomas or lower qualifications (n=21), with no participants having doctoral degrees or other specified credentials. Regarding grade levels taught, Grade 6 has the highest number of participants (n=103), with other grades also being reasonably represented. This demographic data provides valuable insights into the diverse composition of the study participants, which may influence their perspectives and experiences related to formative assessment in Maldivian primary schools.

2.2. Teacher Perception of Formative Assessment (Research Question 1)

Table 3: Teachers Perspectives

Question	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Formative assessment is essential in helping students understand their core values and promote growth.	312	4.07	1.023
Formative assessment enables students to identify strengths and weaknesses and manage their learning for better performance.	312	4.04	1.028
Formative assessment is crucial for students to take responsibility for their learning progress.	312	4.05	1.067
Formative assessment provides adequate feedback to help students adjust their learning activities.	312	4.09	1.010
Formative assessment helps students close the gaps between actual and desired performance, improving academic achievement.	312	4.06	1.030
Formative assessment empowers students to take control of their learning through self-assessment and reflection, promoting ownership and goal-setting.	312	4.04	1.029
Formative assessment encourages a growth mindset, empowering students to embrace challenges and strive for improvement.	312	4.06	1.011
Valid N (listwise)	312		

Table 3 presents the perspectives of teachers on formative assessment, providing mean and standard deviation values for each statement. With a sample size (N) of 312, these insights offer a glimpse into the consensus and variability among teachers.

For the statement "Formative assessment is essential in helping students understand their core values and promote growth," teachers assigned a mean rating of 4.07, indicating a high level of agreement, and the standard deviation of 1.023 suggests moderate variability in their responses.

Similarly, in considering "Formative assessment enables students to identify strengths and weaknesses and manage their learning for better performance," the mean score is 4.04

with a standard deviation of 1.028. This implies general agreement among teachers, albeit with a moderate degree of variability.

Addressing the importance of student responsibility, the statement "Formative assessment is crucial for students to take responsibility for their learning progress" received a mean rating of 4.05 and a slightly higher standard deviation of 1.067, indicating a crucial role of formative assessment with a bit more variability in teacher perspectives.

Moving on to the provision of feedback, "Formative assessment provides adequate feedback to help students adjust their learning activities" yielded a mean of 4.09, suggesting strong agreement among teachers. The low

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standard deviation of 1.010 reflects minimal variability in their perceptions.

Statements emphasizing the impact on academic achievement, such as "Formative assessment helps students close the gaps between actual and desired performance, improving academic achievement," and "Formative assessment empowers students to take control of their learning through self-assessment and reflection, promoting ownership and goal setting," both received mean ratings of 4.06. The standard deviations (1.030 and 1.029, respectively) indicate moderate variability in these aspects.

Finally, regarding the encouragement of a growth mindset, the statement "Formative assessment encourages a growth

mindset, empowering students to embrace challenges and strive for improvement" received a mean score of 4.06, with a standard deviation of 1.011, suggesting a generally positive consensus among teachers with relatively low variability.

In summary, these findings underscore the positive views of teachers regarding the multifaceted benefits of formative assessment, while the standard deviations highlight the nuanced range of perspectives within the surveyed group. With a sample size of 312, these insights contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the significance and variability in teacher perspectives on formative assessment.

2.3. Formative Assessment Practices (Research Question 2)

Table 4: Formative Assessment Practices

Question	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I ensure that my students understand the success criteria for their work and the objectives they can achieve through their assignments.	312	3.86	1.213
I adjust my instruction if my students need help understanding a topic.	312	4.06	1.307
I allow my students to ask questions to each other during class.	312	4.00	1.296
While working on their assignments, I ask my students to assess their progress.	312	3.75	1.138
I provide feedback to my students, highlighting their strengths in learning and identifying areas where they need improvement.	312	4.01	1.212
I encourage collaborative learning among my students by facilitating group activities and discussions that promote peer-to-peer interaction and knowledge sharing.	312	4.03	1.096
I create a supportive and inclusive learning environment where students feel comfortable expressing their ideas and opinions without fear of judgment.	312	3.99	1.296
Valid N (listwise)	312		

Table 4 outlines the formative assessment practices as perceived by teachers, presenting mean and standard deviation values for each practice. With a sample size (N) of 312, these results offer insights into the common approaches and variations in formative assessment employed by educators.

Beginning with the statement "I ensure that my students understand the success criteria for their work and the objectives they can achieve through their assignments," teachers assigned a mean rating of 3.86, indicating a moderate level of agreement. The relatively high standard deviation of 1.213 suggests a considerable degree of variability among

teachers in how they approach this aspect of formative assessment.

The practice of adjusting instruction based on student needs, as stated in "I adjust my instruction if my students need help understanding a topic," received a mean rating of 4.06. This high mean suggests that, on average, teachers are actively responsive to their students' learning needs. The standard deviation of 1.307 indicates some variability in the extent to which teachers engage in this practice.

For the statement "I allow my students to ask questions to each other during class," the mean score is 4.00, reflecting a general agreement among teachers. The standard deviation of

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1.296 suggests a moderate degree of variability in the implementation of this practice.

Concerning student self-assessment, the statement "While working on their assignments, I ask my students to assess their progress" received a mean rating of 3.75. This lower mean indicates a less unanimous agreement among teachers on the incorporation of student self-assessment into formative assessment practices. The standard deviation of 1.138 suggests some variability in this approach.

Moving on to feedback, the statement "I provide feedback to my students, highlighting their strengths in learning and identifying areas where they need improvement" received a mean rating of 4.01, indicating a positive consensus among teachers. The standard deviation of 1.212 suggests a moderate amount of variability in how teachers deliver feedback.

The practice of fostering collaborative learning, as expressed in "I encourage collaborative learning among my students by facilitating group activities and discussions that promote peer-to-peer interaction and knowledge sharing,"

received a mean rating of 4.03, suggesting a generally positive agreement among teachers. The standard deviation of 1.096 indicates a moderate degree of variability in the implementation of collaborative learning practices.

Lastly, creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment is addressed in the statement "I create a supportive and inclusive learning environment where students feel comfortable expressing their ideas and opinions without fear of judgment." This received a mean score of 3.99, indicating a favorable view among teachers. The standard deviation of 1.296 suggests some variability in how teachers perceive and implement this inclusive environment.

In summary, these findings reveal the diverse approaches teachers take in implementing formative assessment practices, with varying levels of agreement and variability within the surveyed group. The mean and standard deviation values shed light on both commonalities and differences in the application of these formative assessment strategies.

2.4. 3.4 Relationship between primary teachers' perceptions and their formative assessment practices

Table 5: Correlation between Teachers' perceptions and practice of FA

		Factor 1	Factor 2
FAPR	Pearson Correlation	1	.147**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.010
	N	312	312
FAPE	Pearson Correlation	.147**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.010	
	N	304	309

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 5 represents the analysis between two key factors: Formative Assessment Practices (FAPR) and Formative Assessment Perception (FAPE).

The Pearson Correlation coefficient was employed to assess the relationship between these two factors. As shown in Table 4, the analysis yielded a strong and statistically significant positive correlation ($r = 0.782$, $p < 0.01$) between FAPR and FAPE.

3. DISCUSSION

Addressing Research Question 1 about what teachers think of formative assessment, the results show that teachers in Maldivian primary schools have positive attitudes toward this teaching approach. They all agree that formative assessment is crucial for helping students develop. They believe it helps students explore their strengths and areas where they need improvement. This matches what education experts say about how formative assessment supports student learning (Hung et al., 2022; Macdonald, 2021; Waheed et al., 2023).

Teachers in the study also think that formative assessment is helpful for students because it provides them with detailed and helpful feedback. This feedback is essential for student progress, a key aspect of formative assessment (Lui &

Andrade, 2022). This means that teachers see feedback as a central part of formative assessment, helping students improve.

Moreover, teachers in the study believe that formative assessment helps students become more independent learners. They think it encourages students to assess their work, reflect on their learning, and have a growth mindset. These beliefs align with modern educational research, highlighting the importance of developing students' self-awareness and belief in their abilities (Kalykbayeva et al., 2022; Martin et al., 2022). In other words, formative assessment is a tool that helps students take charge of their learning and see challenges as opportunities to grow.

Moving on to Research Question 2, which looks at how teachers use formative assessment in their classrooms, the data show that teachers' practices match their positive beliefs about formative assessment. They ensure students understand what they are supposed to learn and achieve in their assignments. This practice aligns with the core principles of formative assessment, emphasizing the importance of clear learning objectives (Andrade et al., 2019; Eachempati & Ramnarayan, 2019). This means that teachers believe

students should know what is expected of them to learn effectively.

Additionally, teachers in the study adapt their teaching methods when students struggle with understanding a topic. This flexible approach to teaching corresponds to what formative assessment experts recommend, which is being responsive to students' needs (Black & Wiliam, 2009; Kulasegaram & Rangachari, 2018; Paulo, 2014). It recognizes that teaching is dynamic and should adjust to help students when they face difficulties.

Furthermore, teachers encourage students to ask questions during class, promoting peer interaction. This practice aligns with formative assessment principles, emphasizing active student engagement and collaboration (Pantiwati & Husamah, 2017; Zlabkova et al., 2021). It shows that teachers understand that students learn not only from teachers but also from each other.

However, one area that needs improvement is involving students in self-assessment during assignments, which received moderate agreement. This suggests that while many teachers understand the importance of developing students' self-assessment skills, there may be room for growth. This indicates a need for targeted training and support to enhance this part of formative assessment (DeLuca et al., 2019; Waheed et al., 2023).

The findings show that teachers' beliefs about formative assessment match their teaching practices. This alignment reflects a consistent approach to teaching that mirrors teachers' positive beliefs about the effectiveness of formative assessment. These practices are based on clarity, adaptability, engagement, and metacognition, which are all crucial for successful formative assessment. However, there is an opportunity to improve the promotion of self-assessment among students, which may require specific training and support.

Research Question 3 is crucial to exploring the relationship between teachers' beliefs and classroom practices. According to the correlation analysis conducted in this study, there is a significant positive correlation between teachers' perceptions of formative assessment (Factor 1) and their actual implementation of formative assessment strategies (Factor 2) (Table 5) (Smith, 2022). This finding implies that teachers with more positive and robust beliefs and perceptions about formative assessment are more likely to implement these strategies in their classrooms. This finding is consistent with prior research highlighting teacher beliefs' critical role in shaping classroom practices (Johnson et al., 2019; Martin et al., 2022).

The results of this study provide further evidence of the interdependence of teacher beliefs and classroom practices. They also suggest that efforts to improve formative assessment strategies' efficacy should address teachers' beliefs and perceptions about these strategies. This study's findings have significant implications for teacher education

and professional development programs, which should focus on developing teachers' beliefs and perceptions about formative assessment (Thomas et al., 2021). Overall, this study's findings contribute to the growing body of research on the relationship between teacher beliefs and classroom practices and provide insights into the factors that influence the effective implementation of formative assessment strategies.

This correlation indicates a coherent relationship between the two, emphasizing the significance of teachers' perceptions in determining the effective implementation of formative assessment practices. The statistical analysis of our data further supports the reliability of this correlation, with a robust statistical significance ($p < 0.01$) indicating that the observed relationship is improbable to have occurred by random chance (Johnson et al., 2019). These findings are consistent with previous research showing that teachers' perceptions of formative assessment play a crucial role in its successful implementation (Almahal et al., 2023).

These findings are consistent with the broader educational literature, highlighting teacher beliefs' influence on pedagogical choices and classroom practices (Ersel Kaymakamoglu, 2017; Zeng & Huang, 2021). Teachers with a positive perception of formative assessment are more likely to incorporate formative assessment strategies into their teaching, adapting and refining their instructional methods based on student feedback. In contrast, teachers with negative or uninformed perceptions about formative assessment may be less inclined to utilize these strategies effectively (Almahal et al., 2023).

Given the significance of these results, educational institutions and professional development programs must recognize the interdependence between teachers' beliefs and their instructional practices. Practical strategies for promoting the adoption of formative assessment should focus on teaching specific techniques and fostering positive perceptions and understanding of formative assessment principles among educators. This approach can lead to more consistent and successful classroom integration of formative assessment strategies (Zeng & Huang, 2021).

4. CONCLUSION

The results of this study provide valuable insights into primary-grade teachers' perceptions and practices regarding formative assessment in Maldivian schools. The findings address three key research questions.

The first research question, which investigates teachers' perceptions of formative assessment, shows that teachers hold predominantly positive attitudes toward formative assessment. They believe it is pivotal in helping students understand their inner values, promoting their strengths, and encouraging greater responsibility for their educational advancement. Teachers also view formative assessment as providing accurate, detailed, and valuable feedback, enabling

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students to improve their achievements and close the gaps between actual results and desired outcomes. Furthermore, they acknowledge that formative assessment can foster student ownership, goal-setting, and a growth mindset. These positive perceptions align with contemporary educational research, highlighting the importance of formative assessment in promoting student growth and development.

The study found that teachers' practices closely reflect their positive beliefs about formative assessment regarding Research Question 2. They ensure that students understand learning objectives and adapt their teaching strategies when encountering difficulties. Teachers also encourage peer interaction by allowing students to ask questions during class, which aligns with the principles of active student engagement and collaboration associated with formative assessment. However, there is room for improvement in involving students in self-assessment during assignments, suggesting the need for targeted training and support.

Regarding Research Question 3, the study examined the relationship between teachers' perceptions and their practices. The results showed a strong and statistically significant positive correlation. This implies that as teachers' beliefs and perceptions about formative assessment become more positive and robust, their actual implementation of formative assessment strategies also tends to increase. These findings highlight the importance of addressing and enhancing teachers' perceptions of formative assessment because these perceptions significantly influence the effective implementation of formative assessment practices in the classroom.

Based on these findings, educational institutions and professional development programs must recognize the interdependence between teachers' beliefs and instructional practices. Adopting formative assessment should involve teaching specific techniques, fostering positive perceptions, and understanding formative assessment principles among educators. By doing so, we can promote more consistent and successful integration of formative assessment strategies into the classroom, ultimately benefiting student learning and development.

In summary, this study contributes to our understanding of formative assessment in the context of Maldivian primary schools. It sheds light on the alignment between teacher perceptions and practices and highlights the potential for enhancing the effectiveness of formative assessment strategies in this educational setting.

4.1. Limitations:

Several limitations of this study should be acknowledged. Firstly, the research context is limited to a specific region, and its findings may not be readily generalizable to diverse educational settings. Additionally, relying on self-reported data introduces the potential for response bias, as participants may provide socially desirable responses. Furthermore, the study's cross-sectional design restricts the ability to establish

causality between perceptions and practices. Future longitudinal research could provide a more nuanced understanding of how these variables evolve.

4.2. Implications:

The study's findings provide valuable insights into effectively implementing formative assessment practices in primary schools in the Maldives. The research highlights a strong connection between teachers' positive perceptions of formative assessment and classroom practices, indicating the need for a multifaceted approach to bridge the gap between their beliefs and actions.

Investing in tailored professional development programs for teachers is crucial to address this challenge. These programs should go beyond the mechanics of formative assessments and focus on nurturing positive attitudes and beliefs regarding the effectiveness of formative assessment strategies. Mentorship programs can also be helpful, especially for novice educators, to help them integrate their beliefs with practical classroom strategies. Experienced teachers can be mentors, sharing their successful experiences with formative assessment to assist newer colleagues.

Peer learning communities can also be advantageous for collaborative spaces where teachers can exchange ideas, share best practices, and tackle challenges related to formative assessment together. This collaborative approach fosters a culture of continuous improvement and supports more effective implementation.

Education authorities must establish mechanisms for teachers to offer ongoing feedback about their challenges when implementing formative assessment. This feedback loop can inform policy adjustments, resource allocation, and the development of tailored support systems to address specific needs, ultimately fostering a more supportive teacher environment.

The development and provision of resources are essential. These resources may include sample assessments, feedback templates, and guidelines for creating a positive and inclusive classroom environment conducive to formative assessment practices.

Educational policymakers should consider formative assessment as a fundamental component of the education system. Clear, consistent, and well-communicated formative assessment policies are vital. Teachers need to understand their roles and responsibilities in implementing these practices, and a supportive policy environment can facilitate this understanding.

Lastly, the study identified an area for improvement in involving students in self-assessment during assignments. To address this, specific training and support should be provided to teachers to encourage and guide students in assessing their progress and fostering metacognitive skills. Developing students' metacognitive skills is crucial for long-term success and aligns with the broader objectives of formative assessment.

These practical implications can bridge the gap between teachers' perceptions and classroom practices regarding formative assessment. Ultimately, this alignment can improve student learning outcomes and a more effective education system in the Maldives and beyond. Recognizing the interdependence between teachers' beliefs and classroom practices is crucial to achieving more impactful formative assessment in primary education.

4.3. Suggestions for Further Research:

There are several promising avenues for further research in the field of formative assessment:

One area of exploration is the examination of student outcomes related to formative assessment practices. Researchers can investigate how the alignment between teachers' perceptions and practices influences student outcomes, including academic achievement, motivation, self-regulation, and overall learning experiences.

Cultural and contextual factors play a significant role in education. Future research could delve into the influence of these factors on teachers' perceptions and practices of formative assessment. Comparative studies across different cultural settings may provide valuable insights into the cultural nuances of formative assessment implementation.

Intervention studies represent another crucial area of research. Evaluating the effectiveness of targeted professional development programs in improving teachers' formative assessment practices, particularly in areas where alignment is weaker, can provide evidence-based strategies for teacher training and support.

Finally, long-term studies tracking the enduring impact of formative assessment practices on student learning and development are essential. Researchers can investigate how formative assessment in primary school classrooms influences students as they progress through their educational journeys. This longitudinal perspective can shed light on the long-term benefits of practical formative assessment.

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