

Teacher's Perception About Student-Centered Learning In The Government Primary Schools

By

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A thesis submitted to the BRAC Institute of Educational Development in partial
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Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my own original work while completing degree at Brac University.
2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.
3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.

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Ethics Statement

This research is entirely my original work and was carried out with strict attention to ethical standards. All participants were clearly informed about the purpose and process of the study, and their voluntary consent was obtained before conducting interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis. To protect confidentiality, pseudonyms were used, and participants were assured of their right to withdraw at any stage. Interviews conducted in Bengali were transcribed and translated carefully to preserve their original meaning. Throughout the analysis, I ensured the accuracy and integrity of the data. All references used have been properly cited following APA 7th Edition guidelines.

Abstract

Student-centered learning represents a pedagogical approach that places students at the center of the educational process, emphasizing their active participation and individual needs. This approach has gained significant attention in Bangladesh's educational reform guided by the National Curriculum Framework 2021. In this regard, the aim of this qualitative study was to explore teachers' perceptions of student-centered learning in government primary schools in Bangladesh. The research site and participants were selected with purposive sampling. This research explored current practices and perceptions according to ten assistant teachers from four government primary schools through in-depth interviews and classroom observations. The qualitative data was analyzed using thematic analysis following Creswell's six-step approach, with transcribed interviews coded and grouped into themes validated through member checking. As a result, this study found common practices including group work, peer learning, interactive activities, and teachers' role as facilitators. Teachers held positive attitudes toward student-centered learning and recognized its benefits for enhancing student engagement and learning outcomes. Though, teachers faced substantial systemic barriers including large class sizes of 40-60 students, infrastructure limitations, time constraints, and limited parental understanding that hindered effective implementation. However, teachers demonstrated openness to the approach and made efforts to introduce student-centered elements while managing these constraints.

Keywords: Student-centered learning; government primary schools; teacher perceptions; pedagogical approaches; educational implementation; Bangladesh primary education

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my mother, Khaleda Akhter who always inspired me to prioritize my education no matter what, and Upom Louise Costa who kept on supporting me throughout this Masters journey and didn't let me give up. I owe this thesis to them.

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Chapter 1

Introduction and Background

1.1 Introduction

Primary education is the foundation of a student's learning journey. It is during these early years that students develop essential skills, knowledge, and attitudes that will shape their future academic success. The crucial years of primary education build the knowledge and skill base for the students that help them do better in their later years (Etor et al., 2013). However, traditional teaching methods often follow a teacher-centered approach, where the teacher is the sole source of knowledge, and students are passive recipients of information. On the other hand, the student-centered approach is still newer teaching-learning approaches that are mostly being used in developed nations (Biswas & Roy, 2010). Student-centered learning approach keeps students in the core and gives them the opportunity to flourish their knowledge and skills by letting them do more interactive activities and take ownership of their own learning. Student-centered learning approach uses instructional methods much different from the traditional learning approach which plays an important role in both the short- and long-term learning outcomes and the development of problem-solving and creative thinking skills of the students (Jony, 2016). Thus, implementing a student-centered learning approach in primary education can significantly impact the student's growth.

A few studies were carried out on similar topics by different researchers mostly focusing on secondary, higher secondary or tertiary level, but there is not enough study on the perceptions of teachers of government primary schools on student centered learning. The results of the study will help the policymakers, educationists, teachers and other stakeholders to take necessary actions for the development of the teachers' quality by taking such as different policies, strategies or programs. Besides, the findings of the study will also help improve the

overall primary education by providing insights into the problems of the teachers and initiating further research.

1.2 Research Topic

Student-Centered Learning in Government Primary Schools

Student-centered learning represents a pedagogical approach that places students at the center of the educational process, emphasizing their active participation, individual needs, and learning preferences. This approach contrasts with traditional teacher-centered methods by encouraging students to take responsibility for their own learning while teachers serve as facilitators and guides. In the context of government primary schools, implementing student-centered learning faces unique challenges and opportunities that require careful examination.

The effectiveness of student-centered learning depends heavily on various factors including teacher perceptions, institutional support, available resources, and the broader educational environment. Understanding how primary school teachers perceive this approach, what enables or hinders its implementation, and what limitations exist in government school settings is crucial for improving educational outcomes. This research seeks to explore these dimensions to provide insights that can inform educational policy and practice in government primary schools, ultimately contributing to more effective teaching and learning strategies that better serve young learners' developmental needs.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Student-centered learning approach is a significant teaching-learning approach where students become the main drivers in the learning process. Student-centered learning makes the overall learning process focus on using the content of the curriculum to create a knowledge base for the students as students take ownership of their learning, they become more conscious of what they are learning. In this case, teachers play a very unique role in creating a learning environment where students can thrive with their guidance (Weimer, 2012). In many countries, educators are currently emphasizing more on shifting from the traditional form of teacher-centered learning to student-centered learning approaches to make students more active and engaged learners (Jony, 2016). For instance, Finland has been recognized for its student-centered education system, where students have autonomy over their learning and teachers act as facilitators. Their student-centered approach to education, which emphasizes individualized learning, collaboration, and critical thinking, has shown positive outcomes for student-centered learning in terms of student performance and well-being (Sahlberg, 2011). While teachers may not be at the center of student-centered learning, they still play crucial roles as helpers, facilitators, mentors, and formators, significantly impacting students' learning experiences. Teachers have the ability to cultivate an environment where students feel empowered to take ownership of their learning (Qutoshi & Poudel, 2014). Therefore, it's vital to understand teachers' perceptions of student-centered learning to effectively implement this approach in schools and reap its benefits.

According to Biswas and Roy (2010), to ensure the development of a nation, it is crucial to introduce a student-centered learning approach in the primary education system. One of the basic principles, student-centric and joyful learning, has been outlined in the national context with the goal of realizing the National Curriculum Framework 2021's vision, which will act as a roadmap for developing and implementing the curriculum (NCTB, 2021). While

previous studies have highlighted the benefits of student-centered learning approaches in private educational settings (Ahmed, 2023), little is known about the challenges and perceptions of teachers in public primary schools, particularly in terms of their training, resources, and cultural attitudes towards education. Despite the benefits of student-centered learning, there may be obstacles and challenges that teachers face in implementing this approach in government primary schools. These challenges could include inadequate teaching and learning materials, large class sizes, and a lack of proper learning facilities (Chiphiko & Shawa, 2014). Understanding these dimensions is crucial for developing effective strategies and policies that support teachers in implementing student-centered learning. Thus, the primary aim of this study is to explore the perceptions, experiences, and challenges faced by teachers in government primary schools regarding the shift towards student-centered learning.

1.4 Research Questions

- a. How do the teachers perceive student-centered learning in primary level?
- b. What factors influence the implementation of student-centered learning in government primary schools?
- c. What are the limitations of using a student-centered learning approach in government primary schools?

1.5 Purpose of the Study

Student-centered learning represents a departure from traditional teaching methods, emphasizing active student involvement and teacher facilitation. In the context of Bangladesh's education system, the recommendations from the National Student Assessment

(NSA) report significantly emphasized on student-centered learning (NCTB, 2021). Given the pivotal role of teachers in implementing curriculum and fostering student-centered approaches, it is essential to explore their perspectives and experiences with student-centered learning.

The purpose of this study is to delve into teachers' beliefs, views, and challenges surrounding student-centered learning in government primary schools. By gaining insights into these aspects, the research seeks to inform strategies for supporting teachers in creating learner-centered classrooms and enhancing the overall quality of education. Additionally, the study endeavors to shed light on the current status of student-centered learning in primary education and provide guidance for promoting its effective implementation. Ultimately, understanding teachers' viewpoints is essential for developing targeted interventions or training initiatives to address the challenges associated with student-centered learning effectively.

1.6 Significance of the Study

Student-centered learning approaches are widely embraced across the world. Student-centered learning emphasizes the construction of knowledge through inquiry, problem-solving, and the application of concepts to real-world situations (Weimer, 2012). This aligns with the abstract conceptualization and active experimentation stages of Kolb's experiential learning cycle, where learners develop theories and concepts based on their reflections and then apply these concepts in new situations (Kolb, 1984). Thus, the significance of student-centered learning approach has grown substantially in Bangladesh with the introduction of experiential learning cycle under new curriculum change. In student-centered learning, teachers serve as facilitators rather than mere transmitters of knowledge. They create learning environments that encourage students to actively engage in the learning process, explore

concepts through hands-on experiences, and construct their own understanding (Weimer, 2012). As primary school teachers are responsible for facilitating student-centered learning, it is crucial to understand their perceptions to enhance overall student learning outcomes.

By delving into primary teachers' perspectives, this research offers a nuanced understanding of current practices and challenges in implementing student-centered learning. This insight is invaluable for informing targeted interventions and training programs aimed at enhancing teaching practices and promoting student engagement. Moreover, the findings of this study can serve as a catalyst for policy formulation, guiding policymakers in crafting initiatives to effectively implement at the primary level. By aligning policy with teachers' needs and experiences, educational authorities can create an enabling environment conducive to the successful adoption of student-centered approaches. Additionally, by fostering a culture of knowledge sharing and collaboration among teachers, this research enables enriching teaching methodologies and promoting professional growth. As teachers draw insights from diverse experiences, they can adapt and refine their pedagogical approaches to better meet the evolving needs of their students. In essence, this research serves as a cornerstone for advancing educational practices in Bangladesh. By leveraging teachers' insights and experiences, educational stakeholders can collectively strive towards creating inclusive, engaging, and impactful learning environments for all students.

Chapter 2

Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

In this literature review, I am presenting information from different books, articles and documents that I reviewed to understand my research topic of student-centered learning both from national and international aspects. I have organized my literature review under the following categories: 1) Defining Student-centered learning, 2) Importance of student-centered learning, 3) Perception of teachers around the world, 4) Teachers' perceptions in Bangladesh's context.

2.1 Student-Centered Learning

Student-centered learning is an educational approach that empowers students to take an active role in their learning process. Instead of passively receiving information from the teacher, students engage in projects or tasks aligned with their interests, allowing them to construct knowledge through exploration, research, and collaboration with peers. In this approach, the teacher serves as a facilitator, guiding and supporting students along their learning journey (Overby, 2011). Through intentional instruction, teachers cultivate leadership and ownership among students regarding their learning experiences, transforming both students' and teachers' overall educational experiences (Weimer, 2012). This paradigm shift from the traditional teacher-centered approach, where students are passive learners, emphasizes the importance of students being partners in their learning (O'Neill & McMahon, 2005). Weimer (2002) identifies five key areas in instructional practice that require significant changes to create a learner-centered learning environment: power dynamics, content delivery, teacher roles, student responsibility, and assessment methods. Student-centered learning prioritizes student autonomy, scaffolded learning activities, and opportunities for students to produce authentic work for real-world audiences (Lee & Hannafin, 2016).

2.2 Importance of Student-Centered Learning

The student-centered learning method involves fostering collaboration and active engagement among students within the dynamic learning process, granting them opportunities to reflect on their learning and exert some control over their educational journey. This approach not only cultivates problem-solving and critical thinking skills but also enhances students' learning attitudes and attendance by making the learning experience more captivating (Overby, 2011). Implementing student-centered learning requires dedication and innovation to navigate the challenges associated with departing from traditional teaching methods (Weimer, 2002). Emphasizing active student participation and individual interaction to achieve common objectives, the student-centered approach stands in stark contrast to the traditional teacher-centered model of instruction (Qutoshi & Poudel, 2014; O'Neill & McMahon, 2005).

Dewey (1938) critiques the traditional teaching approach for its failure to actively engage students in the learning process, emphasizing the importance of involving learners in constructing the purposes behind their studies. Similarly, Freire (1970) highlights the need for educators to create environments where learners can express their creativity through exploration and interaction rather than merely receiving information from teachers. The National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) acknowledges the significance of social constructivism in promoting equity in education and recommends the adoption of learner-centered teaching, learning, and assessment practices to facilitate problem-solving and creative thinking among students (NCTB, 2019, 2021).

Kolb's experiential learning theory, influenced by Dewey, Lewin, and Piaget, aligns closely with student-centered learning principles, advocating for a shift from teacher-centered to learner-centered instruction. The experiential learning cycle, comprising concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation, emphasizes

hands-on learning, self-reflection, and the practical application of knowledge, all of which are central tenets of student-centered pedagogy (Kolb, 1984; Qutoshi & Poudel, 2014). This cohesive integration of theoretical perspectives underscores the holistic and dynamic nature of student-centered learning approaches in fostering meaningful and impactful educational experiences.

2.3 Perception of Teachers around the world

Research from various parts of the world indicates that teachers generally hold positive beliefs about student-centered education, although their practices may differ based on their pedagogical beliefs. A quantitative study by Işıkoğlu et al. (2009) found that in-service teachers who adhere to traditional beliefs tend to employ didactic instructional practices, whereas those with constructivist beliefs are more inclined to utilize student-centered approaches. This highlights the importance of assessing teachers' beliefs before expecting them to shift their teaching practices.

In Pakistan, a study on a community school in Karachi found that while teachers acknowledged the benefits of student-centered learning, they faced challenges in implementation due to limited resources, large class sizes, and a lack of training (Qutoshi & Poudel, 2014). Similarly, a study in North Cyprus identified barriers such as overcrowded classrooms, lack of materials and resources, and inadequate teacher training as hindrances to the use of student-centered learning in schools (Aliusta & Özer, 2014).

A study in Indonesia focused on developing a student-centered learning model to improve high-order mathematical thinking ability. The researchers found that teachers had positive perceptions of student-centered learning and believed it could enhance students' mathematical thinking skills, but they also identified challenges such as limited time, resources, and training in implementing this approach effectively (Saragih & Napitupulu, 2015).

In Turkey, a study comparing student-centered and teacher-centered learning environments in primary science and technology lessons revealed that teachers perceived student-centered approaches as more effective for promoting student participation, collaboration, and use of materials (Acat & Dönmez, 2009). Another study in New Zealand investigated teachers' experiences with implementing student-centered curriculum integration in three schools, finding that while initially challenging, the approach led to a more engaging, inclusive, and empowering learning environment over time (Brough, 2012).

2.4 Teachers' Perceptions in Bangladesh's Context

In Bangladesh, the education system has long prioritized exam results, leading to a culture of rote learning and intense exam preparation where students' futures hinge on their grades (Chowdhury & Sarkar, 2018). However, recent findings from the National Student Assessment (NSA) in 2022 emphasized the importance of teachers' confidence in their teaching methods. For example, students' math performance in grade 5 was notably better when teachers believed in more interactive teaching styles rather than just lecturing (DPE, 2023).

A study conducted in Bangladeshi colleges shed light on the prevailing teaching methods, which often lack deeper connections with students and fail to address their individual needs. Instead, classrooms tend to rely heavily on commands and disciplinary measures (Jakir et al., 2019). The study recommends adopting interactive and student-centered learning strategies to foster creativity and critical thinking in students' development, enabling them to achieve their full potential.

Similarly, research on secondary-level education in Bangladesh highlighted teachers' recognition of the benefits of student-centered instruction for fostering interactive and effective learning. Another study focusing on English language learning at tertiary colleges in

Bangladesh uncovered positive perceptions of student-centered learning among teachers. However, both of these studies revealed that teachers acknowledged challenges such as large class sizes, resource shortages, resistance from students accustomed to traditional teaching methods and the need for professional development to make this approach work (Jony, 2016; Islam & Paul, 2019). Many researchers advocate for the adoption of student-centered approaches in Bangladesh to keep pace with global educational trends and prepare students for the demands of the 21st century (Biswas & Roy, 2010).

2.5 Conceptual Framework

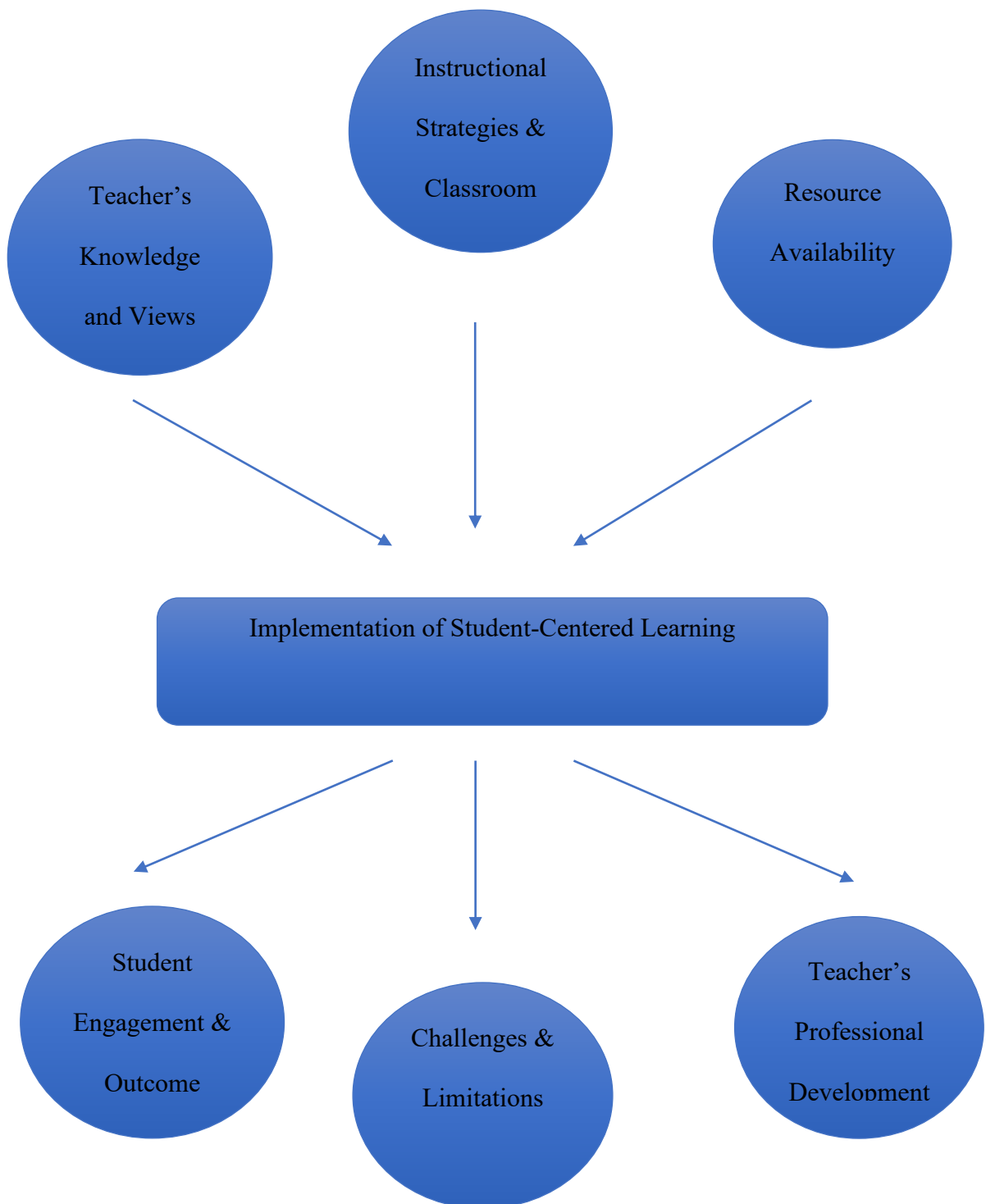


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Research Approach

This was a qualitative study with the phenomenological approach. According to Johnson and Christensen (2004), qualitative research is used when there's little information about a topic or phenomenon and when one wants to discover or learn more about it through understanding people's experiences and their perspectives. Phenomenological approach is a qualitative research approach that focuses on understanding the meaning, structure, and essence of an individual participant's or group of participants' lived experience of a phenomenon through "these particular participants' perspective" (Johnson and Christensen, 2004), as cited in Gay & Airasian, 2003). Thus, the proposed study is a qualitative study with the phenomenological approach to learn about the perception of teachers about student centered learning in primary schools of Bangladesh to gather new insights on student-centered learning practices in the particular context.

3.2 Research Site

The research had been conducted at several government primary schools located in the southern city corporation areas of Dhaka. This study aims to explore teachers' perspective on student-centered learning practices in primary school settings. Thus, including schools across these two major regions of the capital as research sites created scope for an investigation into the perspectives and experiences of primary teachers regarding student-centered learning in diverse educational settings within Dhaka.

3.3 Research Participants

The study population was the assistant teachers of government primary schools in Dhaka city who teach following the new curriculum. A total of 10 teachers were selected for an In-Depth Interview (IDI) and three classroom observations were conducted from three of these teachers' classrooms.

3.4 Sampling Procedure

The target population for this qualitative study consisted of primary school teachers from government schools in Dhaka South City Corporation who have experience with student-centered learning approaches. A total of 10 participants were purposively selected from four government primary schools for in-depth interviews, with 3 of these teachers also participating in classroom observations.

The sampling criteria included: (1) teachers currently working in government primary schools within Dhaka South City Corporation, (2) teachers with at least one year of teaching experience, (3) teachers who have been exposed to or claim to use student-centered learning approaches, and (4) teachers who provided informed consent to participate in the study. Schools were selected based on convenience sampling due to accessibility and researcher's familiarity with the institutions.

Since this is a qualitative study aimed at gaining in-depth understanding of teachers' perceptions and practices regarding student-centered learning, the sample size was determined by the need for rich, detailed data rather than statistical representation. The purposive sampling approach allowed for the selection of information-rich participants who could provide valuable insights into the research phenomenon.

3.5 Data Collection Methods

This qualitative study employed two primary data collection methods: in-depth interviews (IDI) and classroom observations. These methods were selected to gain comprehensive insights into teachers' perceptions and actual practices regarding student-centered learning approaches.

3.5.1 In-Depth Interview (IDI)

In-depth interviews were chosen as the primary data collection method because they allow for detailed exploration of participants' perspectives, experiences, and underlying reasoning regarding student-centered learning (Gill et al., 2008). A total of 10 teachers from four government primary schools participated in face-to-face interviews conducted at their respective schools. Each interview lasted approximately 45-60 minutes and was conducted using a semi-structured interview guide to ensure consistent coverage of key topics while allowing flexibility for follow-up questions. All interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent and were transcribed immediately after each session to ensure accuracy and completeness of data.

3.5.2 Classroom Observation

Classroom observations were conducted to provide direct insight into teachers' actual practices and to complement the interview data (Johnson and Christensen, 2004). Three classroom observations were carried out with teachers who had participated in the IDI and provided additional consent for observation. Each observation session lasted one complete class period (approximately 40 minutes) and was documented using a structured observation checklist with space for detailed field notes. The observations aimed to capture real-time implementation of student-centered learning approaches and identify any gaps between teachers' stated perceptions and actual classroom practices.

3.6 Role of the Researcher

As a researcher with a background in education, I bring both insights and potential biases to this study. My professional experience in the educational sector helped establish rapport with teacher participants and understand their contextual challenges. However, I remained conscious that this background could influence data collection.

During interviews and observations, I deliberately positioned myself as a neutral researcher rather than an educational colleague or evaluator. When participants sought validation for their practices or appeared concerned about judgment, I emphasized my role as a researcher interested in understanding their experiences, not assessing their performance.

To minimize bias, I used open-ended probing questions and maintained a non-participatory stance during classroom observations. I focused solely on documenting observations without intervening or offering suggestions. Member checking was conducted with select participants to ensure my interpretations accurately reflected their intended meanings.

While my familiarity with Bangladesh's educational context aided understanding of institutional constraints and cultural factors, I remained vigilant about not letting my personal educational philosophy overshadow participants' authentic voices.

3.7 Data Analysis

The qualitative data collected through in-depth interviews and classroom observations was analyzed using thematic analysis following Creswell's (2018) six-step approach. This method was selected as it allows for systematic identification, analysis, and interpretation of patterns within qualitative data, making it particularly suitable for understanding teachers' perceptions and experiences regarding student-centered learning approaches. The analysis process involved organizing the data, coding transcripts, developing themes, presenting findings, interpreting results, and ensuring accuracy through verification techniques.

The data analysis process began with transcribing all audio-recorded interviews verbatim and translating them from Bangla to English where necessary. Classroom observation field notes were also organized and prepared for analysis. The transcribed data was then read multiple times to gain familiarity before beginning the coding process. Initial codes were generated by identifying meaningful segments of text related to teachers' perceptions, challenges, and

practices. These codes were then grouped into potential themes based on patterns and commonalities. The themes were reviewed and refined to ensure they accurately captured the essence of the data and aligned with the research questions. Finally, the themes were organized into a coherent narrative structure with supporting evidence from the data. To ensure reliability, a portion of the coded data was cross-checked, and member checking was conducted with select participants to validate the themes and interpretations.

3.8 Ethical Issues and Concerns

Research ethics involves the principles and guidelines that govern the conduct of research, focusing on three main areas: the relationship between society and science, professional issues like fraud, and the treatment of research participants. Adhering to ethical standards is crucial for educational researchers, who often follow guidelines such as the AERA Guidelines, covering topics like informed consent, deception, freedom to withdraw, confidentiality, and the role of Institutional Review Boards (Johnson & Christensen, 2004).

This study adhered to established research ethics principles to ensure the protection and rights of all participants. Prior to data collection, ethical approval was obtained from the BRAC Institute of Educational Development, BRAC University. Informed consent was secured from all participants before conducting interviews and classroom observations. Teachers were contacted via mobile phone and provided with comprehensive information about the study's purpose, objectives, procedures, and their rights as participants. Only those who willingly agreed to participate were included in the study.

Confidentiality was maintained throughout the research process by using pseudonyms for all participants and schools in data transcription and analysis. All audio recordings and field notes were stored securely and will be destroyed after completion of the thesis. Participants

were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and were assured they could skip any questions that made them uncomfortable. One participant requested not to record the interview which was considered during the interview and it was fully recorded in written format. No significant ethical issues were encountered during the study, as participants were cooperative and the research procedures were non-invasive.

3.9 Credibility and Rigor

My professional background provides a solid foundation for conducting this research on teachers' perceptions of student-centered learning approaches. I have two years of direct teaching experience in government primary schools and three years of overall experience in the education sector, which has given me firsthand insight into the challenges and realities that primary school teachers face in implementing various teaching methodologies. This experience significantly influenced my selection of this research topic, as I witnessed the gap between theoretical knowledge about student-centered learning and its practical implementation in classroom settings. My teaching background enabled me to establish rapport with participants and understand the nuances of their responses during data collection. However, I acknowledge that this experience may have introduced certain biases in data interpretation, and I remained conscious of maintaining objectivity throughout the research process. To ensure rigor, I followed a systematic approach in developing this study, including creating a research matrix, comprehensive research outline, and detailed research proposal that was reviewed and approved by my supervisor. Currently working in a different sector has provided me with some distance from the immediate educational context, potentially offering a more objective perspective while retaining valuable insights from my teaching experience.

3.10 Limitations of the study

This study encountered several limitations that may have influenced the depth and reliability of its findings. Political unrest during the originally planned data collection period in July 2024 caused delays and restricted access to schools, compressing the fieldwork timeline and limiting opportunities for sustained engagement. Only three classroom observations could be conducted instead of the intended five, reducing opportunities to triangulate interview data with observed classroom practices. Additionally, environmental disruptions—such as class cancellations due to heavy rainfall—further limited access to observational data and affected the consistency and representativeness of the evidence gathered.

The research also relied heavily on self-reported data through in-depth interviews, which may have been subject to social desirability bias. Participants may have presented their teaching practices in a more favorable light, particularly in relation to student-centered learning methods. This potential discrepancy between reported and actual classroom practices could have led to an overly optimistic interpretation of pedagogical changes. As a result, the reliability and depth of certain thematic insights—especially those related to classroom-level implementation—may have been compromised.

Chapter 4

Results

4.1 Introduction

The study was conducted with the view of exploring the perceptions of primary school teachers regarding student-centered learning approaches in government primary schools in Bangladesh. The research was designed with 10 in-depth interviews (IDIs) of primary school teachers from three different government primary schools in Dhaka city and 3 classroom observations of three teachers who participated in the IDIs.

The results have been categorized in 4 major thematic areas:

1. Teachers' Understanding and Perceptions of Student-Centered Learning
2. Teaching Strategies and Classroom Practices for Implementing Student-Centered Learning
3. Barriers and Limitations to Implementation of Student-Centered Learning
4. Structural and Professional Support for Implementation of Student-Centered Learning

This section presents the key findings from the in-depth interviews conducted with teachers and classroom observations in government primary schools. The analysis revealed the above-mentioned four major themes that address the research questions on teachers' perceptions and implementation of student-centered learning (SCL), factors influencing its implementation, and limitations to effective SCL approaches in government primary schools.

4.2 Demographic Information

For this study, a total of ten primary school teachers were selected as participants for in-depth interviews from four different Government Primary Schools situated in Dhaka city. Of the participants, 9 were female and 1 was male. The majority of them had higher educational qualifications; seven of them had completed a Master's degree in various disciplines (Economics, Political Science, Management, Chemistry, Botany, Geography, and Human Resource Management), one participant held a Bachelor of Science degree, one had a Bachelor of Business Administration, and one had a Master of Business Administration. The participants represented a wide range of teaching experience levels, from 19 months to over 23 years, with six teachers having substantial experience (10+ years), two teachers with extensive experience (20+ years), and two teachers being relatively new to the profession (less than 2 years).

All participants had received various forms of professional training relevant to primary education. All ten teachers received subject-based training at different times covering core subjects like Mathematics, Science, Bangla, English, and Social Science. Several participants had obtained additional professional qualifications such as B.Ed, M.Ed, C.in.Ed, and DPED. Some had specialized training in inclusive education, pre-primary education, curriculum development, and ICT. Most teachers taught upper primary grades (3-5), with some also teaching lower primary grades (pre-primary to 2), and typically handled multiple subjects rather than specializing in a single subject.

4.3 Teachers' Understanding and Perceptions of Student-Centered Learning

The first theme explores how teachers conceptualize and perceive student-centered learning in the primary education context, addressing the research question: "How do teachers

perceive student-centered learning in primary education?" The result of this theme has been presented under three sub-themes below:

4.3.1 Teachers' Knowledge and Awareness of Student-Centered Learning

As the first thematic area of this research explored the knowledge and awareness of the participants about student-centered learning, it was found that teachers showed varying levels of understanding of student-centered learning, with most having a clear conceptual idea of its fundamental principles. Most interviewed teachers conceptualize SCL primarily as shifting the classroom dynamic from teacher-dominated instruction to student participation, though with varying depth of understanding. Their definitions commonly center around group/peer work, with students taking active roles while teachers facilitate. This understanding reflects a practical approach to implementing SCL within their classroom contexts. One participant replied:

"Student-centered learning basically means student-centered group work, pair work, working in groups of two or four. Then, before starting teaching, ask questions from the students, listen to what the students understand about the subject, and give them feedback. This is called student-centered learning." - In-depth Interview #1, 15-09-2024

Teachers consistently position themselves as facilitators who provide initial guidance before stepping back, demonstrating their understanding of the changed teacher role in SCL. This perspective shows teachers recognize that effective SCL requires them to relinquish some control and allow students greater autonomy in their learning process. As one teacher explained:

"Student-centered learning means that I will keep the student in the main or central place while conducting my lesson. For example, I am teaching a

lesson, "Uncle's House". First, I will give them a little idea about Uncle's House. What is said in the poem Uncle's House? After saying this, I will give them the task. The teacher will have no other work. The teacher will leave the entire work to the students. This is what student-centered learning is all about. In the 45 minutes of class, I will have 10-15 minutes of work. The rest of the time, they will be distributed, they will do whatever they have in groups or individually or acting." - In-depth Interview #6, 18-09-2024

Several teachers describe SCL as creating environments where students' express thoughts freely, solve problems independently, and learn from each other. This understanding demonstrates their awareness that SCL involves not just different activities, but a fundamental shift in classroom dynamics that empowers students to take ownership of their learning. A recurring pattern shows teachers positioning themselves as facilitators who provide initial guidance but then delegate most classroom activities to students. One teacher explained:

"Student-centered learning means that I will make the student work. I can give the student group work; I can give the student individual work. I will find out the answer to each question from the student. I won't say first, they will say, and I will help later." - In-depth Interview #5, 15-09-2024

Another respondent emphasized the problem-solving aspect of SCL, highlighting how it develops students' independent thinking capabilities and prepares them for future challenges:

"'Student-centered' means that the students will solve the problem themselves, they will create it themselves. Here the teacher will only play the role of a facilitator, a helper. Here we will only throw the problems in

front of them. And from there they will find the solution in their own way and in the future, they will be able to solve all the problems that come up.

We will only help them." - In-depth Interview #8, 18-09-2024

However, practical constraints like large class sizes (40-50 students) influence implementation approaches, with some teachers adapting by having more advanced students teach peers. Overall, while teachers recognize SCL involves student autonomy and participation, their interpretations remain somewhat narrow, often focusing on the structural aspects of group work rather than deeper pedagogical principles.

4.3.2 Teachers' Perceptive on the Benefits of Student-Centered Learning

Teachers generally demonstrated a positive view on student-centered learning, highlighting numerous benefits they have observed in their classroom practice. They particularly emphasized how SCL makes learning more accessible and engaging for students, allowing them to grasp concepts more easily. This positive perception suggests that teachers see real value in SCL approaches despite implementation challenges.

"If implemented, they will definitely learn a lot. Their learning system will grow. And you can't expect much from them. They will be able to learn very easily." - In-depth Interview #3, 15-09-2024

Similarly, another teacher said,

"This is definitely good. If it is not student-centered, if I cannot engage the students, if I cannot get them to participate, they will not understand anything. If I cannot explain theories about Lalbagh Fort, if I cannot give a briefing, and if I simply tell them to read the passage on that page, they will not develop an interest in reading." - In-depth Interview #6, 18-09-2024

Teachers also emphasized the value of peer learning opportunities through group activities, noting that this approach creates a supportive learning environment where students learn from each other and develop confidence. The peer learning aspect is particularly valued because it addresses individual learning differences and creates multiple sources of support within the classroom. In terms of classroom management, teachers noted that SCL approaches help identify and support struggling students more effectively, as peer interactions reveal learning gaps that might otherwise go unnoticed.

"They learn through each other; this is one benefit. That is, those who cannot, at first may have a little inertia, but later there is no inertia. They learn by discussing among themselves, this is the biggest advantage. Sometimes when we are taking classes, those who are behind may not come to our attention. When we divide them into groups, everyone talks to everyone, discusses." - In-depth Interview #2, 15-09-2024

While explaining the advantages, a teacher focused on peer learning and student comfort in opening up with their peers, highlighting how students often feel more comfortable seeking help from classmates than approaching teachers directly:

"There are many advantages in implementing student-centered education. For example, we identify weak students. But not all weak students want to come to us again. They prefer to learn from their friends. Here, if we teachers identify some good students in advance, then we see that they learn quickly from their friends." - In-depth Interview #8, 18-09-2024

4.3.3 Teacher-centered learning vs. student-centered learning

When reflecting on different teaching methods, teachers provided thoughtful comparisons between teacher-centered and student-centered approaches. They generally recognized the

complementary nature of both approaches while acknowledging the unique advantages that student-centered learning offers. Teachers noted that SCL allows for more practical, hands-on learning from the beginning, which helps students understand concepts more thoroughly than traditional lecture-based methods.

A respondent emphasized how SCL facilitates better learning outcomes through practical engagement and peer support:

"In the student-centered method, they learn practically from the beginning easily. Sometimes, when it is teacher centered, the teacher explains whether they have fully achieved the learning and whether the learning has been done properly, sometimes there is a gap. And in the student-centered method, since the work is done by the student from the beginning, the less able and more able students are grouped together, and learning can be achieved easily through them." - In-depth Interview #1, 15-09-2024

4.3.4 Challenges in Implementation Despite Understanding

One teacher articulated the practical challenges and benefits of peer teaching approaches in SCL implementation, highlighting time constraints and resource limitations:

"Even if the teacher wants to give the whole 40 minutes of time to our students, they cannot give it to them. But if he wants to teach my weak students with my good students, then it is possible. Then it is seen that everyone is active, everyone becomes active. And when the teacher always teaches, it becomes boring for them, they do not like to listen or understand it." - In-depth Interview #8, 18-09-2024

However, classroom observations revealed a strong prevalence of teacher-centered practices across all three observed classrooms, with limited evidence of student-centered approaches

being implemented despite teachers' stated understanding of SCL benefits. Teachers used a commanding approach displaying a power dynamic in the classroom. Therefore, despite the use of group activities, students were not fully engaging in the learning process.

4.4 Teaching Strategies and Classroom Practices for Implementing Student-Centered Learning

This theme addresses the research question: "What factors influence the implementation of student-centered learning in government primary schools?" by examining the specific strategies and practices teachers employ to implement SCL in their classrooms. It explores how teachers engage students, manage classrooms, and enhance learning experiences through various approaches.

4.4.1 Student Engagement Techniques

Teachers employ various engagement strategies to foster student participation and create interactive learning environments. They particularly emphasized the importance of encouraging student participation through questioning techniques and creating a classroom atmosphere where students feel comfortable sharing their ideas. The emphasis on encouragement demonstrates teachers' understanding that SCL requires building student confidence and willingness to participate actively.

"If you encourage them, even if they say something wrong, they will be interested in saying it later. If you don't encourage them, they won't be interested. Encourage them and correct them even if they say something wrong." - In-depth Interview #1, 15-09-2024

Another participant explained the importance of student engagement and recognizing individual learning differences, emphasizing how understanding each student's perspective and needs is crucial for effective SCL implementation:

"My main target is to ensure that they are engaged. If a teacher does not understand a student's perspective, they will not be able to grasp what the student truly needs. Each student has a different capability for receiving information. If I fail to maintain eye contact and focus on them, if I do not recognize their needs and struggles, then my entire effort will be in vain." -

In-depth Interview #6, 18-09-2024

Game-based activities are frequently used to make learning enjoyable and stimulate student interest, particularly with younger students. This approach demonstrates teachers' creativity in adapting SCL principles to make learning more engaging and age-appropriate.

"For example, I teach most of the time through games. I give a game, I teach English to class 2, then I teach through games. I give a game, the children have a lot of fun with it, it is an interesting experience for me. I give 5-6 words, I delete one word, then the children remember it, then I ask, tell me which word I delete? This is my experience with games." - In-

depth Interview #5, 15-09-2024

Interactive and participatory activities were identified as crucial for maintaining student engagement and ensuring deeper learning. Teachers use various questioning techniques and discussion methods to promote active participation and critical thinking.

"I take science class for class 4. First, I always use the board. After using the board, I discuss the topic. Then I make groups, then they discuss. Then I throw questions, they answer. Again, I also tell them when I see they are

finding it difficult to answer the question for a long time, I say, do you think you can ask questions from here? then if they can't, I answer. It's like interactive learning." - In-depth Interview #3, 15-09-2024

Observed Limitations in Student Engagement

The classroom observations revealed significant limitations in student engagement techniques. In the first observation, the teacher primarily asked yes/no questions that did not generate discussion among students. Despite a small class size (23 students), only 4-5 students actively participated in classroom activities. In the second observation, although the teacher attempted to engage students through questions, only a few students responded, with many simply repeating the teacher's words instead of thinking critically. Students appeared hesitant to ask questions due to the teacher's strict approach resulting in minimal student participation and engagement in the third observation.

4.4.2 Teachers' Instructional Approaches

Teachers described various instructional methods they employ to implement student-centered learning, often combining different approaches to address diverse learning needs and subject requirements. Many teachers use a blended approach, starting with brief explanations and then transitioning to more student-centered activities.

"In the first stage, when explaining something, when the class starts, it is explained in the lecture method. Later, when they understand, it is easier to explain through question and answer by listening to them, if they ask questions, I answer the questions. If at first they do not know the subject, then if they understand, then the question answer method is used more through the question and answer." - In-depth Interview #1, 15-09-2024

Another teacher described their practical approach to implementing discussion-based learning, showing how they structure group work and assessment to ensure student understanding:

"When I explain a topic to them, after explaining it, I tell them to form a group of 2 or 3, and discuss it. After discussing, I will ask you whether you understand it by throwing questions. Mostly I throw questions. Sometimes I ask individually whether you understand it, if you don't understand, tell me and I will explain it." - **In-depth Interview #3, 15-09-2024**

Teachers often rely on assessment techniques to understand student learning and adapt their teaching accordingly. This approach demonstrates their commitment to responsive teaching that adjusts based on student needs and understanding.

"I understand that they are learning, when I ask them, they respond orally or when I ask them to write in a notebook, they show it by writing. I also take it orally, I also let them write it down and the class test is taken, the response is good." - **In-depth Interview #2, 15-09-2024**

A participant shared their approach to identifying and supporting struggling students, emphasizing the importance of maintaining student dignity while providing additional support:

"After each lesson, through that evaluation, I see which student is not able, who is lagging behind. Then my eye contact goes towards him. I don't want him to misunderstand or do anything to humiliate him. I just know that he is not able. The one who is not able is lagging behind, later my target will be to bring him forward or motivate him with some work. That's how I try to do it." - **In-depth Interview #6, 18-09-2024**

4.4.3 Classroom Management Techniques

The field observations confirmed that teachers consistently used loud, commanding voices across all observed classes. However, this appeared to be primarily for maintaining discipline rather than facilitating learning. Teachers predominantly employed traditional instructional methods with minimal student-centered elements. This discrepancy between stated understanding and observed practice suggests challenges in translating SCL knowledge into effective classroom implementation.

In one of the observations, it was noticed that the teacher's instructions were primarily given in commanding form with no verification of student comprehension, resulting in some students appearing lost. In another classroom, the teacher conducted the entire class while sitting at the front, showing physical disengagement with students.

Classroom management across all observations relied heavily on strict discipline and fear-based compliance. It was observed that one teacher-controlled students by making them fear punishment, while another teacher used frequent shouting and strict homework enforcement which created reluctance among students to participate.

4.4.4 Learning Enhancement Strategies

Teachers employ various strategies to enhance the learning experience, with particular emphasis on using teaching-learning materials to make abstract concepts more concrete and accessible to students. The use of visual and manipulative materials helps students understand complex concepts more easily and makes learning more engaging.

"For example, suppose I am taking a math class. When I take a math class, I show them the materials. They are either semi-real or real materials that I show them, especially in geometry. If I draw triangles, quadrilaterals on paper, they(students) have a lot of fun. And when I show them, they make

them one after another. They can catch on to this very quickly." - In-depth

Interview #2, 15-09-2024

One of the teachers shared about following the teacher's guide during lessons to plan and execute a class:

What I normally do is, as it is said in the guide that we have, step by step, for example, first we have to exchange greetings, do a greeting song, I have to get the title of the chapter I will teach from the children's mouths, I have to revise the previous reading. Just as it is said in the guide. - In-depth

Interview #4, 15-09-2024

A teacher outlined their use of materials and varied assessment techniques to facilitate student learning, emphasizing how materials support the student-centered approach:

"I use materials in the classroom. First I show the material, then I ask what is being shown, then I try to get the point out of them, they tell me. I mostly apply the student-centered method. The quality of education improves. (Students) understand. In addition, I give group work, individual work, assessment, class assessment." - In-depth Interview #5, 15-09-2024

An important outcome of student-centered learning noted by teachers is the development of leadership qualities in students, particularly through peer teaching opportunities. This aspect of SCL helps develop students' confidence and communication skills while reinforcing their own learning.

"And a sense of leadership comes among them, so how will I teach? They come with a lot of interest, that if I study well today, then I will be able to teach them today. If it is seen that 5 children have studied today, then 7

children will study tomorrow. This is a big advantage." - In-depth Interview #2, 15-09-2024

Another teacher explained how peer teaching benefits both the student who teaches and the one who learns, creating a mutually beneficial learning environment:

"What happens when children teach children? Both of them are revised repeatedly. The one who can do it, the one he is teaching also has to revise. Again, he looks at that child and thinks, if he can do it, why can't I? Then he also tries. Then I say that he can do it, so he teaches. You learn, you can also teach others. Then he feels encouraged that if I can do it, I can also teach others." - In-depth Interview #4, 15-09-2024

Observed Limitations in Learning Enhancement

Limited implementation of learning enhancement strategies was visible in the observations. One teacher attempted to use materials but not enough for everyone and there was no proper group work implemented. Another observation noted a complete absence of learning enhancement strategies, with the teacher focusing exclusively on rote memorization of a paragraph on "My Family," first reading it aloud and then checking if students had memorized it. In only one observation, the teacher attempted to enhance learning by providing real-world connections, giving examples related to her personal experiences to connect with the topic of that class.

4.4.5 Training and Professional Development Impact

Most teachers reported receiving training that included SCL components, although not always as a standalone focus. These trainings have contributed significantly to their understanding and implementation of student-centered approaches. The training background

helps explain teachers' conceptual understanding of SCL principles, even if implementation remains challenging.

"Our trainings has been given on student-centeredness since the beginning of 2010. The teacher will go to the classroom and leave the entire work to the students. If they need help, assistance, or if there is something they don't understand, he will explain those topics." - In-depth Interview #6, 18-09-2024

Another participant emphasized that SCL concepts are integrated into various training programs rather than being taught as separate modules:

"I think there is no need for any separate training on this at this time. This is discussed in our various training and demo classes are also shown. In this case, teachers need to be more creative. Teachers can be more creative in conducting classes." - In-depth Interview #7, 18-09-2024

4.5 Barriers and Limitations to Implementation of Student-Centered Learning

This theme addresses the research question: "What are the limitations of using a student-centered learning approach in government primary schools?" It examines the various challenges teachers face when attempting to implement student-centered approaches, including physical constraints, resource limitations, and stakeholder-related challenges.

4.5.1 Class Size and Student-Teachers Ratio Challenges

Large classroom sizes emerged as a significant barrier to effective SCL implementation, with teachers expressing concerns about their ability to properly manage and support all students in oversized classes. Teachers consistently expressed how high student-to-teacher ratios

negatively impact their ability to provide individualized attention and maintain quality instruction. The ideal classroom environment for SCL requires manageable numbers that allow for meaningful interaction and individual attention.

"To be student-centered, the number of students in the classroom needs to be limited. If there are 25-30 students, then student-centered learning becomes easy. And if there are more students, 60-70, then it becomes challenging." - **In-depth Interview #1, 15-09-2024**

The challenge extends beyond just classroom management to the ability to provide differentiated instruction to students with varying needs. Large class sizes make it nearly impossible for teachers to address individual learning differences effectively.

"Each student is different. There are some students who have problems with memorizing or understanding reading, whose intelligence is low, those students need to be given more time. But sometimes we cannot give 100%."
- **In-depth Interview #10, 19-09-2024**

Some teachers also pointed to broader systemic issues, emphasizing that effective SCL requires manageable class sizes for meaningful teacher-student interaction:

"The number of students in each classroom should not exceed 25. Because if it is more than this for a teacher's eye contact, it is not possible in any way." - **In-depth Interview #8, 18-09-2024**

These perspectives collectively highlight how classroom overcrowding fundamentally undermines teachers' ability to implement SCL practices effectively, regardless of their commitment to student-centered pedagogy.

4.5.2 Teachers Workload and Time Management Issues

Beyond simple numbers, teachers also described how larger class sizes drain their energy and diminish their teaching effectiveness. The heavy workload prevents teachers from dedicating adequate time and energy to implementing more engaging, student-centered approaches.

"The same comfort one feels teaching a small number of children is not the same as teaching a large number of children. If there were fewer children and a teacher had no more than 4 classes, that teacher could contribute a lot more. What I can give in 4 classes, I cannot give in 6 classes. I don't have that energy. The government should understand this, but it doesn't. I think that's the problem." - In-depth Interview #4, 15-09-2024

Another teacher shared similar concerns about the exhausting nature of managing multiple large classes daily:

"The number of students is very high. A teacher has to take 5-6 classes every day. Due to the large number of students, it becomes difficult to control the class and the teachers get tired. In this case, it would be better for the teachers if there were 3-4 classes every day." - In-depth Interview #7, 18-09-2024

Time constraints were also identified as a significant barrier, with teachers struggling to balance SCL activities with curriculum demands:

"Sometimes it is time-consuming to ensure everyone's participation by working in groups. Moreover, the lesson plan can't be completed." - In-depth Interview #7, 18-09-2024

4.5.3 Physical Infrastructure and Space Limitations

Small classroom spaces present additional challenges for implementing group activities and other interactive learning strategies. Limited physical space impacts classroom mobility and engagement, making it difficult to organize students for collaborative activities.

"We have a problem here, our rooms are a little small. Due to the small room, if you want to bring a student to the front, it takes time to bring him from the side where he is sitting because the benches are pressed. And three people have to get up. In this case, if the room is big, then the benches can be arranged in a spaced manner, then it is easy to call all the students and bring them close and make them work." - In-depth Interview #1, 15-09-2024

The challenge of overcrowded classrooms is compounded by insufficient space and furniture, creating an environment that is not conducive to interactive learning:

"We have less space. There is more noise for space. If the classroom was bigger. We have less benches compared to the children. So, sitting in a row, the classroom is small, there are more children, these are problems" - In-depth Interview #4, 18-09-2024

4.5.4 Resource and Material Limitations

Limited resources and inadequate facilities further constrain teachers' ability to implement student-centered approaches effectively. These limitations range from inadequate physical spaces to insufficient learning materials and technological tools. Poor classroom conditions directly impact student engagement and learning effectiveness.

"Again, the primary classrooms are dilapidated, tables are broken, windows are broken, their attention is lost due to these things." - In-depth

Interview #3, 15-09-2024

Teachers also highlighted how technological resources could enhance SCL implementation but are largely unavailable in their contexts:

"The classes that I think are better if these classes are taken by incorporating some activities with computers... It automatically becomes student-centered, not teacher-centered. But in Bangladesh, there are very few places that have projectors"- In-depth Interview #10, 18-09-2024

Observed Infrastructure Challenges

Field observations provided compelling evidence of these constraints in action. All three observed classrooms demonstrated significant overcrowding. In the first observation, a room originally designed for 32 students was tasked with accommodating 73 enrolled students, though attendance was reduced to 23 during the observation period due to recent political unrest. The second classroom was too small for 76 students, resulting in insufficient seating that forced some students to squeeze in on limited benches. Similarly, the third classroom was deemed inadequate for the number of students, with 59 of 72 enrolled students present during observation.

Resource limitations were evident in all observations, with not enough materials for everyone in the second classroom and no proper classroom materials in the third. Environmental issues further complicated learning, as evidenced by a broken ceiling fan making the second classroom hotter and students restless, while the third classroom suffered from poor lighting and lack of proper ventilation that noticeably impacted student concentration and engagement.

4.5.5 Parental and Socioeconomic Challenges

A significant challenge identified by teachers is the lack of parental awareness and support, which they believe reduces the effectiveness of student-centered approaches. Teachers consistently described how family circumstances and parental educational backgrounds affect student preparation, follow-through, and classroom behavior. Socioeconomic factors create barriers to effective learning that extend beyond the classroom.

"They come from lower-class families more, there is more ignorance among them, there is more ignorance among their parents. It turns out that I taught very well in a 2.5-hour class, the next day was a government holiday, they did not study anything the next day, when they came to class the next day, they forgot everything." - In-depth Interview #3, 15-09-2024

Another participant highlighted the challenges of working with families from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, where support for education may be limited:

"The class of children we teach is not middle class like us, although now we get 2-1, we handle mostly lower-class children. In that case, there may be a little obstacle. Overall, we continue. Sometimes there is a lack of support from parents." - In-depth Interview #5, 15-09-2024

The impact of poverty on students' ability to complete independent learning tasks was explicitly noted by one teacher:

"First of all, our children live in a poor and densely populated area, below the poverty line. They are crammed into a room. They do not have the time to study for a while. In that case, if I tell them or give them other tasks... they do not do it or bring it to me." - In-depth Interview #6, 18-09-2024

Observation data did not directly address parental involvement, but showed teacher-related challenges that could impact SCL implementation. In the third observation, the teacher displayed a sense of exhaustion in her delivery, suggesting potential burnout that could limit effective SCL implementation.

4.6 Structural and Professional Support for Implementation of Student-Centered Learning

This emergent theme identifies factors that facilitate or could improve the implementation of student-centered learning in government primary schools, addressing both classroom infrastructure needs and professional development considerations.

4.6.1 Importance of Classroom Infrastructure

Teachers emphasized the importance of well-equipped and appropriately designed classrooms in enabling effective student-centered learning practices. Adequate infrastructure is seen as a prerequisite for successful SCL implementation. One participant explicitly connected effective SCL implementation with resource availability:

"And if there are complete materials, the student-centered method is effective. We have projectors, materials, and the branches we have divided have students, which is necessary. In that case, student-centered learning is happening." - In-depth Interview #1, 15-09-2024

Beyond just materials, the same teacher emphasized how spatial considerations directly impact instructional options:

"The classroom needs to be a little bigger, light and airy or a little bigger room, so that it is easy to give work to the group. In addition, the group

learning activities need to be completed, then it is possible to easily achieve a student-centered approach." - In-depth Interview #1, 15-09-2024

Field observations provided concrete evidence of these infrastructure challenges, revealing significant deficiencies across all observed settings. The first classroom, while featuring some educational wall paintings, was fundamentally undersized for the total enrolled student population. The second observation documented a faded chalkboard, hard to read from the back resulting in some students straining to see or hear during instruction. Similarly, the third classroom was characterized as having inadequate conditions overall, with particular concerns about poor lighting and ventilation issues that made the learning environment stuffy and less conducive to engagement. These observations directly validate teachers' concerns about how physical constraints undermine their ability to implement effective student-centered pedagogical approaches.

4.6.2 Teachers' Recommendations for Improvement

Teachers provided specific recommendations for improving the implementation of student-centered learning, including enhanced training programs that address practical challenges. There is a clear need for professional development that goes beyond theoretical understanding to address real classroom challenges.

"Sometimes, the work we are doing is not being done well. It is a bit chaotic. Maybe I may be missing the arranging capacity or I may have a problem managing what I want to say in my speech. All in all, a training is needed." - In-depth Interview #8, 18-09-2024

Another participant specifically highlighted how current training fails to address large classroom management, which is a critical gap given the reality of overcrowded classrooms:

"Our training does not say anything about the large class. It tells you how to teach in the classroom, but it does not say anywhere how to manage the large classroom. That is the biggest lack of training. When I worked on training design, I realized that there was no idea about the large classroom. It has to be done as a teacher's technique." - **In-depth Interview #10, 19-09-2024**

Beyond training improvements, teachers emphasized the potential of technological integration to enhance SCL approaches:

"Through high-quality materials, we can teach children, and innovation will come. Traditional materials, traditional learning, and only student-centered learning will not be enough. If children get innovation, if we teach it, it will be more fruitful. It will be good for children. Improve ICT further. I want to give more priority to technical education. Now, technology is the basis of everything. Technology needs to be improved further." - **In-depth Interview #5, 15-09-2024**

Another participant noted existing technological resources that could be better utilized:

"Besides, in primary science classes, we can use laptops. We can show pictures of junk food... Laptops have also been provided to every school. So the teachers do that." - **In-depth Interview #6, 18-09-2024**

Classroom observations complemented these recommendations by revealing specific areas where additional support is needed. Teachers were observed struggling with classroom management approaches that would promote participation without relying on authoritarian

methods. There was limited evidence of differentiated instruction or student-centered assessment techniques being implemented effectively. Additionally, teachers appeared to lack specific strategies for engaging all students in their overcrowded classrooms, suggesting a need for targeted professional development addressing these practical challenges.

Chapter 5

Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 Discussion

This study explored teachers' perceptions of student-centered learning in government primary schools in Bangladesh through in-depth interviews with ten assistant teachers and classroom observations in three schools. The findings provide valuable insights into how teachers understand, implement, and experience student-centered learning approaches within Bangladesh's primary education context. This discussion synthesizes the research findings around four key themes that emerged during data analysis, contextualizing these results within the broader educational landscape and examining their implications for primary education practice and policy.

Theme 1: Understanding of Student-Centered Learning Among Primary School Teachers

The study revealed varying levels of understanding about student-centered learning (SCL) among government primary school teachers in Bangladesh. While all participants had been introduced to the concept through various forms of teacher training, their interpretations differed significantly in depth and clarity. Some teachers demonstrated sophisticated understanding of SCL as a pedagogical approach that promotes student autonomy, critical thinking, and active participation. Others conceptualized it more simplistically as activities such as group work or encouraging student participation in class discussions.

This variation in understanding reflects the complex interplay between pedagogical beliefs, personal experiences, and professional development opportunities. Bangladesh's education

system is currently transitioning from traditional teacher-centered instruction to more student-centered approaches, guided by the National Curriculum Framework 2021, which emphasizes "student-centric and joyful learning" (NCTB, 2021). Most teachers in this study aligned with Overby's (2011) conceptualization of SCL, recognizing students' active role in learning. However, consistent with Qutoshi and Poudel's (2014) findings in Pakistan, many teachers interpreted SCL as a collection of participatory techniques rather than a comprehensive pedagogical transformation.

Weimer (2013) argues that authentic student-centered learning requires fundamental changes in five areas: classroom power dynamics, content delivery methods, teacher roles, student responsibility, and assessment practices. The findings suggest that many teachers have not yet internalized this broader transformation. Their professional development had introduced SCL concepts but failed to explore underlying philosophical foundations or practical implementation strategies comprehensively. Without dedicated training focused on both the theoretical foundations and practical applications of student-centered learning, teachers often implemented SCL superficially—incorporating student activities within otherwise traditional lessons rather than fundamentally reconceptualizing their teaching approaches.

Teachers who demonstrated deeper understanding were more likely to facilitate authentic, student-driven learning experiences. This finding echoes Arseven et al.'s (2016) assertion that both teacher candidates and in-service teachers require strong philosophical grounding in student-centered education alongside targeted practical training to address implementation gaps.

Despite variation in conceptual understanding, teachers overwhelmingly held positive attitudes toward student-centered learning. Participants consistently reported that SCL enhanced student engagement, improved communication skills, and led to better learning

outcomes. Many observed increased student motivation and improved information retention when incorporating student-centered elements into their teaching. Peer learning, group activities, and interactive lessons were frequently cited as effective tools that made learning more enjoyable and meaningful.

Teachers also emphasized how student-centered approaches build learner confidence, supporting Asoodeh et al.'s (2012) findings that collaborative learning fosters social acceptance, self-confidence, and cognitive development. Similarly, Akdemir and Özçelik (2019) highlight that small group activities in SCL environments encourage critical thinking, reflection, and teamwork—skills valuable both academically and professionally. As Glowa and Goodell (2016) note, student-centered classrooms enable learners to shape their educational journeys while supporting peers' growth and celebrating collective achievements.

Teachers reflected thoughtfully on differences between teacher-centered and student-centered approaches, acknowledging traditional methods' limitations in developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills. These reflections align with Land and Hannafin's (1996) argument that achieving deeper learning outcomes requires shifts in both mindset and instructional strategies. Some participants suggested that balanced integration of both approaches might be more practical in their context, a perspective supported by Ameliana's (2017) research on TEFL in Indonesia.

Overall, while conceptual clarity around student-centered learning remains uneven, teachers in Bangladesh demonstrate openness to the approach and recognize its benefits through classroom experience. This positive foundation suggests that capacity-building efforts should focus on specialized training and removing practical barriers rather than attempting to change fundamental teaching beliefs.

Theme 2: Practices and Implementation of Student-Centered Learning

This theme examines how student-centered learning is practiced and implemented in classrooms, focusing on teacher-student engagement, classroom management, and strategies for enriching students' learning experiences.

Teachers reported using various student-centered techniques including group work, peer learning, and project-based tasks. These practices align with Kolb's (1984) experiential learning cycle, emphasizing active, hands-on learning. Many teachers highlighted the value of interactive and participatory activities for maintaining student engagement and stressed the importance of understanding individual students' learning needs—a key aspect of personalizing instruction in student-centered environments.

This emphasis on engagement echoes previous research suggesting that student-centered teaching fosters greater involvement and promotes meaningful interactions that help achieve shared learning goals (Qutoshi & Poudel, 2014). Teachers reported positive experiences with game-based activities, which made lessons more enjoyable and enhanced student enthusiasm for learning. However, while such approaches were more commonly observed in English-medium schools, Ahmed (2023) noted that project-based learning—a core SCL method—faces implementation challenges in government schools. Teachers didn't particularly give any information how they plan for taking a student-centered learning environment.

Regarding teaching strategies, participants mentioned incorporating various tools to support learning, including visual aids, interactive materials, and diverse assessment methods. Peer-to-peer activities were particularly valued. Despite general openness to innovative assessment techniques, many teachers preferred traditional evaluation methods such as written and oral examinations over alternatives like portfolio assessment, self-assessment, or peer assessment (Arseven et al., 2016).

Classroom observation data largely confirmed these self-reported practices while revealing implementation gaps. Although teachers made efforts to introduce student-centered elements—such as small group work and questioning strategies—overall classroom dynamics remained predominantly teacher-directed. Opportunities for student autonomy and learning ownership were limited. Even teachers who expressed strong SCL support often reverted to traditional teaching methods during instruction. These findings align with Turkish research that identified disconnects between teachers' perceptions of themselves as student-centered educators and their actual classroom practices (Arseven et al., 2016).

Many teachers struggled to find creative ways to facilitate student participation, sometimes hindering active engagement. Interestingly, Ameliana's (2017) study on TEFL programs in Indonesia identified perceived benefits of teacher-centered approaches: more efficient management of large classrooms, reduced instructional anxiety for teachers, better material preparation, and increased student use of English during lessons.

Despite these challenges, promising practices emerged. Research from a community school in Karachi, Pakistan, found that when teachers received adequate support—including resources, encouragement, and recognition from school leadership—they were more likely to develop innovative strategies supporting both classroom and outdoor learning. However, teachers actively organizing outdoor or self-directed learning activities remained few (Qutoshi & Poudel, 2014).

These findings suggest that implementing student-centered learning is a gradual process rather than an immediate transformation. Many teachers are in transition, moving between familiar traditional methods and newer student-centered approaches. This gradual progress reflects Işıkoğlu et al.'s (2009) findings that teachers' pedagogical beliefs heavily influence

their instruction. Even when teachers intellectually accept SCL principles, practical implementation requires time, ongoing support, and confidence-building.

Theme 3: Challenges in Implementing Student-Centered Learning

The study revealed numerous systemic barriers that significantly hinder teachers' ability to implement student-centered learning approaches effectively. Large class sizes emerged as the most prominent obstacle, with teachers managing 40-60 students per classroom. These overwhelming numbers make it nearly impossible to facilitate meaningful group activities, provide individualized attention, or create the flexible learning environments that student-centered approaches demand. These overcrowded conditions align with Islam and Paul's (2019) findings, while Thornton's (2006) research on primary education in Bangladesh similarly identified classroom density as a major barrier to participatory teaching methods.

Beyond class size, teachers face substantial infrastructure limitations that further constrain implementation efforts. Many government primary schools lack basic physical conditions necessary for student-centered learning, including inflexible furniture arrangements, limited classroom space, and insufficient teaching materials. Teachers in community schools encounter significant obstacles when implementing interactive pedagogical approaches such as group work, problem-based learning, and critical thinking exercises. These challenges stem from multiple factors including concerns about maintaining classroom authority, insufficient resources, limited time allocation, and inadequate physical spaces needed for effective learning environments (Qutoshi & Poudel, 2014).

Time constraints add another layer of complexity to teachers' struggles. Educators find themselves caught between student-centered learning demands and relentless pressure to cover required curriculum within limited timeframes. This tension creates constant dilemmas

where teachers must choose between depth and breadth of learning, often defaulting to traditional methods to ensure curriculum completion. These limitations collectively pose significant challenges to adopting interactive and personalized methods essential for effective student-centered classrooms.

These findings are particularly significant because they demonstrate that effective student-centered learning implementation requires far more than teacher training and curriculum modifications. Results clearly indicate that structural and resource-related barriers must be systematically addressed for meaningful pedagogical transformation to occur. This aligns with Qutoshi and Poudel's (2014) research in Pakistan, where inadequate resources, cramped classrooms, and limited teacher expertise similarly hindered student-centered approach implementation.

An unexpected yet crucial finding emerged regarding parental attitudes' profound influence on teachers' implementation efforts. Several educators reported that limited parental understanding significantly undermines student-centered learning's sustainable impact, recognizing that effective education extends beyond classroom walls. Parents and community members serve as integral educational partners, particularly regarding student-centered learning's effectiveness in promoting academic achievement and developing social skills. Students receiving little encouragement from parents, teachers, or peers often doubt their ability to succeed (Asoodeh et al., 2012). Given that this study was primarily conducted in schools serving lower-income families, it revealed deeply rooted socioeconomic factors affecting parental involvement in student-centered learning implementation and effectiveness.

This finding became apparent as a significant factor shaping teachers' practice. The data suggests that educational change cannot occur in isolation from community attitudes and

expectations. In lower-income communities where parents may not fully understand their children's learning needs, different engagement mechanisms must be introduced beyond traditional monthly meetings, which most parents cannot attend due to work commitments. This observation's importance lies in its implications for educational reform strategies, indicating that successful student-centered learning implementation requires comprehensive community engagement and parent education alongside teacher training and curriculum change. Nath's (2009) research on primary education in Bangladesh similarly highlights how community and parental expectations can either facilitate or hinder educational innovations.

When educators emphasize meaningful connections to students' lives, amplify student perspectives, and involve learners in decision-making processes, fundamentally positive transformations in classroom interactions occur. Such dynamic shifts appear particularly crucial in economically disadvantaged rural communities where connections between educational institutions and local communities are frequently weak or underdeveloped (Deay & Saab, 1994). Cultural foundations encompass societal beliefs about education, cultural values, and individual roles, directly shaping educational system design through underlying value frameworks. As educators and society recognize education's need to meet expanding technological society demands, schools increasingly integrate computers and educational software, reflecting technology-driven culture values and priorities (Land & Hannafin, 1996).

The data revealed concerning signs of teacher exhaustion resulting from classroom limitations in implementing student-centered learning. The examination-oriented culture prevalent in the educational system (Chowdhury & Sarkar, 2018) creates additional pressure on teachers to cover extensive syllabi, leading to exhaustion and creating significant challenges when attempting to focus on deeper learning experiences. Furthermore, teachers' concerns about training inadequacies echo Jakir et al.'s (2019) findings that educators often lack essential pedagogical knowledge required for effective student-centered approaches.

These multifaceted challenges paint a complex picture of barriers facing student-centered learning implementation, highlighting the need for comprehensive, systemic approaches to educational reform addressing not only pedagogical training but also infrastructure, community engagement, and cultural expectations.

Theme 4: Support Systems and Future Directions for Student-Centered Learning

Implementing student-centered learning presents significant challenges requiring attention to both infrastructural needs and professional development. Teachers emphasized the importance of improving infrastructure and professional development support. The data suggests that reducing class sizes to manageable levels (ideally 25-30 students) would significantly improve teachers' ability to implement student-centered approaches effectively. Additionally, providing flexible furniture, adequate teaching materials, and appropriate physical spaces would remove key barriers identified by teachers.

The results revealed significant gaps in professional development support for teachers implementing student-centered learning. Existing professional development approaches have been largely theoretical, failing to address practical challenges teachers face in daily classroom practice. This finding indicates that current professional development strategies do not meet teachers' actual needs. While most teachers received some student-centered learning training as part of comprehensive programs, they consistently reported feeling inadequately prepared for practical implementation. Teacher candidates cannot adopt student-centered approaches in teacher education systems that do not provide practices of student-centered teaching and enable active involvement in learning. Unless student recognition techniques with professional teaching skills are included in teacher education, expecting future teachers to demonstrate effective teaching behavior will be unrealistic (Arseven et al., 2016).

Teachers expressed particular needs for guidance on managing large classes during group activities, facilitating meaningful discussions, and assessing student learning in student-centered environments. They specifically requested hands-on training, demonstration lessons, and ongoing mentoring support.

Based on this study's results, several strategies could improve student-centered learning implementation in government primary schools in Bangladesh. First, teachers' positive attitudes provide a strong foundation that should be leveraged through comprehensive support systems. The need for comprehensive professional development echoes Biswas and Roy's (2010) assertion that shifting to SCL requires proper training and resources. Results suggest that training programs need to be more practical, contextual, and sustained rather than one-time theoretical workshops. Professional development needs identified in this study echo findings from other developing country contexts, suggesting that practical, sustained support is crucial for successful implementation of pedagogical innovations.

5.2 Conclusion

This study provided important insights into teachers' perceptions and experiences with student-centered learning in government primary schools in Bangladesh through in-depth interviews with ten assistant teachers and classroom observations in three schools. The research achieved its primary purpose of understanding how teachers conceptualize, implement, and experience student-centered approaches within their classroom contexts.

The results reveal that while teachers hold positive attitudes toward student-centered approaches and make genuine efforts to implement them, they face significant systemic barriers that limit their effectiveness. Teachers' interpretations of student-centered learning varied considerably, ranging from sophisticated understanding of student autonomy to

surface-level conceptualizations focused on group activities. This variation directly influenced their classroom practices, where student-centered elements were incorporated within largely teacher-directed approaches.

The research identified substantial systemic barriers including large class sizes (40-60 students), inadequate infrastructure, limited resources, and insufficient professional development that significantly impede effective implementation. An unexpected finding was the influence of parental attitudes on implementation effectiveness, highlighting that educational transformation requires holistic approaches extending beyond classroom-level interventions.

The findings demonstrate that successful student-centered learning implementation requires comprehensive systemic change rather than isolated pedagogical modifications. Teachers' positive attitudes provide a strong foundation for reform efforts, suggesting interventions should focus on building capacity and removing structural barriers rather than changing fundamental beliefs about teaching and learning.

Conducting this study deepened my understanding of the complexities involved in educational change processes and the intricate relationships between policy intentions, teacher beliefs, classroom realities, and community contexts. The research process enhanced my appreciation for government primary school teachers' dedication while navigating numerous challenges and reinforced my understanding of qualitative research methodologies and the importance of practitioner perspectives in educational research.

The findings suggest that successful implementation requires comprehensive support addressing teacher preparation, infrastructure improvement, assessment alignment, and community engagement. Understanding these teacher perspectives provides a crucial foundation for designing more effective strategies to support educational transformation in

Bangladesh's primary education system. This research contributes evidence-based recommendations for policymakers and educators seeking to support the transition toward student-centered approaches in government primary schools.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to improve the implementation of student-centered learning in government primary schools in Bangladesh:

- Reduce class sizes to 25-30 students to enable teachers to facilitate meaningful group activities and provide individualized attention essential for student-centered learning implementation.
- Provide hands-on, practical teacher training with demonstration lessons and ongoing mentoring support to address the gap between theoretical knowledge and classroom implementation skills.
- Establish parent education programs in lower-income communities using flexible communication channels to increase parental understanding and support for student-centered learning approaches.
- Create practical implementation guidelines that acknowledge unique challenges of government primary schools with realistic timelines and support mechanisms.
- Research should examine the effectiveness of different professional development approaches, investigate student perspectives on SCL experiences, and explore community attitudes toward educational change and parental engagement strategies in curriculum reform.

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Appendices

Appendix A. Consent Letter

Research Title: Practice of Student-centered Learning in the Government Primary Schools of Dhaka

Researcher: Irin Jahan Afroze

Code/Unique ID: _____

Date: _____

Name of the Participant: _____

Dear Sir/Ma'am,

I am Irin Jahan Afroze, a student of Master's in Educational Leadership and School Improvement in BRAC Institute of Educational Development, BRAC University. I am conducting research on "Teacher's Perception about Student Centered Learning in Government Primary Schools". I would like to invite you to participate in this study.

Your participation will involve a brief interview during which I will ask you about your perception and experiences as a primary school teacher regarding student-centered learning. This will not take more than 40 minutes of your time and will be conducted according to your preferred time. Your interview will be followed by an observation of full class of any grade from 1 to 4 where new curriculum has been introduced based on your convenience. This study regarding the student-centered teaching-learning practice of your primary school may

directly or indirectly help our primary education's development. The interview will be recorded based on your consent just to keep the data safe so that it can help me to further analysis.

Participation in this research is entirely voluntary. You have the right to refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the interview at any time without any negative consequences. Your responses will be kept confidential, and your identity will remain anonymous. Only the study personnel will have access to the data.

If you agree with my proposal to take part in my research, please state your agreement by placing

your signature in the space below. If you have any questions or need further information, please feel free to contact me at +8801538298392.

Thank you very much for your support and cooperation.

Signature of Researcher

Date:

Signature of Participant

Date:

Appendix B. Interview Guide

Date of Interview:

Time of interview:

Interviewee:

Educational Qualification:

Trainings:

Place:

Class:

Subject:

(This Interview Guide has been developed to collect data on the teacher's perception about student-centered learning at government primary schools. Participant confidentiality will be kept. Participant's Interview will be transcribed verbatim.)

1. What does the term "student-centered learning" mean to you? How would you describe this approach?
2. What kind of teaching methods and classroom activities do you practice in the classroom? Can you share any specific experience?
3. How do students respond to these teaching learning strategies/activities you implement? How does learning happen in those cases? Would you please share some examples?
4. From your experience, what factors do you believe influence the implementation of student-centered learning in government primary schools?
5. What are benefits of implementing student-centered learning in classroom? Why?
6. Is there any drawbacks of students centered learning approach in classroom? If so, what are those, why? Share any experience.
7. What kind of training, resources or support would help you more effectively implement student-centered practices?
8. Would you like to add anything more?

Bangla Version:

(Language used for the interviews would be Bangla so that participants can easily understand.)

১। "শিক্ষার্থী-কেন্দ্রিক শিক্ষা" শব্দটির অর্থ আপনার কাছে কী? আপনি কিভাবে এই পদ্ধতিকে বর্ণনা করবেন?

২। শ্রেণীকক্ষে আপনি কোন ধরনের শিক্ষাদান পদ্ধতি এবং শ্রেণীকার্যক্রম অনুশীলন করেন? আপনি কি কোন নির্দিষ্ট অভিজ্ঞতা সম্পর্কে বলতে পারেন?

৩। শিক্ষার্থীরা কীভাবে আপনার প্রয়োগ করা এই শিখন শেখানো কৌশলের প্রতি সাড়া দেয়? এই ক্ষেত্রে কীভাবে শেখার বিষয়টি ঘটে থাকে? আপনি কি অনুগ্রহ করে কিছু উদাহরণ দিতে পারবেন?

৪। আপনার অভিজ্ঞতা থেকে, সরকারী প্রাথমিক বিদ্যালয়ে শিক্ষার্থী-কেন্দ্রিক শিক্ষা বাস্তবায়নে কোন বিষয়গুলো প্রভাব ফেলে বলে আপনি মনে করেন?

৫। শ্রেণীকক্ষে শিক্ষার্থী-কেন্দ্রিক শিক্ষা বাস্তবায়নের কী ধরনের সুবিধা আছে? কেন?

৬। শ্রেণীকক্ষে শিক্ষার্থী-কেন্দ্রিক শেখার পদ্ধতির কোন সমস্যা আছে কী? যদি থাকে, সেগুলো কী? কেন এই সমস্যাগুলো আছে? আপনার এই ধরনের যেকোনো অভিজ্ঞতা সম্পর্কে বলতে পারেন।

৭। কোন ধরনের প্রশিক্ষণ বা সহায়তা আপনাকে আরও কার্যকরভাবে শিক্ষার্থী-কেন্দ্রিক শিক্ষা কার্যক্রম বাস্তবায়নে সহায়তা করবে?

৮। আপনি কি আরও কিছু যোগ করতে চান?

Appendix C. Field Note on Classroom Observation

No. of Students:

Grade:

Subject:

Description of the class activities:

- Instructional Strategies (নির্দেশনামূলক কৌশল)
- Teaching Methods (শিক্ষণ পদ্ধতি)
- Classroom Management (শ্রেণীকক্ষ ব্যবস্থাপনা)
- Classroom Environment (শ্রেণীকক্ষ পরিবেশ)
- Resource/Classroom Facilities (রিসোর্স/ক্লাসরুম সুবিধা)
- Student Engagement (শিক্ষার্থীদের অংশগ্রহণ)

Special Remarks: