# Teachers' Perception towards Formative Assessment in Saudi Universities' Context: A Review of Literature

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## Abstract

Formative assessment has received considerable attention among scholars around the world. In Saudi Arabia, formative assessment is perceived as a promising opportunity for improving learning outcomes. A review of literature reveals that, formative assessment influences students' outcomes positively. Notably, teachers' perception is an important factor that determines the assessment strategies used in class. Their perception towards formative assessment is influenced by factors such as teaching experience and education level. As such, any efforts to influence teacher's perspective will have a significant positive outcome on their willingness to apply formative assessment. However, a further study is needed to quantify the significance of teachers' perception in influencing their decision to apply formative assessment.

**Keywords:** formative assessment, learning outcomes, lesson planning, perception, student-centred learning, teaching, teaching experience

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background

Formative assessment is necessary for facilitating students' learning around the globe. There is adequate evidence that formative assessment is an integral part of teaching aimed at improving students' learning outcomes (Karim, 2015; Almuntasheri, 2016; Asare, 2020). However, studies demonstrate that few teachers understand the significance of formative assessment in improving teaching and learning outcomes (Sach, 2012; Karim, 2015; Alotabi, 2014). Karim (2015) emphasized the need for teachers to understand and adopt sound classroom assessment practices. In Saudi Arabia, the application and outcomes of formative assessment are crucial research topics. The current efforts to improve learning outcomes in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) necessitate evidence-based approaches. Therefore, there is a need to provide empirical evidence to justify the adoption of formative assessment in Saudi Arabia. The first step is to compare pieces of evidence to assess the degree of agreement for studies focusing on the KSA. In doing so, the KSA's education policy-makers will find a more scientifically supported ground to justify decisions to balance formative and summative assessment.

KSA's cultural background cannot be ignored when tailoring an assessment tool for Saudi students. Schools in Saudi Arabia are keen on adhering to cultural practices and customs in line with Islamic values. A study by Al-Wassia et al. (2015) focused on the cultural challenges in implementing formative assessment in Saudi schools. Al-Wassia et al. (2015) revealed how teachers in Saudi Arabia prefer summative assessment. The main focus in summative assessment is for the students to pass tests and not to gain, retain, and apply theories and concepts (Rana & Zubair, 2019). According to Al-Wassia et al. (2015), focusing on students' test outcomes deviates from the goal of preparing learners to meet performance goals at the expense of learning goals.

The uniqueness of Saudi Arabia education context raised the question of whether scientific evidence gathered in other countries applies in the KSA's context. Therefore, the question can be addressed by examining country-specific evidence that shows the significance of teachers' perception on formative assessment. In doing so, it will be possible to provide crucial empirical evidence needed in making country-specific and system-specific strategies for improving KSA's education system.

*1.2 Statement of the Problem*

Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Education is keen on providing quality education. According to KSA's Ministry of Education, assessing learners is a crucial aspect of enhancing the quality of education (Alotabi, 2014; Rana & Zubair, 2019). For example, Alotabi (2014) acknowledged the efforts of the Saudi Arabian government to introduce more effective forms and strategies for assessing learners as part of enhancing the quality of instruction. However, Khraif et al. (2019) noted that Saudi Arabian education is facing serious challenges in focusing on summative assessment, which is based on memorization. Other scholars agree that a memorization routine makes it difficult for teachers to identify student's specific strengths and weaknesses and assist them on time (Almuntasheri, 2016; Al-Wassia et al., 2015; Alahmadi et al., 2019). In a study on socio-cultural theorization, Pryor and Crossouard (2008) emphasized that content learning is not enough since de-constructing contextual issues make learning a long and complex process.

The current efforts to make the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia a centre of academic excellence in the Middle Eastern region necessitate more insights into specific areas such as assessment strategies. As such, it is worth investigating formative assessment in KSA considering the unique national culture and religion. Empirical studies and other reliable sources identify education as a crucial factor for increasing KSA's local human capital (Pierce, 2012; Aboudah, 2015; Hendrix, 2017; International Monetary Fund [IMF], 2016). Hence, more insights are needed to understand the possibility of providing country-specific evidence that captures Saudi Arabia's education challenges.

Recent studies provide crucial pieces of evidence on the role that education plays in shaping Saudi Arabia's labour force. Scholars agree that it is through better academic outcomes that students can compete favourably in the job market (Pierce, 2012; Aboudah, 2015; Hendrix, 2017; Khraif et al., 2019). In what Hendrix (2017) terms as "Kicking a crude habit", economic diversification for 40 oil-dependent economies is critical. In particular, Hendrix (2017) emphasized the need for creating a more productive local human capital. As such, the current study presents the necessity of improving learning outcomes for the current and future generations of Saudis graduating every year at different levels of education. According to Khraif et al. (2019), developing Saudi Arabia's human capital is a crucial aspect of diversifying the KSA's economy and reducing overreliance on expatriates. Specifically, formative assessment is presented as a sense of direction for improving the quality of Saudi's learning institutions (Aboudah, 2015; Khraif et al., 2019). With formative assessment, learning institutions are in the best position to improve human capital and employability.

Evidently, formative assessment is a well-researched and documented issue in many parts of the world. Notably, studies focusing on Saudi Arabia demonstrated a varying trend regarding the application of formative assessment among teachers (Almuntasheri, 2016, Al-Wassia et al., 2015; Alahmadi et al., 2019). According to Almuntasheri (2016), science teachers in Saudi Arabia applied formative assessment strategies that do not encourage teacher-student interactions. For example, teachers start a new lesson without exploring students' prior knowledge on the same topic (Almuntasheri, 2016). Also, Almuntasheri (2016) noted how teachers limited their students to the right answers instead of encouraging them to share their thinking on the issue. Therefore, focusing on Saudi Arabia education context offers country-specific evidence to guide education policies and practice.

Previous studies on the perception of Saudi teachers on formative assessment necessitate a comparative review of the existing literature. According to Alotaibi (2019), Saudi Arabian teachers treat formative assessment as an unnecessary and counterproductive approach to grading learners. Specifically, the study revealed how Saudi Arabian teachers prefer the implementation of formative assessment as a group activity. In other words, they are reluctant to use formative assessment as a personalized intervention for achieving learning goals for individual students in class.

he current literature review bridges the gap of knowledge on the degree of agreement and disagreement among scholars. First, do the perceptions of Saudi Arabian teachers differ significantly from one teacher to the other? Which specific factors influence the perception of Saudi teachers towards formative assessment in general and their willingness to apply it? Third, how does cultural background, experience, level of understanding, knowledge, and challenges influence the perception of Saudi teachers on a formative assessment? Finally, how can teachers' perception on formative assessment be changed to achieve the intended objectives of teaching and learning outcomes in class?

## 2. Literature Review

The current review of literature is necessitated by the need to capture teachers' perception on formative assessment, which is a determinant of learning outcomes in Saudi Arabia. In particular, a study by Alotabi (2014)

demonstrated country-specific challenges facing Saudi Arabia's education system. Alotabi (2014) revealed how Saudi Arabia teachers are required to follow specific textbooks and lesson plans which are clearly defined and approved by Saudi Ministry of Education. Alarmingly, another notable challenge is how Saudi Arabia's education system applies a memorization routine where teachers gauge the outcomes of their teaching based on how much their learners pass summative tests. According to Jarrett (2016), teachers need to adopt assessment approaches that focus on enhancing the abilities of learners to think rationally and creatively. In this regard, formative assessment is important since it supports a student-centred learning environment where the ability of students to score correctly on summative standardized tests is determined.

Scholars agree that formative assessment plays a critical role in influencing student outcomes in different levels of education. Notably, Saeed, Tahir, and Latif (2018) presented formative assessment as a crucial way of improving students' learning process and outcomes. According to Karim (2015), formative assessment involves teachers' decision-making regarding which elements are working and what needs to be adjusted to improve learning outcomes. In this case, Karim (2015) emphasized the need for using formative assessment as a teaching and learning tool rather than a mere tool for assessing students' learning outcomes.

Sach (2012) focused on teachers' perception of formative assessment in the United Kingdom. According to the findings, British teachers have a positive attitude towards formative assessment. However, Sach (2012) revealed how teachers are less confident in putting formative assessment strategies into action. In particular, teachers' experience is positively correlated to their perception of formative assessment. Similarly, a study focusing on the Turkish learning context (Aslantis, 2016) revealed the importance of teachers' experience on their perception towards formative assessment. According to Aslantis (2016), several issues affect teachers' perceptions towards formative assessment. The main factors include class condition, classroom crowdedness, and teachers' profile. In the same vein, Sahinkarakas (2012) investigated the significance of teachers' experience and the perception of teachers towards formative assessment, as a dependent variable. According to Sahinkarakas (2012), teachers play a crucial role in facilitating formative assessment. Sahinkarakas (2012) emphasized the need for teachers to make crucial decisions on lesson planning, determine students' strengths and weaknesses, and make an informed judgment on their learners' progress. In a nutshell, studies from different parts of the world show the importance of formative assessment in improving both teaching and learning outcomes. However, the universality of the findings necessitates further studies to demonstrate the extent to which specific countries apply formative assessment and the challenges they face while doing so.

*2.1 Teacher's Perspective in the Middle East*

The Middle East is a unique region considering the cultural context that is defined by common religion and language context. Therefore, it is crucial to consider other Middle Eastern educational context to understand the country-specific context of the Saudi Arabian education system. For example, Turkey is a unique Middle Eastern country where the perception of teachers on formative assessment is well-documented. A study by Aslantis (2016) examined the perception of Turkish teachers towards using formative assessment in the classroom. According to the findings, teachers are aware of the value and positive outcomes of formative assessment. However, according to Aslantis (2016), they have continued to face numerous challenges in daily assessment practices. In particular, Aslantis (2016) noted how classroom crowdedness, teacher profile, topic properties, and classroom potential are crucial determinants. According to Aslantis (2016), the aforementioned factors influence their perception of Turkish teachers towards formative assessment and their willingness to use specific strategies.

Another study by Saeed et al. (2018) focused on the adoption of formative assessment in Pakistan elementary and secondary schools. The research focused on 300 elementary and 200 secondary schools in Pakistan. Just like in Turkey, teachers in Pakistan are keen on applying formative assessment in classrooms. According to Saeed et al. (2018), Pakistani teachers believe that formative assessment plays a crucial role in promoting students overall learning process. Importantly, formative assessment offers a more holistic development of students at the elementary and secondary levels in Pakistan, for both private and public schools.

In Iraq, Karim (2015) explored the significance of teachers' perceptions and beliefs concerning formative assessment in English as a Second Language (ESL) class. In particular, Karim (2015) focused on 25 Kurdish ESL teachers in North Iraq. In Bangladesh, Abu Musa and Islam (2020) focused on the challenges facing teachers in applying formative assessment. The findings revealed how the implementation of formative assessment in Bangladesh classrooms is problematic mainly due to limited teachers' knowledge and understanding. Consequently, Abu Musa and Islam (2020) noted that teachers end up focusing on knowledge content and student memorization as the expected learning is not adequately achieved. Importantly, Abu Musa

and Islam (2020) noted how lack of training on formative assessment contributes to a negative perception of teachers towards such methods of evaluating their learners.

Similarly, a study focusing on the Ethiopian (Heeralal & Dessie, 2016) and Ghanaian (Asare, 2020) contexts revealed a positive perception of teachers towards formative assessment. In the case of Ghana, Asare (2020) demonstrated a positive correlation between teachers' perception and their willingness to regularly apply formative assessment practices. However, according to the findings, lack of knowledge among teachers made it difficult for teachers to integrate formative assessment strategies to improve student's learning during daily instructions. In the same vein, Asare (2020) recommended short-term courses, seminars, workshops, and other in-service training activities on formative assessment. As such, these pieces of evidence demonstrate a universally researched outcome that teachers' knowledge and understanding of formative assessment will always affect their perception of the same. However, according to Abu Musa and Islam (2020), some teachers were keen on learning and practising formative assessment techniques.

## 2.2 Teachers' Perspective in Saudi Arabia

An informed approach to teachers' perception on formative assessment among Saudi Arabian teachers is crucial in influencing their decision to subscribe to formative assessment strategies. Notably, a study by Alahmadi et al. (2019) explored the impact of formative assessment on the performance of Saudi learners in speaking tests. In a similar study, Klatt et al. (2020) demonstrated how Saudi teachers learned about competency-based assessment from their Australian counterparts in just 12 months, leading to positive learning outcomes. These findings show how formative assessment plays a crucial role in helping Saudi students with the numerous challenges they face in handling speaking tests. Importantly, formative assessment assists learners in their strengths and weakness as far as their speaking skills are concerned.

A survey by Alotaibi (2019) explored the perception of teachers on specific factors that influence the adoption of formative assessment in Saudi Arabian schools. In particular, the study focused on 14 factors that influence the perception of teachers working within Riyadh province of Saudi Arabia. Alotaibi (2019) applied a stratified sampling technique to gather data from 210 participants in 15 schools within Riyadh province. According to the findings, teachers anonymously agreed on all the factors under investigation. For example, the surveyed teachers agreed on how their willingness to accept and support curriculum changes influenced their positive perception towards formative assessment. Previous studies also demonstrate the correlation between teachers' perception towards formative assessment and their willingness to accept curriculum changes (Alaudan, 2014; Hakim, 2015; Rana & Zubair, 2019; Klatt et al., 2020).

The current study examines crucial demographic factors that influence the perception of Saudi Arabian teachers on formative assessment. Notably, Alotaibi (2019) noted significant differences in teacher's perception towards formative assessment, that are defined by gender, education and training, and the subject that teachers teach. For example, Alotaibi (2019) noted how female teachers had a more significant positive attitude towards formative assessment than their male counterparts. In the same vein, trained teachers were more informed regarding the importance of formative assessment. Finally, the application of formative assessment differs from one subject to another. As such, teachers' perception differs significantly based on the subject they teach.

Another study by Al-Wassia et al. (2015) focused on how various cultural challenges affect the implementation of formative assessment in Saudi Arabian schools. This could be categorized under four challenges categories including political/strategic, economical/resources, social/religious, and technical/developmental.

Al-Wassia et al. (2015) revealed the uniqueness of the Saudi Arabian context, where the desire to balance academic load and work plays a crucial role in defining the type of assessment that teachers prefer. According to Al-Wassia et al. (2015), the central challenge for educators and students in the Faculty of Medicine in adopting formative assessment is the inadequate knowledge in the concept of assessment for learning and the important role that formative assessment plays in enhancing learning.

It is worth noting how religious and social issues or challenges affect the implementation of formative assessment in classrooms. Findings by Al-Wassia et al. (2015) revealed a statistically significant difference between students and faculty regarding interacting with members of the opposite gender. In particular, Al-Wassia et al. (2015) noted how the Saudi Arabian social-cultural values discourage interactions between male and female members of the society. Importantly, Al-Wassia et al. (2015) revealed how gender-defined interactions are more embedded in the faculty than the newer generation of Saudi Arabian learners. As such, faculty members are more inclined to beliefs that discourage social interactions than the current generation. In a previous study, Al-Shehri (2008) investigated the attitude of students and teachers towards formative assessment in English as a second language in Saudi Arabia. According to the findings, there is a significant difference

between the perception of students and teachers regarding the usability and significance of formative assessment. In particular, Al-Shehri (2008) discovered that 81.8% of teachers believed that aligning formative and summative assessment leads to better outcomes at the individual level.

As Table 1 demonstrated, studies focusing on Saudi Arabia's education context shows how formative assessment leads to positive student outcomes (Al-Shehri, 2008; Saeed et al., 2018; Alahmadi et al., 2019; Alharbi and Meccawy, 2020). For example, Alharbi and Meccawy (2020) investigated the introduction of Socrative as an effective tool for formative assessment in the context of EFL classrooms in Saudi Arabia. Alharbi and Meccawy (2020) defined Online Student Response System (OSRS) as "…a web-based platform that can be accessed using any browser that is connected to the Internet (p. 372). According to the findings, participants (Saudi EFL students) initially preferred paper-based formative assessment. However, at the end of the experience, most of the learners shifted their preferences in favour of the mobile-based Socrative formative assessment. Therefore, the scholars recommended the adoption of OSRSs since they are effective formative assessment approaches that lead to crucial pedagogical benefits for Saudi learners. However, according to Alharbi and Meccawy (2020), the recommendation is limited by the small sample size (n=35) and the inclusion of female learners only, which makes the findings gender biased.

Table 1. Overall outcomes among scholars

| *Studies* | *Overall finding two* | *Overall finding two* |
| --- | --- | --- |
| (Al-Shehri, 2008; Saeed et al., 2018; Alharbi & Meccawy, 2020; Alahmadi et al., 2019) | Majority of studies in Saudi Arabia demonstrate that formative assessment leads to positive student outcomes. | Although formative assessment offers holistic development of students, not all teachers apply it in class regularly. |
| (Aslantis, 2016; Saeed et al., 2018; Al-Wassia et al., 2015) | The overall perception towards formative is multi-factored. As such, a single factor cannot be blamed for teachers' perceptions, attitude and outcomes. | For example, classroom crowdedness, teacher profile, and topic properties. |
| Alotaibi, 2019; Al-Wassia et al., 2015) | Many Saudi Arabian teachers treat formative assessment as an unnecessary counterproductive strategy for grading learners. | This finding demonstrates the research problem where country-specific evidence is needed regarding the factors that create a negative attitude of Saudi teachers towards formative assessment. |

*2.3 Correlations in Teacher's Perception on Formative Assessment*

2.3.1 Teachers' Overall Teaching Experience

Teachers' overall experience in achieving teaching objectives represents a crucial extrinsic motivation. For teachers, teaching objectives means a lot in influencing their efforts in achieving both teaching and learning outcomes. The evidence regarding the impact of teachers' experience on their perceptions towards formative assessment is significant enough to justify policy changes in Saudi Arabia and beyond. For example, the United Kingdom represents a different cultural context from Saudi Arabia or other Muslim countries in North Africa and the Middle East. Therefore, country-specific studies in the Western culture and system of education provide a crucial platform for comparative analysis. In particular, studies in the British education context revealed that teachers generally tend to have a positive attitude towards formative assessment (James, 2011; Sach, 2012). According to Karim (2015), teachers start developing their formative assessment practices in specific areas that they are most comfortable with. Therefore, according to Karim (2015), teachers can work collaboratively and learn from experiences learned in other areas, and transfer them to other subjects.

Other studies demonstrate a similar trend regarding the adoption of a formative assessment routine among teachers. According to Sach (2012), British teachers have a positive attitude towards formative assessment. However, the findings revealed how the teachers were less confident in putting formative assessment strategies into action. According to the findings, teachers' experience is positively correlated to their perception towards formative assessment. Similarly, a study by Aslantis (2016) focused on the Turkish context and revealed the importance of teachers' experience on their perception towards formative assessment. Further, Aslantis (2016) identified several issues affecting teachers' perception on formative assessment. The factors include class condition, classroom crowdedness, and teachers' profile. According to Sahinkarakas (2012), the role of teachers in formative assessment is also inevitable considering their need to make crucial decisions during teaching practice.

2.3.2 Teachers' Level of Knowledge and Understanding

The level of knowledge is yet another crucial factor affecting the perception of teachers towards formative assessment. According to Karim (2015), a clear or better understanding of the application and significance of formative assessment is crucial for helping teachers to focus on enhancing student learning. Similarly, Almuntasheri (2016) showed a close link between teachers' understanding of applying student-centred teaching strategies and their willingness to use formative assessment startegies. According to Almuntasheri (2016), teachers' insufficient knowledge and understanding negatively influences their attitude towards formative assessment and their willingness to use various strategies associated with it. Therefore, a good understanding and application of formative assessment is important in allowing teachers to adjust accordingly and enhance overall learning outcomes.

2.3.3 Teachers Level of Awareness

Teachers' level of awareness on formative assessment plays a crucial role in influencing their perception or attitude towards formative assessment. According to previous findings, teachers who are aware or understand the importance and benefits of formative assessment are more likely to express a positive attitude towards the approach (Vingsle, 2014; Aslantis, 2016; Heeralal & Dessie, 2016; Abu Musa & Islam, 2020; Asare, 2020). For example, Vingsle (2014) noted how teachers' level of awareness in different countries has continued to influence their perceptions towards formative assessment. For instance, Arrafii and Sumarni (2018) identified a close link between creating awareness and providing teachers' with knowledge on formative assessment. In this case, teachers' level of awareness is positively correlated to student-centred outcomes.

2.3.4 Teachers Assessment Practices

Teachers' practices in applying formative assessment play an influential role in their perception towards formative assessment. According to Almuntasheri (2016), the ability of teachers to use various formative assessment strategies positively influences their attitude towards formative assessment. For example, Almuntasheri (2016) demonstrated that using questioning strategy as part of formative assessment and responding to learners' thinking can help in developing effective assessment practices. Consequently, teachers will gradually develop a positive attitude towards formative assessment once they witness positive teaching and learning outcomes. A study by Lira Gonzales (2012) provides crucial insights on the correlation between teachers' assessment practices and their perception towards formative assessment. According to Lira Gonzales (2012), teachers who use formative assessment regularly demonstrated positive attitudes towards it. Other studies conducted in Saudi Arabia (Al-Wassia et al., 2015; Alotabi, 2018; Keezhatta, 2020), Ghana (Asare, 2020), and Ethiopia (Heeralal & Dessie, 2016) show similar outcomes, where teacher assessment practices influence their perception towards formative assessment.

2.3.5 Challenges

Many scholars agree on the impact of cultural beliefs and practices as a crucial determinant that influences the perception of teachers towards formative assessment (Al-Wassia et al., 2015). The current study shows the importance of Saudi's unique culture in influencing the application of formative assessment in the classroom. According to the findings, religious and social practices represent a significant country-specific challenge facing the Saudi Arabia's education system (Al-Wassia et al., 2015). In particular, scholars demonstrated a negative impact of Saudi's religious and social practices on the application of formative assessment (Al-Wassia et al., 2015).

Table 2. Factors related to teachers' perception towards formative assessment

| *Studies* | *Variable/Factor related to teachers' perception* | *Findings* |
|---|---|---|
| (Sach, 2012; Sahinkarakas, 2012; Aslantis, 2016; Karim, 2015) | Teachers' Overall Teaching Experience | The more teachers gain experience in teaching, the more they discover, experiment, and discover the importance of formative assessment. In particular, experience provides a platform for discovering the crucial role that formative assessment plays in influencing, not just teaching objectives, but student-centred learning outcomes. As such, teachers' perception is positively correlated to their experience. |
| (Lira Gonzales, 2012; | Teachers' Assessment Practices in the classroom | Teachers who use formative assessment tend to show a more positive perception than those who prefer summative assessment. |
| (Lira Gonzales, 2012; Vingsle, 2014; Aslantis, 2016; Heeralal & Dessie, 2016) | How often teachers use formative assessment | Teachers who use formative assessment demonstrate a more positive perception than those who use it less often. In this case, teachers' perception is the dependent variable. |
| (Karim, 2015; Heeralal & Dessie, 2016; Asare, 2020; Abu Musa & Islam, 2020; Heeralal & Dessie, 2016; Arrafii & Sumarni, 2018; Keezhatta, 2020) | Teachers' level of knowledge on application of formative assessment strategies | The lack of knowledge among teachers had a negative implication on the integration of formative assessment strategies to improve student's learning during daily instructions. |
| (Vingsle, 2014; Aslantis, 2016; Heeralal & Dessie, 2016; Abu Musa & Islam, 2020; Asare, 2020; Keezhatta, 2020) | Teachers Level of awareness of the benefits of formative assessment | According to the findings, teachers are aware of the value and positive outcomes of formative assessment |
| (Vingsle, 2014; Almuntasheri, 2016; Abu Musa & Islam, 2020; Asare, 2020) | Teachers' training on formative assessment | Studies point towards the same conclusion that training teachers on formative assessment leads to positive outcomes. In particular, scholars agreed that the lack of training on formative assessment contributes to a negative perception of teachers towards such methods of evaluating their learners. |
| (Aslantis, 2016; Saeed et al., 2018; Almuntasheri, 2016; Abu Musa & Islam, 2020) | Challenges facing teachers while applying formative assessment | Teachers face numerous challenges on daily assessment practices, which negatively affect their attitude towards formative assessment. |
| Al-Wassia et al., 2015; Almuntasheri, 2016) | Cultural challenges in the application of formative assessment | Cultural challenges represent a country-specific independent variable that negatively affects teachers' perception of formative assessment. |

## 3. Findings

The current review demonstrates the importance of focusing on effective formative assessment strategies in Saudi Arabian education system. As Karim (2015) noted, effective formative assessment is crucial in enhancing the quality of education systems. As the study by Almuntasheri (2016) revealed, Saudi Arabia's education system needs to shift from a teacher-centred to a student-centred learning environment. In other words, teaching outcomes should be strictly aligned with students' learning outcomes. Formative assessment plays a crucial integral role in initiating and continuously modifying scientific inquiry teaching practices. As such, formative assessment is crucial for facilitating teacher-student interactions. It is through such interactions that teachers can collect the much-needed information regarding students' learning process and make the necessary adjustments.

From the findings above, majority of Saudi teachers have a positive attitude towards formative assessment. However, from the findings, some of them demonstrated negative perception towards formative assessment. The

correlation between teachers' perception towards formative assessment and the frequency in which they apply related teaching strategies remains unclear. In other words, previous studies do not demonstrate whether teachers' perception is the dependent variable or the independent variable. As such, it is difficult to conclude whether teachers' perception influences their willingness to apply formative assessment or vice versa. However, previous studies point towards the same possibility that changing teachers' perception positively can significantly increase the application of formative assessment strategies. Overall, the current study suggests further country-specific examinations on the impact of teachers' perception on their willingness to apply formative assessment strategies.

Scholars agree unanimously on the importance of formative assessment as an integral part of the instructional process in class (Karim, 2015; Almuntasheri, 2016 Heeralal & Dessie, 2016; Asare, 2020). As such, teachers need to view formative assessment, not as an evaluation device but as a tool for facilitating students' learning process. Notably, formative assessment establishes learners' progress in class. It is through formative assessment that learners can also access crucial feedback on how much they have learned. For teachers, continuous formative assessments provide the much-needed diagnosis of their students' needs.

Consequently, teachers can effectively plan learning materials, curriculum, and activities needed to address general and student-specific needs. The current report demonstrates the importance of formative assessment and the need to adopt the necessary measures to improve learning outcomes. Empirical evidence demonstrates the significance of teachers' perceptions on formative assessment. According to the findings, teachers play a crucial yet inevitable role in initiating and facilitating formative assessment. As such, the best starting point in achieving both teaching and learning goals is to ensure that teachers' perception is as positive as possible. First, it is through a positive perception that teachers will embrace formative assessment strategies and integrate them into their class lessons. For example, previous findings from different parts of the world lead to the conclusion that teachers' perception towards formative assessment motivates them to apply it during class lessons.

As agents of change, teachers may choose to ignore or resist formative assessment strategies they deem ineffective or impractical. As experienced educators, the resistance to change may be due to scientifically supported challenges facing teachers in their efforts to apply formative assessment (Aslantis, 2016; Saeed et al., 2018; Abu Musa & Islam, 2020). Notably, a study by Aslantis (2016) showed how teachers face numerous challenges including crowdedness, teacher profile, and topic properties. According to Aslantis (2016), these challenges negatively influence the perception of teachers in Saudi Arabia towards formative assessment in general. In other words, a teacher is empowered to make crucial decisions on the assessment strategies they choose to apply. Therefore, teachers are in the best position for facilitating effective formative assessment throughout Saudi's education levels. Consequently, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will achieve the crucial academic goals needed for achieving national education and human resources development goals.

## 4. Conclusion

The current study provides crucial evidence on the need to apply evidence-based strategies in implementing formative assessment strategy in Saudi Arabia's education system. First, the current body of literature justifies the idea of focusing more on formative assessment than summative assessment as part of meeting learning goals rather than performance goals. For Saudi Arabia, studies demonstrate the importance of enhancing learners' outcomes rather than proving teachers commitment and efforts. Second, the current body of literature presents formative assessment as a universally applicable approach aimed at focusing on students' learning outcomes rather than teaching efforts. In other words, teachers must adjust their perception in such a way that they can focus on students' learning goals rather than meeting their teaching goals. Importantly, the current review shows the high level of agreement among scholars on the importance of formative assessment in Saudi Arabia's education system. However, further studies are required to quantify the significance of teachers' perception in influencing their decision to apply formative assessment.

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