The Effect of Educational Philosophy in the Context of Assessment Orientation in Colleges of Teacher Education in the Amhara National Regional State, Ethiopia.

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Abstract

This study aimed to examine the effect of educational philosophy on assessment orientation in the teacher education colleges in the Amhara National Regional State. A concurrent mixed methods design was employed to combine strengthens of both quantitative and qualitative data at the same time. For quantitative data, a total of 390 comprehensively selected teacher educators participated in the study. For qualitative data, 48 teacher educators (40 males' and 8 females) were selected purposefully. Data were collected using questionnaires and interviews. The content validity of the instrument was confirmed by specialists in the fields of education and Cronbach's alpha reliability was checked for items related with assessment orientation and educational philosophy. Quantitative data were analyzed using mean scores, standard deviations, one sample t-test (for implementations of assessment orientation) and MANOVA for three dependent variables of assessment before, during and after instruction, whereas qualitative data were analyzed thematically. The findings revealed that teacher educators misunderstood assessment orientation and failed to differentiate distinct purposes of assessment orientation before, during, and after instruction. The t-test results showed that assessments before and during instruction were not executed as expected. MANOVA also revealed that teacher educators' philosophy of education significantly contributed to assessment orientation (P< .05). Hence, teacher educators' philosophy of education plays a significant role in determining their assessment orientation. Therefore, the Regional Education Bureau and colleges of teachers' education should invest in teacher training and professional development pertinent to the integration of assessment orientation and philosophy of education to improve their practice of assessment orientation in order to enhance students' learning at CTEs.

Keywords: assessment, assessment orientation, educational philosophy, teacher educators, teachers' education colleges

1. INTRODUCTION

Assessment has long been recognized as a central element of the teaching–learning process. The adage *"what is tested determines what is learned, and how it is assessed affects how it is learned"* underscores the influential role of assessment in shaping students' learning behaviors and outcomes (Chalmers, 2007; Fletcher et al., 2012). Historically, assessment was traditionally conceptualized as a mechanism for measuring learning outcomes after instruction. Within this view, student failure was often attributed to the learners themselves rather than to instructional or assessment practices (Conley, 2005; McConlogue, 2020).

Over time, this narrow conception evolved as scholars began to recognize the multiple functions of assessment in higher education. Beyond certifying achievement, assessment now serves to provide feedback on student learning, guide instructional decisions, evaluate teaching effectiveness, and ensure accountability of programs and institutions (Fletcher et al., 2012). Theoretical perspectives emphasize that assessment is not neutral but a pedagogical act that strongly influences how and what students learn (Atkins, 2012).

The concept of **assessment orientation** emerges from this recognition. It refers to the beliefs, practices, and approaches that educators adopt when designing and implementing assessment, whether before instruction (diagnostic), during instruction (formative), or after instruction (summative). Research has consistently demonstrated that assessment orientation has a profound impact on students' academic engagement and achievement (Chalmers, 2007; Flores et al., 2015; Gibson & Shaw, 2011). Consequently, the shift from assessment *of* learning to assessment *for* and *as* learning reflects a paradigmatic change toward more student-centered approaches in higher education.

In this sense, assessment orientation is historically rooted in the evolution of educational thought—from teacher-centered evaluation of outcomes to broader, theory-driven perspectives that view assessment as integral to learning processes. Theoretically, it aligns with constructivist, socio-cultural, and student-centered learning frameworks, which stress that assessment, should not only measure knowledge but also actively support and enhance learning.

As a result of the paradigm shift in education and assessment, alternative assessment practices and the reconceptualization of teachers as co-learners and co-assessors have emerged (Chalmers, 2007). This shift reflects a broader movement from behaviorist models of education, which

emphasize teacher authority and rote performance, to constructivist and sociocultural perspectives that highlight learner agency, active engagement, and the co-construction of knowledge (Vygotsky, 1978; Shepard, 2000). Consequently, assessment in contemporary pedagogy has moved away from being purely summative and teacher-centered toward formative, student-centered, and learning-oriented approaches (Hosseini et al., 2013).

Assessment orientation before, during, and after instruction can be understood within this theoretical shift. **Assessment before instruction**—often referred to as diagnostic assessment—plays a foundational role in constructivist learning theory by activating prior knowledge and informing instructional design (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000). It helps teachers determine what learners already know and identify misconceptions before new content is introduced (Jang et al., 2014). Empirical evidence shows that pre-assessments provide valuable baseline data, particularly in higher education contexts, where learners bring diverse backgrounds and prior experiences (Rice, 2013; Brookhart, 2018). Importantly, such pre-lesson assessments should be used to inform instruction but not to grade performance (Jang et al., 2014).

Assessment during instruction, commonly referred to as formative assessment or assessment

for learning, is grounded in constructivist and social constructivist principles. It emphasizes feedback loops, scaffolding, and the co-regulation of learning between teachers and students (Black & Wiliam, 2009; Nicol, 2009). Formative assessment practices—such as questioning, peer assessment, and feedback—help identify students' current learning levels, clarify learning goals, and guide the next steps for improvement (Andersson & Palm, 2017). Empirical studies consistently demonstrate that formative assessment enhances student engagement, promotes deep learning, and improves long-term academic achievement (Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Kingston & Nash, 2011). In contrast, assessment after instruction—commonly referred to as summative assessment—is typically conducted at the end of a teaching unit, course, or program.

Although summative assessment is often associated with grading and accountability, research underscores its role in measuring learning outcomes and providing evidence for institutional and program evaluation (Kugamoorthy & Weerakoon, 2018; Taras, 2005). While it has traditionally dominated higher education, scholars emphasize the need to balance summative assessment with diagnostic and formative practices in order to foster a more holistic assessment orientation (Earl, 2013). Finally, feedback emerges as a critical and

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indispensable component across all stages of assessment orientation. According to Hattie and Timperley (2007), effective feedback provides information that reduces the gap between current performance and desired goals. More recent research shows that timely, specific, and dialogic feedback enhances student self-regulation, metacognition, and academic achievement (Carless & Boud, 2018).

In the Ethiopian higher education context, the Ministry of Science and Higher Education (MoSHE) has emphasized a paradigm shift in educational philosophy—from predominantly essentialist and perennialist orientations, which often compelled students to engage in rote memorization of facts, to a philosophy of social transformation that necessitates a shift from teacher-centered to student-centered learning and the adoption of alternative modes of assessment (Agezew, Bareke, & Herut, 2022). In line with this transformation, Ethiopia introduced a comprehensive overhaul of its teacher education system, accompanied by a new curriculum designed to promote active learning, reflective practice, and continuous assessment (Wabe & Tessema, 2011). Furthermore, the Ministry of Education launched a Continuous Professional Development (CPD) program aimed at enhancing the quality of the teaching–learning process, with a particular emphasis on active learning strategies,

formative assessment, and ongoing teacher reflection (Chalchisa, 2010).

Despite extensive reforms in Ethiopia's higher education system and across all levels of education, research consistently indicates that higher education instructors in the country primarily engage in teaching as the transmission of knowledge and employ assessment largely as a means of recalling previously learned facts. As a result, assessment practices have not effectively supported students' learning and development (Adela, 2020; Boateng, 2009; Kassaye, 2005; Shishigu, Gemechu, Michael, Atnafu, & Ayalew, 2017; Teferra, 2022; Teferra, Asgedom, Oumer, Dalelo, & Assefa, 2018; Tessema & Abebe, 2011; Yizengaw, 2003). In this context, scholars argue that teacher educators' underlying educational philosophies may exert a direct influence on the implementation of assessment orientation—encompassing practices before instruction, during instruction, and after instruction—particularly in Colleges of Teachers Education (CTEs) within the Amhara Region.

1. Perennialism and Modes of Assessment: Perennialism is rooted in Aristotle's realism and the belief in certain eternal truths and universal virtues that form the foundation of human knowledge and moral development (Gutek, 2004). Perennialist educators argue that the purpose of education is to cultivate

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intellect and character by engaging students with timeless ideas and enduring works, often referred to as the "great books" of human civilization (Hunt, 2010). In this framework, teachers are regarded as experts who transmit essential knowledge, and students are expected to receive, internalize, and reproduce this knowledge accurately (Ginsburg & Drake, 2002; Rowley, Behrens, & Krackhardt, 2000).

Assessment in perennialist classrooms reflects this teacher-centered and content-focused orientation. Modes of assessment typically include teacher-designed tests (objective, multiple-choice, or essay), oral examinations, standardized tests, memory work, and recitation exercises. These assessments are predominantly summative, administered after instruction, and generally operate independently of daily teaching and learning processes. The emphasis is on evaluating students' ability to recall, reproduce, and apply established knowledge rather than on fostering creativity, critical thinking, or collaborative problem-solving (Gutek, 2004; Hunt, 2010).

Empirical evidence suggests that such assessment approaches can effectively measure knowledge retention and mastery of foundational concepts, but they may inadequately support the development of higher-order thinking skills or student-centered learning competencies (Brookhart, 2018; Black & Wiliam, 2009). As a result, perennialist assessment may produce high levels of factual knowledge acquisition while limiting opportunities for formative feedback and ongoing learning reflection. Understanding these dynamics is essential when comparing perennialism with more progressive or constructivist educational philosophies that advocate for formative, continuous, and learner-centered assessment practices.

2. **Essentialism and Modes of Assessment**: Essentialism, rooted in traditional educational philosophy, arose as a critique of progressive approaches, emphasizing the importance of a core body of knowledge and fundamental skills for all learners (Foster, 2006; Rieg & Wilson, 2009). Essentialists argue that education should cultivate intellectual rigor and moral discipline through structured instruction, where the teacher is the authority and primary transmitter of knowledge. Assessment practices in essentialist classrooms are predominantly summative and teacher-directed. These include standardized tests, objective and essay-based exams, memory-based recitations, and other forms of

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post-instruction evaluation. Empirical studies indicate that such assessment practices are effective for measuring content mastery and factual recall, but they may limit opportunities for formative feedback, higher-order thinking, and creative problem-solving (Brookhart, 2018; Black & Wiliam, 2009). In terms of assessment orientation, diagnostic assessments before instruction are rarely emphasized, while ongoing or formative assessment during instruction is minimal, reinforcing a strong focus on post-instruction evaluation.

3. **Progressivism and Modes of Assessment:** Progressivism is a student-centered philosophy grounded in pragmatism, emphasizing active, experiential, and collaborative learning (Bruce & Eryaman, 2015; Cassidy, 2011; Terzi et al., 2020). In progressivist classrooms, assessment is an integral component of learning, designed to support students' problem-solving, reflection, and metacognition (Johnson & Hayes, 2016). Teachers design curricula based on learners' interests and prior knowledge, integrating flexible and adaptive assessment strategies. Before instruction, teachers may use diagnostic assessments to identify learners' baseline knowledge and skills. During instruction, formative assessments—including self-assessment, peer assessment, project-

based evaluations, and reflective journals—help guide learning and provide feedback loops. After instruction, summative assessments measure achievement while also encouraging self-reflection and continuous learning (Jordi, 2011). Empirical evidence demonstrates that progressivist assessment practices improve student engagement, critical thinking, and long-term retention of knowledge compared with traditional, teacher-centered approaches (Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Kingston & Nash, 2011).

4. **Social Reconstructionism and Modes of Assessment:** Social reconstructionism, informed by existentialist and transformational philosophies, views education as a tool for social change and personal empowerment, rejecting the "banking" model of knowledge (Cabral, 2005; Gutek, 2004). Assessment in this approach is inherently student-centered, dialogic, and collaborative, designed to integrate learning with social awareness and critical thinking (Carless, 2015). Before instruction, learners' experiences, prior knowledge, and socio-cultural contexts are considered to shape relevant learning activities. During instruction, assessment occurs through peer collaboration, project-based work, dialogue, and reflective exercises that provide continuous feedback and foster co-

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construction of knowledge. Post-instruction assessment evaluates not only mastery of content but also the development of social responsibility, problem-solving skills, and transformative learning outcomes. Research shows that social reconstructionist assessment practices promote learner autonomy, metacognition, and civic-mindedness, preparing students to apply knowledge to real-world societal challenges (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005; Carless, 2015).

Collectively, these educational philosophies demonstrate a continuum of assessment orientations: perennialism and essentialism emphasize teacher-directed, summative assessment after instruction; progressivism balances formative and summative assessment with active learner involvement; and social reconstructionism fully integrates assessment within learning, emphasizing continuous, collaborative, and transformative evaluation. Understanding these distinctions is crucial for designing teacher education programs that cultivate appropriate assessment orientations before, during, and after instruction, particularly in Colleges of Teacher Education in Ethiopia, where educational reform aims to shift from traditional, teacher-centered approaches toward learner-centered and socially responsive practices. Therefore, this study aimed to examine the effect of teacher

educators' educational philosophies on their assessment orientation before, during, and after instruction in Colleges of Teacher Education in the Amhara Region, Ethiopia.

5. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Higher education in Ethiopia is tasked with providing quality education that aligns with active learning strategies and alternative assessment methods (Mergia, 2020; Tadesse, Kenea, & Woldemariam, 2022). In line with this mission, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) emphasize that assessment should be a central component of teaching and learning in both undergraduate and graduate programs. Policies encourage the use of continuous assessment, formative strategies, and active learning methods, under the premise that these practices improve student engagement, enhance learning outcomes, and ensure the overall quality of education (Chalchisa, 2010; Tamrat, 2020; Teferra et al., 2018).

Despite these policy directives, evidence suggests a significant gap between recommended practices and classroom realities in Ethiopia. Many teacher educators continue to rely heavily on traditional, teacher-centered approaches that prioritize summative assessment over formative or continuous assessment. Consequently, assessment often focuses on recall and rote

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memorization rather than supporting students' conceptual understanding, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities (Teferra etal., 2017; Teferra et al., 2018). This disconnect between policy and practice limits the transformative potential of higher education reforms, undermining the intended shift from teacher-centered to student-centered pedagogy.

Furthermore, teacher educators' **educational philosophies** are believed to influence assessment orientation before, during, and after instruction. Educators who align with perennialist or essentialist philosophies may favor summative, teacher-directed assessments focusing on content mastery, whereas progressivist or social reconstructionist educators may prioritize formative, reflective, and student-centered assessments integrated throughout instruction (Ginsburg & Drake, 2002; Bruce & Eryaman, 2015; Carless, 2015). Educators who adopt traditional perennialist or essentialist philosophies may prefer summative, content-focused assessments, whereas those aligned with progressivist or social reconstructionist philosophies may favor formative, student-centered, and reflective assessment practices.

Higher education in Ethiopia has undergone numerous reforms aimed at improving the quality of education through active learning strategies and alternative assessment methods (Mergia,

2020; Tadesse, Kenea, & Woldemariam, 2022). National policies emphasize that assessment should be central to teaching and learning in both undergraduate and graduate programs, advocating for continuous assessment and formative approaches to enhance student engagement and academic achievement (Chalchisa, 2010; Tamrat, 2020; Teferra et al., 2018). Despite these reforms, research indicates a persistent gap between policy and practice. Many higher education instructors continue to rely on traditional, teacher-centered approaches, with assessment practices largely limited to mid-term and final examinations conducted after instruction (Mohammedseid, 2018; PALGO; Tesfaye & Ababa, 2018).

In the Ethiopian context, where Colleges of Teacher Education (CTEs) are central to training future teachers, understanding how these philosophies and teaching styles shape assessment practices is critical. Limited empirical evidence exists regarding the interplay between teacher educators' beliefs, instructional approaches, and assessment orientation in Ethiopian higher education. Addressing this gap is essential for designing professional development initiatives, improving curriculum implementation, and ensuring that assessment practices genuinely enhance student learning and contribute to broader educational goals.

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Empirical evidence from Ethiopian higher education underscores the challenges in implementing effective assessment practices. Wondim (2025) reported that most university teachers did not effectively use formative assessment strategies due to misalignment with course objectives, inadequate feedback mechanisms, and limited student involvement. Sewagegn (2019) found that teachers predominantly relied on written exams, with minimal engagement in alternative assessment methods, citing insufficient training and institutional support as barriers. Gebreyes (2024) highlighted that large class sizes, resource limitations, and lack of professional development hindered the application of formative assessment practices in Colleges of Teacher Education (CTEs).

Collectively, these findings indicate that assessment in Ethiopian higher education often fails to support meaningful learning and does not fully align with policy directives promoting student-centered and active learning approaches. Despite the theoretical understanding of the link between philosophy and assessment, there is **limited empirical evidence in the Ethiopian context**. Specifically, no study has comprehensively examined how teacher educators' educational philosophies influence their practice of assessment orientation—

diagnostic, formative, and summative—in CTEs in the Amhara region. Investigating this relationship is crucial, as teacher educators serve as role models for future teachers, and their assessment practices directly impact the development of student-centered, active learning classrooms. Understanding these dynamics can inform professional development, curriculum design, and policy implementation, ensuring that assessment practices genuinely enhance student learning and contribute to the broader objectives of Ethiopian higher education reforms. Hence, this study tried to answer the following research questions:

6. Research questions:
    1. How do teacher educators conceive or understand assessment orientation before instruction, during instruction and after instruction in Teacher Education Colleges in the Amhara Region?
    2. To what extent do teacher educators implement assessment before instruction, during instruction and after instruction in Teacher Education Colleges in the Amhara Region?
    3. Does Teacher Educators' Educational Philosophy Significantly Affect Their Assessment Orientation Before, During, and After Instruction in Colleges of

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Teacher Education in the Amhara Region?

4. Are there significant differences in Teacher Educators' Assessment Orientation (before, during, and after instruction) based on their Educational Philosophy in Colleges of Teacher Education in the Amhara Region?

7. *Theoretical and Conceptual Framework*

This study integrates **educational philosophy, learning theories, and assessment practices** to build a theoretical framework explaining how teacher educators' educational philosophies influence their assessment orientation before, during, and after instruction as follows:

Educational philosophies provide the foundational beliefs about the purpose of education, the nature of knowledge, and the roles of teachers and learners. **Idealism and realism**, for instance, are associated with structured, teacher-centered approaches and have historically aligned with the **behaviorist theory of learning** (Arduini-Van Hoose, 2020; Tan, Wong, Chua, & Kang, 2006). In behaviorist classrooms, learning is measured through observable outcomes, often via paper-and-pencil tests administered **after instruction**. Correct and incorrect responses serve as the primary indicator of student learning, emphasizing knowledge acquisition and recall (Birenbaum & Dochy, 2012). In contrast,

pragmatism and existentialism emphasize student-centered learning and personal meaning-making (Gutek, 2004; Arduini-Van Hoose, 2020).

These philosophical orientations align with **cognitive and social constructivist learning theories** (Golder & Bengal, 2018; Rust, O'Donovan, & Price, 2005). Constructivist classrooms place learners at the center of the learning process, with the teacher acting as a **co-explorer and co-assessor**, guiding students to question, discuss, challenge ideas, and reflect on their learning (Giroux, 2010; Golder & Bengal, 2018; Rust et al., 2005). Constructivist theory emphasizes that learners actively **construct knowledge through experience, reflection, and social interaction**, highlighting the importance of prior knowledge in learning processes (López-Hernández, 2023).

Behaviorism emphasizes **observable behaviors and reinforcement**, focusing on structured instruction and measurable outcomes (Anwar, 2024). It aligns with **essentialist and perennialist philosophies**, where core knowledge acquisition is prioritized. Teaching styles such as **expert and authority** dominate, where instructors guide learners through structured practice. **Before Instruction**: Pre-tests assess baseline knowledge and readiness. **During Instruction**: Reinforcement activities and practice exercises ensure mastery of skills. **After Instruction**:

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Summative tests evaluate the degree of learning (Anwar, 2024).

Cognitive theory focuses on **mental processes** like attention, memory, and problem-solving, guiding learners in organizing and processing information (Al-Thani, 2025). This aligns with **essentialist and progressivist philosophies**. **Before Instruction**: Diagnostic assessments measure students' prior conceptual understanding. **During Instruction**: Formative tools like concept maps and reflective journals monitor cognitive development. **After Instruction**: Summative assessments evaluate depth of understanding and application of knowledge (Al-Thani, 2025).

In teacher education, constructivism aligns with **progressivist and social reconstructivist philosophies**, fostering critical thinking and problem-solving skills. **Before Instruction**: Diagnostic assessments identify prior knowledge and misconceptions, guiding instructional planning. **During Instruction**: Formative assessments, including peer feedback and reflective exercises, provide ongoing feedback. **After Instruction**: Summative assessments such as projects and presentations evaluate the application of knowledge in authentic contexts (López-Hernández, 2023).

Andragogy emphasizes that adult learners are **self-directed, goal-oriented, and draw on prior experiences**, which informs teaching practices in CTEs (Knapke, 2024). This theory aligns with **progressivist and constructivist philosophies.** **Before Instruction**: Self-assessment and goal-setting help learners identify learning needs. **During Instruction**: Formative activities such as peer evaluations and reflections encourage self-regulation. **After Instruction**: Portfolios and reflective summative assessments foster lifelong learning and professional growth (Knapke, 2024). Experiential Learning Theory

Experiential learning theory posits that learning occurs through a **cycle of experience, reflection, conceptualization, and experimentation** (Chen, 2025). It aligns with **progressivist and social reconstructivist philosophies.** **Before Instruction**: Pre-assessments gauge learners' readiness for hands-on activities. **During Instruction**: Formative assessments, including journals and group discussions, facilitate reflection. **After Instruction**: Summative assessments, such as case studies and projects, evaluate application of learning in authentic settings (Chen, 2025). Constructive alignment ensures **coherence among learning outcomes, teaching activities, and assessments**, integrating various philosophies and teaching styles to achieve educational goals (Pereira, 2024). **Before Instruction**: Assessment criteria are aligned with intended learning outcomes. **During Instruction**: Teaching activities reinforce alignment with assessment goals. **After Instruction**: Summative

evaluations measure the achievement of intended outcomes (Pereira, 2024).

In sum, the type of assessment employed in classrooms is directly influenced by these philosophical and theoretical orientations:**Before Instruction (Diagnostic Assessment):** In constructivist-oriented classrooms, pre-lesson assessments are used to gauge prior knowledge, misconceptions, and students' readiness to engage with new content (Lauchlan & Carrigan, 2013; Vaezi, Tabatabaei, & Bakhtiarvand, 2014). **During Instruction (Formative Assessment / Assessment for Learning):** Constructivist and social constructivist approaches emphasize ongoing, interactive assessment practices, such as questioning, peer-assessment, self-assessment, and dialogue-based feedback, enabling both teachers and students to co-regulate learning (Rust et al., 2005; Golder & Bengal, 2018). **After Instruction (Summative Assessment):** In behaviorist-oriented classrooms, summative assessments dominate, measuring the extent to which students have acquired predetermined knowledge and skills (Birenbaum & Dochy, 2012).

The Conceptual Framework, Figure 1, illustrates the relationship between teacher educators' educational philosophies and their assessment orientation. In this study, teacher educators' philosophical perspectives serve as the *exogenous variable, shaping their beliefs about the purpose and process of assessment. These beliefs, in turn, influence the choice, timing, and implementation of assessment practices, which are the endogenous variables, categorized as assessment before instruction (diagnostic), during instruction (formative), and after instruction (summative).*

Practices and Contexts: The framework recognizes that assessment orientation is not only shaped by philosophy but also by contextual factors in the colleges of teacher education in the Amhara National Regional State. Local curricula, institutional policies, and educational reforms influence how teacher educators interpret and apply their philosophical beliefs in assessment practices. Personal Reflections and Assumptions: The framework assumes that teacher educators' conceptions of assessment are shaped by both their formal educational philosophy and their personal teaching experiences. It acknowledges that personal reflections, prior experiences, and assumptions about student learning significantly influence assessment decisions.

Relevant Theories: The framework is grounded in **constructivist and socio-cultural learning theories** (Vygotsky, 1978; Shepard, 2000), which posit that learning is co-constructed through active engagement and social interaction. These

theories support the view that assessment should be formative, learner-centered, and integrated within the teaching–learning process, rather than merely summative. **Empirical Evidence:** Previous research demonstrates that teachers' educational philosophies significantly affect their assessment orientation (Chalmers, 2007; Fletcher et al., 2012; Gibson & Shaw, 2011). Empirical studies show that alignment between philosophy, assessment beliefs, and classroom practices enhances student learning outcomes and engagement (Flores et al., 2015; Bhati et al., 2015).

Ultimately, this conceptual framework provides a theoretical and empirical basis for understanding, predicting, and improving teacher educators' assessment orientation. It guides the design of data collection instruments, informs the analysis of relationships between philosophical perspectives, conceptions of assessment, and assessment practices, and highlights the importance of aligning philosophy, beliefs, and practices to foster meaningful student learning experiences.

Legend: Exogenous Variable: Teacher educators' educational philosophies, representing their beliefs about the purpose and process of assessment.**Endogenous Variables:** Assessment orientation, categorized as:*Before instruction* (diagnostic assessment);*During instruction* (formative assessment);*After instruction* (summative assessment).**Practices and Contexts:** Institutional policies, curriculum design, and educational reforms in the Amhara Region that shape assessment implementation. **Personal Reflections and Assumptions:** Educators' prior experiences, teaching assumptions, and reflective practices that influence assessment choices.**Relevant Theories:** Constructivist and socio-cultural learning theories supporting learner-centered, formative, and integrative assessment approaches (Vygotsky, 1978; Shepard, 2000). **Empirical Evidence:** Prior research linking educational philosophy to assessment orientation and student learning outcomes (Chalmers, 2007; Fletcher et al., 2012; Gibson & Shaw, 2011; Flores et al., 2015; Bhati et al., 2015). **Note:** This framework provides a theoretical and empirical basis for understanding, predicting, and improving teacher educators' assessment orientation, and informs the design of instruments and analysis in the current study.
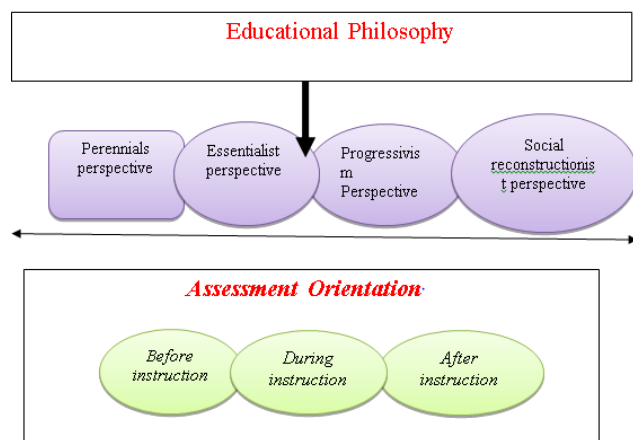
Figure1: Conceptual Framework of the Study

5. RESEARCH METHDOLOGY
5.1. DESIGN

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a **mixed methods approach** more compatible with a **concurrent mixed methods design**, which allowed the simultaneous collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Hirose, 2019; Guetterman, Fetters, & Creswell, 2015). The quantitative component focused on identifying relationships and making predictions regarding teacher educators' assessment orientation, whereas the qualitative component explored the lived experiences and perspectives of teacher educators to contextualize and deepen the interpretation of the quantitative findings.

In the **quantitative strand**, a **co relational research design** was used to examine the contribution of teacher educators' philosophical perspectives—**perennialist, essentialist, progressivist, and social reconstructionist**—to their practice of assessment orientation **before, during, and after instruction**. The primary goal of this component was **prediction**, identifying how different philosophical orientations influence specific assessment practices (Arduini-Van Hoose, 2020). Data were collected using structured questionnaires that measured both teachers' educational philosophies and their reported assessment practices.

In contrast, **the qualitative** strand employed a **hermeneutic phenomenological design** to explore teacher educators' understanding and lived experiences regarding their assessment orientation (Holstein & Gubrium, 2000; Malpas, 2001; Maypole & Davies, 2001). This approach allowed the researcher to interpret the meaning educators attach to their assessment orientation before instruction, during instruction and after instruction, capturing the complexity of classroom realities and contextual factors influencing practice. Semi-structured interviews were used to elicit detailed narratives and reflections from the participants.

3.4 Participants and Sampling

The sample for this study was determined through a **two-stage sampling process**. In the first stage, four **Colleges of Teacher Education (CTEs)**—

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Debre Markos, Finote Selam, Injibara, and Bege Midir—were selected using a **convenience sampling method** based on accessibility and willingness to participate for there was a war situation that precluded the researchers' movement from one place to another. In the second stage, totally sample of 403 teacher educators (102 females and 301 males) were selected by using **comprehensive** sampling procedure (Hakami, Hasan, Alzubaidi, & Datta, 2022; Taherdoost, 2022). Finally, a total of **390 participants** (150 females and 240 males) who returned the completed questionnaire were included in the quantitative component of the study.

For the qualitative component, 48 **participants** (40 males and 8 females) were selected using **purposive sampling** to participate in in-depth interviews. These participants were chosen based on their experience, knowledge, and potential to provide rich insights into assessment practices, ensuring that diverse perspectives regarding educational philosophy and assessment orientation were captured. This sampling strategy allowed the study to **combine broad quantitative coverage with in-depth qualitative exploration**, providing a robust understanding of teacher educators' assessment orientation before instruction, during instruction and after instruction.

5.3. DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

To collect data for this study, both **quantitative and qualitative instruments** were employed to capture teacher educators' assessment orientation and educational philosophical perspectives. A **mixed methods approach** required instruments that could measure practices across multiple dimensions and capture in-depth experiences.

5.3.1 Quantitative Instruments

A **closed-ended rating scale questionnaire** was developed to assess teacher educators' **assessment practices before, during, and after instruction**. The questionnaire consisted of **30 items**, divided equally into three sections: **before instruction (10 items), during instruction (10 items), and after instruction (10 items)**. Items were constructed based on a review of relevant literature (Askalemariam, 2015; Sewagegn, 2019), reflecting best practices in each phase of assessment. Responses were rated on a **five-point Likert scale**, ranging from 5 = Always, 4 = Frequently, 3 = Occasionally, 2 = Seldom, to 1 = Never.

To measure **teacher educators' philosophical perspectives of education**, a Likert-scale questionnaire adapted from Audette (2011) was employed. This instrument assessed four philosophical orientations—**perennialist, essentialist, progressivist, and social reconstructionist perspectives**—with responses

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on a five-point scale: 5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 2 = Disagree, and 1 = Strongly Disagree.

5.3.2 Qualitative Instruments

For the qualitative component, **semi-structured interviews** were used to explore the "why" and "how" of teacher educators' assessment practices. Interviews focused on participants' perceptions and lived experiences regarding assessment orientation **before, during, and after instruction**, allowing the researcher to capture rich, contextual insights into the alignment between philosophical beliefs and assessment practices. As noted by Seidman (2013) and McCann and Clark (2005), in-depth interviewing aims to understand the **lived experiences** and meanings participants attach to their practices.

5.3.3. Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Data

In line with the concurrent mixed methods design, quantitative and qualitative findings were **integrated at the interpretation stage**. Quantitative results provided empirical evidence of relationships and predictive patterns, while qualitative insights explained and contextualized these patterns, revealing how philosophical orientations manifest in actual assessment practices. This integration ensured a **comprehensive understanding** of the influence of teacher educators' educational philosophies on

assessment orientation across all instructional phases.

5.3.3 Validity of Instruments

The **content validity** of both quantitative and qualitative instruments was confirmed through review by specialists in **education and psychology**, in line with recommendations by Gay and Airasian (2000), Moreno (2010), and Salkind and Rasmussen (2008). Experts evaluated the items for clarity, relevance, and alignment with the study's objectives, ensuring that the instruments accurately captured the constructs of teacher educators' assessment orientation and philosophical perspectives. In this study, member checking was used to validate or ensure the credibility of qualitative data as scholars contend that member checking was used by paraphrasing, and seeking clarification on ambiguous issues, allowing discussants to confirm or correct the researcher's interpretation of their words (Gray, 2018). To establish the study's credibility, participants were contacted consistently throughout the data collection period. The data was enriched by using both the data collection form and the interview notes.

5.3.4 Reliability of Instruments

The reliability of the quantitative instruments was assessed using **Cronbach's alpha coefficients**, indicating high internal consistency across all scales. The reliability coefficients for **assessment**

orientation were: Before instruction: $\alpha = 0.81$; during instruction: $\alpha = 0.91$ and after instruction: $\alpha = 0.89$. The reliability coefficients for **educational philosophical perspectives** were: Perennialist perspective: $\alpha = 0.91$; Essentialist perspective: $\alpha = 0.89$; Progressivist perspective: $\alpha = 0.87$ and Social reconstructionist perspective: $\alpha = 0.79$. These results demonstrate that the instruments possess **acceptable to excellent reliability**, ensuring that the measures consistently and accurately capture teacher educators' practices and philosophical orientations.

Furthermore, the dependability or consistency of the qualitative part of this study data was checked by using peer debriefers as the researchers' peers, colleagues, and advisors (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Spillett, 2003). In sum, the combination of **expert-reviewed content validity** and **high reliability coefficients** confirms that the instruments used in this study are **both valid and dependable**. Together, the questionnaires and semi-structured interviews provide a robust data collection framework, enabling the study to examine how teacher educators' philosophical perspectives influence assessment orientation **before, during, and after instruction** in Ethiopian Colleges of Teacher Education.

8. DATA ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES

8.1. Quantitative data analysis: Quantitative data were analyzed using both **descriptive** and **inferential statistics**. Descriptive statistics—including **means and standard deviation** to summarize and present teacher educators' reported practices of assessment before instruction, during instruction and after instruction, as well as their philosophical orientations. These statistics provided an overall picture of the distribution, central tendencies, and variability of responses.

For inferential analysis, **independent-samples t-tests** were used to examine potential differences in assessment orientation based on demographic variables, such as gender, teaching experience, or college affiliation. In addition, **Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA)** was employed to investigate the effect of teacher educators' philosophical perspectives (perennialist, essentialist, progressivist, and social reconstructionist) on the combined and separate dependent variables of assessment orientation before instruction, during instruction and after instruction. A standard **significance level of 5% ($\alpha = 0.05$)** was applied for hypothesis testing. Before performing inferential analyses, the data were rigorously checked to ensure that all **assumptions of the t-test and MANOVA** were met. This included assessing **univariate**

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and multivariate normality, testing for **homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices**, and identifying any **univariate or multivariate outliers**. These preliminary checks ensured the validity, reliability, and interpretability of the statistical results.

8.2. Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data collected through **semi-structured interviews** were analyzed using **thematic analysis**, following a systematic process of coding, categorizing, and identifying emerging themes. This approach allowed the researcher to explore teacher educators' **conceptions and lived experiences** regarding assessment orientation before, during, and after instruction. Thematic analysis enabled the identification of patterns in how philosophical beliefs influenced assessment practices, as well as the challenges and rationales underlying teachers' decisions. To enhance the **trustworthiness and rigor** of the qualitative analysis, several strategies were employed, including **member checking**, where participants reviewed and validated the accuracy of interpreted themes, and **peer debriefing**, where colleagues provided feedback on coding and theme development.

8.3. *Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings*

Following separate analyses, the quantitative and qualitative findings were **integrated during the interpretation phase** to provide a holistic understanding of the research problem. Quantitative results identified **predictive relationships and patterns** between philosophical orientation and assessment practices, while qualitative insights offered **contextual explanations** and enriched understanding of how and why these relationships manifested in classroom practices. The integration of both strands of data strengthened the study's overall **validity, credibility, and applicability** to the Ethiopian higher education context.

9. Ethical consideration.

The study was conducted with strict adherence to **ethical principles** to ensure the protection of participants' rights and the integrity of the research process. Participation in the study was entirely **voluntary**, and the purpose, objectives, and significance of the research were clearly explained to all participants at the outset, both in the introductory section of the questionnaires and prior to the interviews. For the qualitative component, participants' **informed consent** was obtained before conducting the semi-structured interviews. Each participant willingly agreed to participate and was informed that they could **withdraw from the study at any time** without

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any negative consequences.

To maintain **confidentiality and privacy**, personal identifiers were not collected, and all responses—both from questionnaires and interviews—were **anonymized**. Data were securely stored and access was restricted to the researcher and authorized supervisors only. Any reporting of results was done in **aggregate form** or with pseudonyms to ensure that individual participants could not be identified. Additionally, the study adhered to the principles of **honesty, transparency, and respect** throughout the research process. The findings were reported accurately without fabrication, falsification, or misrepresentation, and participants' perspectives were presented **faithfully and objectively**. By implementing these ethical safeguards, the study ensured **the protection of participants' rights, dignity, and well-being**, while maintaining the **credibility and trustworthiness** of the research findings.

10. RESULTS

10.1. The Teacher Educators' Conceptions of Assessment Orientation.

Qualitative data were collected and analyzed through interviews. The analysis and interpretation were carried out qualitatively, using participants' descriptions and narratives. The findings revealed that participants had misconceptions about assessment orientation and were unable to distinguish its distinct purposes before, during, and after instruction. Similarly, feedback was also misunderstood by the teacher educators, as it was mainly perceived as correcting students' homework and glasswork, encouraging students' responses to oral questions, writing the correct answers in students' exercise books or on the blackboard, orally providing correct answers when students made mistakes, and rewriting corrected answers in students' exercise books. Consequently, it was concluded that both assessment orientation and feedback in the colleges of teacher education in the Amhara National Regional State were misconceived or misunderstood. They were largely teacher-dominated, orally delivered, and directive—characteristics typical of a behaviorist approach rather than the constructivist approach, which underpins assessment during instruction (assessment for learning) and formative feedback. As a result, students in these colleges were not benefiting meaningfully from assessment orientation.To further support these findings, additional information was gathered from individual participants and organized thematically based on the three assessment orientations: before, during, and after instruction, as outlined below.

10.2. The Teacher Educators' Conceptions of Assessment Before Instruction

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One participant (AmhaT-1) reported:

"I teach them again the previous lesson if they were not clear; if they were clear, I proceed to the next lesson. I use oral questions as a method to assess students' previous learning" (AmhaT-1, retrieved on, 5-4-2024). The second participant (NSTE-2) explained:*"Assessment before instruction is a method of ensuring students' understanding after teaching a certain lesson; the purpose of assessment before instruction is to check students' prior understanding of the previous lesson. If students were not clear about the previous lesson, feedback means providing written comments on students' assessment responses, including corrections"* (NSTE-2, retrieved on 5-4-2024).

Another participant (SSTE-1) stated:

"I assess my students before instruction by using a variety of approaches, including oral questions, practical work, homework, assignments, tests, and exams." She further emphasized: *"While assessment is beneficial for teachers, it has little or no relevance to students' learning because they are unaware that they are being assessed"* (SSTE-1, retrieved on 10-4-2024).Similarly, participant (SSTE-2) remarked:

*"Assessment before instruction allows teachers to determine which students comprehend or do not comprehend the subject."*He added:*" Assessment is an essential component of the teaching and learning process. I am able to recognize and assist students who are struggling with their learning if I assess their learning"* (SSTE-2, retrieved on 15-4-2024).

On the other hand, participant (MTE-1) asserted:
"When students are challenged through assessment, others also attempt to respond to the question, and they generate knowledge and skill. Assessment therefore needs to be seen as an indispensable accompaniment to lifelong learning. It involves identifying appropriate standards and criteria and making judgments about quality" (MTE-1, retrieved on 20-4-2024).

According to participant (MTE-2):

"Assessments before instruction give students the chance to investigate concepts, test theories, empirically validate hypotheses, grow in confidence, and express their emotions. The focus on methods and techniques needs to be replaced by a new conception of assessment required for lifelong learning. Assessment encompasses the knowledge, skills, and dispositions required to underpin lifelong learning activities" (MTE-2, retrieved on 20-4-2024).

Likewise, participant (AESTE-1) explained:*"Assessment before instruction lets me pinpoint students' strengths and weaknesses; it helps me measure the quantity of material that students have learned in order to close the gap between the teachers' intentions and what students actually accomplished. If assessment tasks within courses at any level act to undermine lifelong learning, then they cannot be regarded as making a contribution to sustainable assessment"* (AESTE-1, retrieved on 2-4-2024).

10.3. The Teacher Educators' Conceptions of Assessment During Instruction

One participant (AESTE-2) reported that

The teacher might be able to recognize and assist students' who are struggling with their learning

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if he/she assesses students' learning"; he added that "assessment helps teachers pinpoint students' strengths and weaknesses, helps to measure the quantity of material that students had learned from the period's teachings, and supports students. Formative' assessment is more about using assessment along the journey of learning so that students can learn from their mistakes, remedy their deficiencies, and advance their earning. (AESTE-2, retrieved on, 2-4-2024)

The other participant (PSTE-1)

reported that

I ask my students oral questions during instruction. If students could answer the question, I would proceed to the next point; if they could not answer the questions, I would teach them again the point that was asked. The other participant (Teacher-2) reported, "I ask my students about the meaning of concepts during instruction because if concepts are not clear to students, they could not understand the lesson at all, and this may create an obstacle to their further learning." E.g., "What is habitat? "What are biodegradables? For him, teaching and assessment are interrelated. Researcher, do you mean assessment methods are teaching methods too? He replied, "Imm, Imm, we can say that," "Ya," "We can say that." (PSTE-1, retrieved on, 10-4-2024)

The other respondent (PSTE-2) responded that

I use assessment during instruction to identify very weak, weak, intelligent, and very clear

students" and "I support those students who are lagging behind by using the assessment evidence as feedback to enhance students' learning." The ministries of education of western and northern Canada have advocated new assessment methods. He emphasized the importance of formative assessment. Assessment practices in higher education institutions tend not to equip students well for the processes of effective learning in a learning society (PSTE-2, retrieved on *15-4-2024).*

Participant (LANG-1) also reported that

Assessment during instruction encompasses the abilities required to undertake those activities that necessarily accompany learning throughout life in formal and informal settings. My focus on assessment during instruction is on struggling students but not on fast learners because fast learners can learn by themselves. He further stated that I prepare test items while I am teaching; he said I believe using classwork to identify weak students and support them, but classwork is time-consuming. I use different assessment methods during instruction to support students' learning, but I do not record any marks for any type of assessment during instruction as I believe it may enhance their learning. (LANG-, retrieved on 20, *4-2024)*

Regarding the nature of feedback, the other

participant (NSTE-2)defined feedback

as correcting students' homework and classwork; encouraging students' responses to oral

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questions; writing the correct answers on their students' exercise books or on the blackboard; orally telling students the correct answers or putting question marks if they were incorrect. In addition, she saw feedback as a form of reinforcement given to students through the use of words and phrases such as brave, bright, brilliant, and so on, and as advice to students who were making aking mistakes. (NSTE-2, retrieved on, *20, 4-2024)*

Still the other participant (SSTE-1)

also reported that

Feedback helps him to show how their students were mistaken with logical evidence or re-correcting students' mistakes with logical evidence. For her, feedback is showing the direction for students to get the correct answer, not telling the correct answer. Feedback that is more important than the scores or grade(SSTE-1, retrieved on, 20, 5-*2024)*

10.4. The Teacher Educators' Conceptions of Assessment After instruction

One of the participants (LANG-2) reported that assessment after instruction is primarily used to ensure students' learning, which she regarded as its main purpose. She elaborated that *"assessment is conducted after instruction to ensure students' learning"* and further claimed that *"assessment is used for auditing students' learning."* In addition, she explained that assessment practices after instruction often involve addressing students by name, asking oral questions, leading group discussions, and assigning homework. According to her, assessment after instruction also enables teachers to identify which students comprehend the subject matter and

which do not (LANG-2, retrieved on 5-5-2024).

On the other hand, another participant (NSTE-1) emphasized that students who receive frequent assessments are more likely to learn than those who do not. However, she also offered a contradictory view, stating that *"while assessments benefit teachers, they have little or no relevance for students' learning, since students are often unaware that they are being assessed."* Despite this inconsistency, she still maintained that assessment after instruction helps her to gauge students' understanding of the daily lesson (NSTE-1, retrieved on 5-5-2014).

Similarly, participant (SSTE-2) reflected on assessment after instruction, describing it as a form of summative assessment, often referred to as "end-of-studies assessment," which measures the extent to which students have achieved learning outcomes. He highlighted that an essential element of such assessment is the *feed-forward* component of feedback, which provides students with concrete guidance on how to improve their learning and performance. At the same time, he cautioned against drawing sharp distinctions between formative and summative assessment, arguing that *"all assessments are, to some extent, formative, since even*

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exam marks or grades can give students information about how their learning is progressing." He concluded that it would be more practical for educators to focus less on categorizing assessments as formative or summative and more on how assessments contribute to student learning (SSTE-2, retrieved on 15-5-2024).

11. Teacher Educators' Implementation of Assessment Orientation

Table1

One-Sample Statistics for Implementation of Assessment Orientation

Assessment	N	Expected mean	Observed mean	SD	t	df	p
Assessment before instruction	390	30	22.83	5.63	-25.16	389	.000
Assessment during instruction	390	30	24.74	6.61	-21.70	389	.000
Assessment after instruction	390	30	30.07	6.29	.225	389	.000

Note: t = independent one-sample t-test statistic; df = degrees of freedom; p = probability value indicating statistical significance.

Table 1 presents the mean values of teacher educators' implementation of assessment orientation. The results of the one-sample *t*-test indicated that the mean implementation of assessment before instruction ($M = 22.83$, $SD = 5.63$, $t(389) = -25.16$, $p < .001$) and during instruction ($M = 24.74$, $SD = 6.61$, $t(389) = -21.70$, $p < .001$) were significantly lower than the

expected mean value ($M = 30$). In contrast, the mean implementation of assessment after instruction ($M = 30.07$, $SD = 6.29$, $t(389) = 0.23$, $p < .001$) was significantly higher than the expected mean. These results suggest that the practice of assessment after instruction prevailed among teacher educators in the Colleges of Teacher Education in the Amhara Region.

11.1. The status of Teacher Educators' Philosophy of Education

Table 2:
One-Sample Statistics for the Status of Teacher Educators' Philosophy of Education

Assessment	N	Expected mean	Observed mean	SD	t	df	p
Perennialist perspective	390	30	32.94	6.27	9.27	389	.000
Essentialist perspective	390	30	37.22	7.15	19.96	389	.000
Progressivist perspective	390	30	25.23	5.32	-17.73	389	.000
Social reconstructionist	390	30	22.37	4.55	-33.13	389	.000

Note: t = independent one-sample t-test statistic; df = degrees of freedom; p = probability value indicating statistical significance. SD: Standard deviations from the mean.

Table 2 shows significant mean differences ($p < .05$) between the observed and expected mean values of teacher educators' perceived philosophies of education. Specifically, the perennialist perspective ($M = 32.94$, $SD = 6.27$, $t(389) = 9.27$, $p < .001$) and the essentialist perspective ($M = 37.22$, $SD = 5.64$, $t(389) = 19.96$, $p < .001$) were significantly higher than the expected mean value ($M = 30$). In contrast, the progressivist perspective ($M = 25.23$, $SD = 5.32$,

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$t(389) = -17.73$, $p < .001$) and the social reconstructionist perspective ($M = 22.37$, $SD = 4.55$, $t(389) = -33.13$, $p < .001$) were significantly lower than the expected mean. These results suggest that perennialist and essentialist philosophies were the most prevalent among teacher educators in the Colleges of Teacher Education in the Amhara National Regional State, while progressivist and social reconstructionist perspectives were less recognized.

11.2. The Effect of Teacher Educators' Philosophy of Education on Assessment Orientation

Table 3:
The contribution of Teacher Educators' philosophy of education to assessment orientation

Note: F = F-test statistic; Sig. = significance

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Eta
Corrected Model	assessment before instruction	10118.169[a]	379	26.697	31.41	.000	.967
	assessment during instruction	12398.369[b]	379	32.713	31.71	.007	.396
	assessment after instruction	6713.644[c]	379	17.714	2.16	.005	.531
Perenniaist perspective	assessment before instruction	208.412	16	13.026	.895	.070	.561
	assessment during instruction	492.703	16	30.794	.667	.773	.516
	assessment after instruction	446.523	16	27.908	3.403	.007	.845
Essentialist perspective	assessment before instruction	107.848	14	7.703	9.063	.061	.927
	assessment during instruction	626.184	14	44.727	.969	.534	.576
	assessement after instruction	241.266	14	17.233	2.102	.001	.746
Progressivist perspective	assessment before instruction	256.915	16	16.057	18.89	**.000**	.968
	assessment during instruction	242.293	16	15.143	18.33	**.007**	.344
	assessement after instruction	106.076	16	6.630	.809	.660	.564
Socialreconstructionist perspective	assessment before instruction	652.173	15	43.478	51.15	.000	.987
	assessment during instruction	436.612	15	29.107	51.63	.007	.486
	assessement after instruction	178.473	15	11.898	1.451	.280	.685

value; η² = effect size (Eta squared).

Table 3 presents the contribution of teacher educators' philosophical perspectives of education to assessment orientation. The results indicated that philosophy of education significantly predicted assessment orientation overall ($p < .05$) as follows: assessment before instruction, $F(379, 390) = 31.41$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .967$; assessment during instruction, $F(379, 390) = 31.71$, $p<.001$, $\eta^2 = .396$; and assessment after instruction, $F(379, 390) = 2.16$, $p<.001$, $\eta^2 = .531$. These results suggest that 96.7% of the variance in assessment before instruction, 39.6% of the variance in assessment during instruction, and 53.1% of the variance in assessment after instruction were explained by teacher educators' philosophical perspectives of education.

Examining the **independent contributions** of specific philosophical perspectives, the results showed that perennialist and essentialist perspectives were **not significant predictors** of assessment before and during instruction ($p > .05$): Perennialist perspective to assessment before instruction, $F(16, 390) = 0.90$, $p>.05$, $\eta^2 = .561$;Perennialist perspective to assessment during instruction, $F(16, 390) = 0.67$, $p>.05$, $\eta^2 = .516$;Essentialist perspective to assessment before instruction, $F(13, 390) = 9.06$, $p >.05$, $\eta^2 = .527$; Essentialist perspective to assessment during instruction, $F(13, 390) = 0.97$, $p>.05$, $\eta^2 = .576$. However, both perennialist and essentialist perspectives were **significant predictors** of

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assessment after instruction: Perennialist perspective, $F(16, 390) = 3.40$, $p<.05$, $\eta^2 = .845$;Essentialist perspective, $F(16, 390) = 2.10$, $p<.001$, $\eta^2 = .746$.

These findings indicate that 84.5% and 74.6% of the variance in assessment after instruction were explained by the perennialist and essentialist perspectives, respectively.In contrast, progressivist and social reconstructionist perspectives were significant predictors of assessment **before and during instruction** ($p < .05$): Progressivist perspective to assessment before instruction, $F(16, 390) = 18.89$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .968$; Social reconstructionist perspective to assessment before instruction, $F(16, 390) = 18.33$, $p<.05$, $\eta^2 = .344$; Progressivist perspective to assessment during instruction, $F(14, 390) = 51.15$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .987$;Social reconstructionist perspective to assessment during instruction, $F(14, 390) = 51.63$, $p <.05$, $\eta^2 = .486$.

These results suggest that 96.8% of the variance in assessment before instruction and 34.4% of the variance in assessment during instruction were explained by the progressivist perspective, while 98.7% of the variance in assessment before instruction and 48.6% of the variance in assessment during instruction were explained by the social reconstructionist perspective. Finally, the influence of progressivist and social reconstructionist perspectives on **assessment after instruction** was not statistically significant:Progressivist perspective, $F(16, 390) = 0.81$, $p>.05$, $\eta^2 = .564$;Social reconstructionist perspective, $F(14, 390) = 1.45$, $p>.05$, $\eta^2 = .685$.

12. DISCUSSION

12.1. The Teacher Educators' Conceptions of Assessment Orientation

Qualitative data analysis revealed that participants **misunderstood assessment orientation** and were unable to distinguish its distinct purposes of assessment orientation before instruction, during instruction, and after instruction. Similarly, the findings demonstrated that feedback was misunderstood by the participant teacher educators, who primarily regarded it as correcting students' homework and class work, encouraging responses to oral questions, writing correct answers in students' exercise books or on the blackboard, orally providing correct answers when students erred, marking incorrect responses with question marks, or rewriting the corrected answers in students' exercise books.

Based on interviews and classroom observations, it was concluded that **assessment orientation and feedback** in the Colleges of Teacher Education in the Amhara National Regional State were **teacher-centered, orally oriented, and directive**, reflecting the behaviorist approach rather than the constructivist approach contrasted

with constructivist approach which underpins assessment during instruction (assessment for learning) and formative feedback. These findings suggest that students in these colleges were **not beneficiaries of assessment orientation conducted before and during instruction**, limiting its role as a driver of their learning and performance.

In contrast, several scholars argue that assessment in higher education serves a range of purposes, including providing information on student learning and progress, evaluating teaching quality, and ensuring program and institutional accountability (Fletcher et al., 2012). Assessment is a technique used by instructors and students to gather information for evaluating strengths and weaknesses, monitoring progress, providing feedback, improving learning and instruction, and assigning grades. This contrasts with Linn and Miller (2005), who define assessment as a broad term encompassing all procedures used to obtain information about student learning and make value judgments concerning learning progress.

Other scholars contend that assessment involves evaluating students' overall performance and generating inferences about their educational learning and production (Farzand et al., 2015; Sadler, 2005). Shavelson and Towne (2002) further assert that classroom assessment is a process through which teachers and students collect, evaluate, and use evidence of learning for multiple purposes, including diagnosing student strengths and weaknesses, monitoring progress toward proficiency, assigning grades, and providing feedback to parents (Kizlik, 2010; Serafini, 2000; Al-Maskari, 2018; Anaf & Yamin, 2014).

The current study's findings align with those of Brookhart, Moss, and Long (2009) and Askalemariam (2015), indicating that many instructors perceive assessment for learning as merely a series of tests given to students. Gronlund (2021) similarly defines assessment as encompassing all procedures to gather information about student learning (e.g., observation, performance ratings, projects, paper-and-pencil tests) and forming value judgments about learning progress. Assessment for learning aims to improve the quality of teaching and uses assessment results to modify students' learning (Gronlund, 2021; McGrogan & Earle, 2019; Moss, 2000).

The findings are consistent with Hattie and Timperley (2007), who reported that many students received feedback unrelated to their progress on key instructional goals, suggesting teachers' misconceptions about feedback. Conversely, Plank, Dixon, and Ward (2014) emphasize that feedback is one of the most important influences on learning and academic

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achievement, whether positive or negative. Many participants in this study perceived feedback incorrectly, equating it merely to providing the correct answer or reinforcement of student responses. This aligns with prior research indicating that students often receive feedback unrelated to critical learning goals, highlighting teachers' misconceptions (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

In contrast, scholars assert that feedback is a **major driver of learning and academic success** and a crucial component of formative assessment (assessment for learning), which, when used effectively, scaffolds learners and fosters significant learning gains (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). These conclusions differ from the views of Fletcher et al. (2012), who stress that assessment is a procedure for collecting information to diagnose strengths and weaknesses, monitor progress, provide feedback, improve learning and instruction, and issue grades. How and what is assessed directly influences what is learned and how it is learned (Chalmers, 2007; Fletcher et al., 2012).

12.2. The Teacher Educators' Implementation of Assessment Orientation

The quantitative data analysis revealed that **assessment orientation and feedback were**

misconceived. Furthermore, findings from interviews and classroom observation notes indicated that assessment orientation and feedback in the Colleges of Teacher Education in the Amhara National Regional State were **teacher-centered, orally oriented, and directive**. These practices reflect a **behaviorist approach** rather than the **constructivist approach**, which underpins the integration of assessment, instruction, and formative feedback. Therefore, in this section, the **major findings and discussions** are organized according to the thematic areas of **assessment before instruction, assessment during instruction, and assessment after instruction**. Overall, both quantitative and qualitative analyses demonstrate that **teacher educators in the Amhara National Regional State** predominantly employ **teacher-centered, oral, and directive assessment practices**, with **assessment after instruction being the most common orientation**. Practices of assessment before and during instruction are **misunderstood and underutilized**, limiting the potential of assessment to inform teaching and promote meaningful student learning. These findings highlight a critical need for professional development to **align assessment practices with constructivist principles**, integrate formative feedback effectively, and ensure that all phases of assessment contribute to **enhancing student learning outcomes**.

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12.3. The Teachers Educators' Implementation of Assessment Before Instruction

Based on the results of a **one-sample *t*-test**, it was concluded that teacher educators' implementation of assessment orientation **before instruction** was significantly lower than the expected standard. This indicates that assessment before instruction in the Colleges of Teacher Education in the Amhara National Regional State was **not carried out effectively**. The findings further revealed that assessment before instruction was primarily regarded as a means to ensure or audit students' learning, which aligns more closely with the purposes of **assessment after instruction**. Teacher educators, therefore, did not demonstrate a clear understanding of the distinct goals of pre-instruction assessment.

These results are consistent with prior studies indicating that teachers frequently do not design and implement classroom activities with **diagnostic assessment** in mind, and that they dedicate limited time to analyzing pre-assessment data (Edelenbos & Kubanek-German, 2004; Rice, 2013). Diagnostic assessment is intended to identify learners' **strengths and weaknesses** in specific skills or knowledge areas and to use this information to guide instruction and promote positive learning outcomes (Nichols et al., 2009). It is designed to determine what students already know at the beginning of a new topic and to

uncover misunderstandings or difficulties so that lessons can be appropriately tailored (Jang & Wagner, 2014). Importantly, diagnostic assessment should **not** be used primarily for grading purposes (Rice, 2013).

The current findings suggest that teacher educators often **misalign assessment practices** with the intended purpose of pre-instruction assessment. Instead of diagnosing prior knowledge and planning instruction accordingly, assessment was applied in ways that focus on auditing or summarizing learning, which limits its effectiveness as a tool for informing teaching strategies and enhancing student learning outcomes. This highlights a gap in teacher educators' understanding of assessment as a **formative and diagnostic tool**, which is essential for scaffolding instruction and supporting student progress from the outset of a lesson or course. Qualitative findings from interviews and classroom observations further supported the quantitative results. One participant (AmhaT-1) reported:

"I teach the previous lesson again if students did not understand it; if they understood, I proceed to the next lesson. I use oral questions to assess students' prior learning" (NSTE-1, 5-4-2024). Another participant (NSTE-2) stated:*"Assessment before instruction is a method to ensure students' understanding after a lesson; the purpose is to*

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check prior understanding. Feedback is provided through written comments on students' responses, including corrections" (NSTE-2, 5-4-2024). Similarly, participant SSTE-1 explained that she uses oral questions, practical work, homework, assignments, tests, and exams to assess students before instruction but noted that students are often unaware they are being assessed, which reduces its effectiveness for learning:*"While assessment benefits teachers, it has little relevance to students' learning because they are unaware that they are being assessed"* (SSTE-1, 10-4-2024).

These qualitative reports reveal that teacher educators predominantly employ **teacher-centered, oral, and directive assessment methods** before instruction, which do not align with the **constructivist principles of diagnostic or formative assessment**. Assessment was primarily used to confirm whether students had learned the previous lesson, rather than to inform instructional planning, identify misconceptions, or support differentiated learning. This is consistent with the literature, which emphasizes that **pre-instruction assessment should diagnose students' prior knowledge** and provide actionable insights for lesson planning (Nichols et al., 2009; Jang & Wagner, 2014). Teachers who fail to analyze pre-assessment data or use it formatively miss the opportunity to scaffold instruction, address misunderstandings, and

promote deeper learning (Edelenbos & Kubanek-German, 2004; Rice, 2013). Taken together, the quantitative and qualitative findings highlight a **critical gap** in teacher educators' understanding and implementation of assessment before instruction. While assessment is occurring, its purpose is often misunderstood, and its potential to inform teaching and enhance student learning is **underutilized**, confirming that students in the Colleges of Teacher Education in the Amhara National Regional State are not fully benefiting from pre-instruction assessment as intended in formative and constructivist approaches.

12.4. The Teacher Educators' Implementation of Assessment During Instruction

The results of a **one-sample *t*-test** revealed that teacher educators' implementation of **assessment during instruction** in the Colleges of Teacher Education in the Amhara National Regional State was **not executed effectively**. Qualitative data from interviews further indicated that feedback was often **misconceived** and primarily regarded as correcting students' homework and classwork, encouraging oral responses, writing correct answers in students' exercise books or on the blackboard, orally providing correct answers, or marking incorrect responses with question marks.

Several classroom practices reflected **teacher-centered approaches**: for example, teachers

frequently praised a student who answered correctly without considering the responses of other students, or they moved on to the next question if all students answered correctly without reviewing each individual's understanding. In general, oral questioning and feedback were applied **without attention to individual learning needs**.Taken together, the quantitative and qualitative findings, as well as questionnaire results, indicate that teacher educators' practice of assessment orientation and feedback was **teacher-centered, orally oriented, and largely ineffective**, reflecting a **behaviorist approach** rather than the **constructivist approach**, which underpins the integration of assessment, instruction, and formative feedback. Consequently, assessment and formative feedback were **underutilized** as tools for promoting students' learning and performance. These findings suggest that college students were not effectively supported to monitor their progress toward clearly stated learning goals or to benefit from instructional adjustments informed by assessment.

These findings contrast with scholarly perspectives, which emphasize the use of **alternative assessment procedures**—including peer review, classroom discussions, observation, group work, and student self-assessment—to measure knowledge and skills during instruction

(Stiggins & DuFour, 2009). Assessment processes are considered **formative** when activities completed by both students and instructors provide information that can be used as feedback to **modify learning and instruction** throughout the instructional process (Doğan, 2013). Consistent with this perspective, prior research indicates that higher education instructors often rely on **summative assessments administered after instruction**, raising concerns that assessment methods are frequently **disconnected from student learning** (Carless, 2015; Carless, Joughin, & Liu, 2006; Postareff, Virtanen, Katajavuori, & Lindblom-Ylänne, 2012; Rathje, 2018; Webber, 2012). One challenge in developing effective assessment is the **long-standing reliance on summative grading practices**.

Formative assessment allows teachers to provide **descriptive, rather than evaluative, feedback** and to adjust instruction to meet students' learning needs more precisely, emphasizing the student as the focal point (Stiggins et al., 2004; Swaffield, 2011). When students are actively engaged in instructional activities, they demonstrate **deeper thinking and long-term retention** of concepts (McCoy, 2013). Supportive feedback from multiple assessment tasks further improves learning outcomes (Andrade et al., 2015; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Sambell et al.,

2013). Formative assessment functions both as an **instructional tool**, used while learning is occurring, and as an **accountability tool**, determining whether learning has taken place (Andersson & Palm, 2017; Egan, 2008; Menendez et al., 2019; National Education Association, 2003; Sharma & Bansal, 2017; Tekyiwa & Sekyi, 2016; Torres, 2019). It is conducted during the teaching and learning process and involves **iteratively determining what, how much, and how well students are learning relative to learning goals**, in order to provide **tailored formative feedback** and support further learning (Gikandi et al., 2011).

12.5. The Teacher Educators' Implementation of Assessment After Instruction

A **one-sample *t*-test** revealed statistically significant mean differences between the observed and expected means for all indicators of **assessment after instruction**. This indicates that teacher educators' implementation of assessment after instruction was the **most prevalent form of assessment orientation**, compared to their practices of assessment before and during instruction. However, this finding also implies that the contribution of assessment to enhancing students' learning was **limited**, as traditional assessments conducted after instruction typically do not provide opportunities for re-learning or adjustment of teaching strategies. Consequently,

teacher educators' practice of assessment after instruction was concluded to be the dominant form of assessment orientation in the Colleges of Teacher Education in the Amhara National Regional State.

This finding is consistent with previous research indicating that higher education instructors' evaluation methods are often classified as **traditional assessments administered after instruction** (Carless, 2015; Carless et al., 2010; Gilles et al., 2011; Postareff et al., 2012). However, the literature also highlights the limitations of such summative assessments, noting that they are often **detached from classroom learning** (Shepard, 2000) and, when based on outdated practices, can be **unfair, erroneous, and ineffective** in promoting quality student learning (Gavrila-Jic, 2013; Huba & Freed, 2000).

Shepard (2000) further emphasizes that summative assessments or high-stakes exams are **separated from real classroom learning**. While they may provide information about overall patterns of student achievement, they do so **without offering students the opportunity to reflect on their learning or demonstrate improvement**, and they do not allow instructors to modify teaching strategies during the instructional process. Similarly, research indicates that traditional assessments often **fail to promote**

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meaningful learning outcomes, limiting the effectiveness of teaching and learning in higher education (Black & Wiliam, 2004; Huba & Freed, 2000; Ministry of Education [MOE], 2004; Weimer, 2002).

13. The Effect of Teacher Educators' Philosophy of Education on Assessment Orientation

Regarding the contribution of teacher educators' **educational philosophy** to assessment orientation, the **MANOVA model** using Wilks' Lambda test revealed that teacher educators' philosophical orientation **significantly and positively influenced assessment orientation**, explaining **96% of the variance in assessment before instruction**, **40% of the variance in assessment during instruction**, and **53% of the variance in assessment after instruction**. This finding aligns with previous studies that have related teachers' educational philosophy to various aspects of teaching and learning, including teaching–learning conceptions (Yalçın İncik, 2018), needs assessment tendencies (Yargı & Sıvacı, 2021), professional values (Selçuk et al., 2021), scientific epistemological beliefs (Taşkın, 2020), 21st-century skills (Gökbulut, 2020), principles of critical pedagogy (Kozikoğlu & Erden, 2018), and teaching styles (Koç, 2019).

In traditional educational philosophical orientations, such as **idealism and realism**, or educational philosophies such as **perennialism and essentialism**, teachers predominantly employ traditional teaching methods and techniques in the teaching–learning process and rely on instructional materials such as **blackboards, chalk, and textbooks** (Sönmez, 2019). Consistent with this finding, previous research has demonstrated that instructors' educational philosophical orientations influence not only their **teaching practices** but also **assessment approaches**, as reflected in specific philosophical perspectives—including **perennialism, essentialism, progressivism, and social reconstructionism**.

13.1. The Contribution of Teacher Educators' Perennialist Philosophical Perspective of Education to Their Practice of Assessment Orientation

The results of the MANOVA indicated that teacher educators' perennialist educational philosophy significantly influenced their assessment practices, particularly in assessments after instruction. This philosophical orientation explained 84.5% of the variance in post-instruction assessment practices. In contrast, its influence on assessments before and during instruction was not statistically significant.This finding aligns with the theoretical foundations of perennialism, which emphasizes the transmission of enduring knowledge and the role of the teacher as a knowledgeable authority. Perennialists

advocate for a curriculum centered on timeless truths and universal knowledge, often delivered through traditional methods such as lectures and standardized testing (Ginsburg & Drake, 2002; Rowley et al., 2000). Consequently, assessment practices in perennialist classrooms predominantly occur after instruction, focusing on evaluating students' retention and understanding of the material.

Empirical studies support this theoretical perspective. For instance, a study by Ilyas and Zaman (2024) found that teachers with a perennialist orientation tend to employ traditional assessment methods, including teacher-made examinations and standardized tests, which are typically administered after instruction. Similarly, research by Uzunöz (2016) indicated that teacher educators with a strong inclination towards perennialism favor assessment practices that emphasize the evaluation of students' mastery of core content, often through summative assessments conducted post-instruction.These empirical findings underscore the alignment between perennialist educational philosophy and assessment practices that prioritize post-instruction evaluations. Such practices may limit opportunities for formative feedback and adaptive teaching strategies that could enhance student learning during the instructional process.

14.2. *The Contribution of Teacher Educators' Essentialist Philosophical Perspective of Education to Their Practice of Assessment Orientation*

The findings of the study revealed that teacher educators' essentialist educational philosophy had no statistically significant impact on assessment before and during instruction. However, it had a significant impact on assessment after instruction, accounting for 74.6% of the variance in this dependent variable. This aligns with the theoretical underpinnings of essentialism, which emphasizes the transmission of essential knowledge and skills, often through teacher-centered methods. In essentialist classrooms, education is typically structured around core subjects such as mathematics, science, history, and literature, with a focus on mastery of content through lectures, drills, and examinations. Assessments are predominantly summative, occurring after instruction to evaluate students' retention and understanding of the material. This approach reflects a belief in the importance of a standardized body of knowledge that all students should acquire.

Empirical studies support this theoretical perspective. For instance, research by Ilyas and Zaman (2024) found that teachers with essentialist orientations tend to employ traditional assessment methods, including teacher-made examinations and standardized tests, which are typically administered after instruction. Similarly,

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a study by Alemdar and Aytaç (2022) indicated that teachers with essentialist educational philosophy tendencies have limited impact on their perceptions of curriculum autonomy, suggesting a preference for structured and standardized assessment practices. These empirical findings underscore the alignment between essentialist educational philosophy and assessment practices that prioritize post-instruction evaluations. Such practices may limit opportunities for formative feedback and adaptive teaching strategies that could enhance student learning during the instructional process.

14.3. *The Contribution of Teacher Educators' Progressivist Philosophical Perspective of Education to Their Practice of Assessment Orientation*

The results of the current study revealed that teacher educators' progressivist educational philosophy positively and significantly impacted assessments before and during instruction, accounting for 96.8% and 34.4% of the variance in these dependent variables, respectively. However, the effect of progressivist educational philosophy on assessment after instruction was not statistically significant. This finding aligns with the progressive education paradigm, often known as student-centered education, which places the student at the center of the real-world problem-solving process (Dykas & Cassidy, 2011; Eryaman & Bruce, 2015; Terzi et al., 2020). In progressivist classrooms, assessment is an integral component of students' active problem-solving process (Johnson & Hayes, 2016; Terzi et al., 2020).

Empirical research supports this perspective. A study by Alemdar and Aytaç (2022) found that teachers with a progressive educational philosophy tend to have a significant impact on their procedural autonomy and professional development autonomy, which are closely related to formative assessment practices. These teachers often employ assessment methods that inform instruction and support student learning throughout the instructional process. Furthermore, research by Kloss (2021) indicates that progressive learning settings emphasize interdisciplinary teaching, active student engagement, and assessments that focus on understanding and application rather than rote memorization. This approach fosters a learning environment where assessment is seamlessly integrated into the learning process, allowing for continuous feedback and adjustment of teaching strategies.These empirical findings underscore the alignment between progressivist educational philosophy and assessment practices that prioritize formative evaluation, active student involvement, and real-world problem-solving. Such practices are designed to enhance student learning by providing ongoing feedback and opportunities for reflection and improvement during the instructional process.

4.4. The Contribution of Teacher Educators' Social-Reconstructionist Philosophical Perspective of Education to Their Practice of Assessment Orientation

The findings of this study revealed that teacher educators' social-reconstructionist educational philosophy significantly influenced assessments before and during instruction, accounting for 98.7% and 48.6% of the variance in these dependent variables, respectively. However, the effect of this philosophical perspective on assessment after instruction was not statistically significant.

This aligns with the social-reconstructionist educational theory, which opposes the "teaching as banking" approach and the assessment-as-recall model typically employed after instruction (Carless, 2015; Giroux, 2010; Gutek, 2004). Social-reconstructionist educators view assessment as an intrinsic component of the teaching and learning process, not something "added" after a learning program (Nicol, 2009).

Empirical studies support this perspective. For instance, research by Reisdorfer (2020) found that teachers employing social-reconstructionist principles utilized differentiated assessments that were integrated throughout the instructional process, emphasizing critical thinking and real-world problem-solving. Similarly, a study by Hill (2006) highlighted that teacher educators with a social-reconstructionist orientation prioritized formative assessments that encouraged student reflection and active participation in societal issues. These findings underscore the alignment between social-reconstructionist educational philosophy and assessment practices that prioritize formative evaluation, student engagement, and the application of learning to address social challenges. Such practices aim to foster a learning environment where assessment is seamlessly integrated into the learning process, allowing for continuous feedback and opportunities for reflection and improvement during instruction.

15. Conclusion

The findings of this study indicate that teacher educators in the Colleges of Teacher Education (CTEs) in the Amhara Region face challenges in conceptualizing and implementing assessment orientation and feedback. Most participants struggled to differentiate among the purposes of assessment before, during, and after instruction, often viewing assessment primarily as a means to determine whether students had learned the content or to audit their learning. As a result, assessment before and during instruction was generally ineffective, while assessment after instruction emerged as the most commonly practiced approach.

Teacher educators' philosophical orientations were found to significantly shape their assessment

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practices. Perennialist and essentialist perspectives were more prevalent and primarily influenced assessment after instruction, aligning with teacher-centered, behaviorist approaches that emphasize post-instruction evaluation. In contrast, progressivist and social-reconstructionist perspectives positively and significantly affected assessment before and during instruction, promoting student-centered, formative assessment practices that support learning throughout the instructional process.

Overall, the study concludes that teacher educators' educational philosophies have a meaningful impact on assessment orientation. However, the dominance of teacher-centered, behaviorist practices limits the potential of formative assessment and feedback to enhance student learning. These findings underscore the need for targeted professional development and capacity-building initiatives to improve assessment literacy, ensuring that assessment practices are aligned with constructivist and student-centered pedagogical principles and effectively support learning at all stages of instruction.

15. *Implications*

This study extends our understanding of assessment orientation and explores the relationship between educational philosophy and assessment practices before, during, and after instruction in Colleges of Teachers' Education (CTEs). It emphasizes the potential of integrating educational philosophy with assessment practices to enhance students' learning and competence. The findings indicate that teacher educators in CTEs of the Amhara National Regional State struggled to define assessment clearly and to differentiate among its purposes before, during, and after instruction. This challenge, coupled with weak implementation of assessment before and during instruction, limits the ability of assessment to effectively promote students' learning and academic growth. These results suggest that intensive pre-service and in-service training programs should be provided to teacher educators at both the program and college levels to strengthen their understanding of the integration of educational philosophy, assessment orientation, and instructional practices.

The study further revealed that teacher educators predominantly held perennialist and essentialist philosophical perspectives. However, these orientations had limited impact on assessment before and during instruction, as they primarily emphasize traditional, teacher-centered assessment practices conducted after instruction. This highlights a need for curriculum redesign and instructional reforms that integrate assessment with teaching in ways that enhance student learning and competence. Conversely,

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teacher educators with progressivist and social-reconstructionist philosophical orientations contributed significantly to assessment before and during instruction, supporting student-centered, formative assessment practices that positively influence learning outcomes.

Therefore, to improve student learning and the overall quality of education in CTEs, the Amhara Regional Education Bureau (AREB) and teacher education institutions should consider:

1. Redesigning curricula and instructional approaches to align with progressivist and social-reconstructionist educational philosophies.
2. Providing targeted professional development and capacity-building programs to strengthen teacher educators' assessment literacy and their ability to integrate assessment effectively with instruction.
3. Promoting the adoption of student-centered, formative assessment practices that enhance active learning, critical thinking, and lifelong learning skills among students.By implementing these measures, CTEs can ensure that assessment practices are not only evaluative but also supportive of learning, thereby improving the effectiveness of

teacher education programs and student outcomes.

14. Limitations of the Study

The generalizability of this study may be limited due to the use of a convenience sampling strategy, which included only four Colleges of Teacher Education in the Amhara Region. As a result, the findings may not fully represent the practices and perspectives of all teacher educators in the region or in other contexts. Additionally, the study did not incorporate the perspectives of students, whose insights could have provided a more comprehensive understanding of assessment orientation and its impact on learning. The exclusion of document-based data sources—such as lesson plans, modules, curriculum materials, teachers' manuals, mark lists, attendance reports, and report cards—may also limit the reliability and triangulation of the findings. Collectively, these limitations suggest that caution should be exercised when applying the results beyond the specific context of this study, and future research should aim to include multiple data sources and a broader range of participants to enhance validity and reliability.

The datasets analyzed in the current case study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request

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