



FUTURITY
OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.57125/FS.2024.06.20.02>

How to cite: Metu, I. C., Agu, N. N., & Eleje, L. I. (2024). Students' Perceptions of and Preferences for assessment feedback in higher education: Implication for evaluators. *Futurity of Social Sciences*, 2(2), 21-37. <https://doi.org/10.57125/FS.2024.06.20.02>

Students' Perceptions of and Preferences for assessment feedback in higher education: Implication for evaluators

Ifeoma Clementina Metu*

MEd and PhD in Educational Research, Measurement and Evaluation, Lecturer in the Department of Educational Foundations, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka Nigeria, <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2968-2853>

Ngozi Nwabugo Agu

MEd and PhD in Educational Research, Measurement and Evaluation, Professor of Educational Measurement and Evaluation and Research, Department of Educational Foundations, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka Nigeria, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9518-7255>

Lydia Ijeoma Eleje

MEd and PhD in Educational Research, Measurement and Evaluation, Lecturer in the Department of Educational Foundations, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka Nigeria, <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-8587-289X>

Correspondence email: ic.metu@unizik.edu.ng.

Received: January 6, 2023 | **Accepted:** April 27, 2024 | **Published:** May 19, 2024

Abstract: The ability to communicate to students the extent of their strengths and weaknesses following assessment is a crucial element for high-quality teaching and learning. In this context it is referred to an assessment feedback. Feedbacks from assessments serve primarily as a means of favourably imparting developmental knowledge, i.e., assessing students' future work in order to facilitate learning. There has been a recent movement towards conceptualising assessment

feedback as a relational and dialogic process; consequently, it is imperative to ascertain students' preferences and perceptions. The dedication of evaluators is vital to support learning advancement and guarantee the value of assessment comments. In order to ascertain students' opinions about and preferences for assessment feedback, this study presented the findings of a descriptive and inferential survey. The "Students' Perceptions of and Preferences for Assessment Feedback Scale" (SPPAFS), a 49-item structured questionnaire was utilised to gather responses from 300 undergraduate students who were sampled from three federal universities in the Southeast geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The study was directed by four research questions, and two hypotheses were examined at the significance level of $p < .05$. The findings supported the claim that students did not regularly receive assessment feedback by revealing that despite receiving high-quality feedback from assessments, lecturers at the institutions were not as eager or proactive in offering it to their students. It was established that since students perceive assessment feedback as crucial for their personal growth and learning, they hold positive and favourable views of it. Additionally, the students favour more conversational, individualized, and online device-based modes of evaluation feedback. It was suggested that in order to give assessment feedback in real time, evaluators and teachers should take advantage of technological advancements. This would enable even more customised assessment feedback that is geared towards the needs and learning preferences of each student.

Keywords: assessment feedback, dialogic feedback, higher education, perceptions, preferences.

Introduction

The procedures used to assess and provide guidance on improvements in students' work are inextricably linked to national, disciplinary, and institutional cultures. The information given to an individual or student regarding their performance on a specific assessment, such as tests, assignments, or projects, is referred to as assessment feedback. Grades from students, feedback on scripts, face-to-face conversations, and spoken remarks to specific students or groups can all contain valuable data. As a result of technological advancements, evaluation feedback is now enhanced through the use of online, audio, and visual devices. The assessment feedback has been called the most potent regulator of accomplishment enhancement, and it has a considerable effect on learning. According to Cohen and Singh (2020), the fundamental goals of assessment feedback are to: let students know how their grade or mark was determined; recognise and honour particular aspects of their work; advise them on how to do better in future; inspire them to focus more on their assessment; and enhance the students' capacity to track, assess, and manage their learning, personally.

The terms "assessment and feedback" refer to two activities that are frequently combined: whenever learning is evaluated, students should receive feedback; this makes the feedback "intimately linked with marking" (Winstone & Boud, 2022), whereas assessment is primarily thought of as fulfilling the role of evaluation and certification. Thus, the teacher is fulfilling two distinct objectives in the process of assessing students' work and providing feedback: assigning grades and substantiating them based on past performance, and offering feedback to influence future performance. Therefore, the major objective of assessment feedback is to assist students in improving their performance by offering timely, pertinent, and helpful information. This can improve learning and serve to boost confidence and motivation (Palmer, 2020). If timing is not stressed, assessment comments will not be able to serve this beneficial purpose of improving knowledge.

When the assessment feedback is delayed, it draws attention to how ineffective information transfer tactics are at helping students become more capable of controlling their own learning and meeting their future educational requirements. According to Ajjawi et al. (2019), by the time students receive helpful feedback on their work; they have typically moved on to the next module or assessment task and are not given the chance or expectation of engaging in meaningful conversation that would help them develop their understanding. This proves that assessment feedback loses its usefulness and may not help students learn more if it is not given at the right moment.

Research Problem

Concerns regarding assessment feedback in higher education institutions have garnered significant attention, particularly due to the mechanics of the feedback process. According to Ajjawi et al. (2019), certain colleges have enforced a cap on the maximum frequency of comments that students can receive on their finished assignments. Additionally, they have encouraged educators to prioritise providing comprehensive feedback to students. However, Carless (2022) refers to this reliance on one-way written feedback remarks as the "old paradigm" of feedback practice, which places a greater premium on the information provider's activities during the transmission process. While some improvements have been observed in the way students rate their feedback in opinion surveys as a result of these initiatives (Bevan, 2020), assessment feedback remains the top concern in nearly all higher education institutions due to the one-way communication mode. Henderson et al. (2019) examined the nature and impact of feedback and suggested that a common criticism of assessment feedback is its largely monologic conception and implementation in higher education. Teachers may allocate a considerable amount of time to providing feedback on assignments submitted by students at the end of a course. However, students may find it challenging to comprehend and apply this feedback, thus limiting its value for their future development (Carless, 2019). As a result, dialogic and sustainable feedback is encouraged; evaluation feedback should satisfy current requirements without jeopardizing students' capacity to satisfy their own future learning objectives.

One approach conceptualising this assessment goal is through the use of sustainable assessment. Hounsell (2021) discussed the significance of sustainable evaluation feedback and suggested three essential components of "high value" the feedback to accomplish this. These are that assessment feedback needs to: (1) have an effect outside of the task it is related to; (2) strengthen the role of the student in producing, interpreting, and interacting with feedback; and (3) create a relationship between guidance and feedback by coordinating learning and teaching environments that foster fruitful discussion. Nicol and McCallum (2022) argue that giving assessment feedback does not always require a teacher to write specific notes on each student's work; instead, it should involve students more in the process. Some ways to do this include using the peer assessment, giving students access to sample work, and promoting conversation about the grading system. As a result, dialogic processes and activities that may both assist and inform the student on the current task and help them acquire the capacity to personally regulate their achievement on future tasks, are what constitute sustainable feedback. Notably, dialogic feedback supports student engagement with feedback (Adams et al., 2020; Alqefari, 2022; Vattøy et al., 2021; Zhang & Hyland, 2022) and self-regulation of learning (Aslan, 2022; Robillos, 2023; Zimmerman, 2023), which align with the sustainable assessment goal. The advancement in technology has even made this better.

University faculties' academic activities are being greatly impacted by technology, and students benefit from the creative evaluation and feedback procedures that offer an engaging and productive learning environment. The assessment feedback can now be captured and turned into a digital film

with audio commentary, giving students personalised feedback in a clear and understandable format (Paterson et al., 2019). For instance, teachers are increasingly utilizing Learning Management Systems (LMS) to improve assessment feedback procedures in any type of learning setting (Metu et al., 2024). It can be used to create, distribute, and assess tasks as well as give students quick, helpful feedback (Grönlund et al., 2021). Technology has also improved dialogic evaluation feedback since it enables teachers give students immediate feedback so they can swiftly correct their mistakes. Due to these benefits, students could favour this type of feedback. According to Esterhazy and Damşa (2019), students should actively participate in searching out, understanding, and negotiating their feedback preferences as well as utilizing assessment feedback to enhance their learning, since dialogic assessment feedback is necessary. To defend this claim, Wittek (2023) provided evidence by stating that students understand their teachers' comments and learn through feedback discussion. The value assigned to the feedback will depend on a number of factors, including the feedback's design and accuracy as well as the affective aspects of both the message's delivery and reception, according to Panadero and Lipnevich (2022). Thus, students' perceptions of feedback are what determine its effectiveness. According to research, a student's engagement with assessment feedback is a critical factor in determining its effectiveness (Andrade & Brookhart, 2020; Brookhart, 2020; Gao, 2022). Receiving, perceiving, evaluating, and understanding feedback, as well as using it to improve learning, are all phases of engagement with feedback (Nicol, 2021). This implies that at each of these engagement stages, the capacity of assessment feedback to enhance learning may be diminished. Assessment feedback, for instance, will not positively impact students' learning if they are unable, unwilling, or lack the time to use it; if they perceive it as useless; if they do not understand it; if they do not indicate their preferred feedback mechanism; or if they do not recognise it (reception); either way (Chong, 2021; Winstone & Boud, 2022). These phases of interaction with evaluation feedback should not be viewed as a linear process, as stated by Van Der Kleij and Adie (2020); King et al. (2024) instead, as students engage with the feedback message, they interact through cognitive and emotive pathways.

This study was initiated in response to the current emphasis on dialogic feedback, which entails that students are expected to have input on the feedback provided by their teachers. Since the feedback is no longer monologic, students are expected to also give feedback to their teachers. This return of feedback to the teachers can only be got by asking about the students' perceptions of feedback as it is known from literature that students' participation and engagement with assessment feedback are what determines its effectiveness. In this era of advancement in technology, there is a great improvement in dialogic feedback since technology enhances immediate and personalised feedback to students. It becomes necessary to seek to know students opinion about their preferences for such mode of feedback. Moreover, the current study was necessary due to the lack of research on perceptions and preferences for assessment feedback in African higher education. Most studies in this field were conducted outside of Africa, as evidenced by the literature. This location gap needs to be filled. It was therefore important to find out the Nigerian students' viewpoints about assessment feedback; considering the current feedback status in technology, and the mode of feedback these students preferred to receive.

Research Focus

Academic activities in university faculties are being greatly impacted by technology and students may be benefiting from creative assessment and feedback procedures that offer engaging and productive learning environment. The present study focused on the quality of assessment feedback given to students in higher institutions in Nigeria. The students' views about their perceptions of assessment feedback, the type of assessment feedback provided by their universities,

and their preferred mode of assessment feedback were sort for. This survey was conducted among three universities in the southeast geopolitical zone of Nigeria. Three hundred undergraduate students were selected for the study. The researchers obtained consent from the participants before their involvement in the study.

Research Aim and Questions

The objective of the study was to investigate students' perceptions of and preferences for assessment feedback in higher education. To achieve this objective, the following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the quality of assessment feedback provided by higher institutions?
2. How often do students receive assessment feedback in higher institutions?
3. What are the mean ratings of students' responses on their perceptions of assessment feedback?
4. What are the mean ratings of students' responses on their preferences for assessment feedback?

Ho1: There is no statistically significant difference in the mean ratings of respondents from different universities on their perceptions of assessment feedback?

Ho2: There is no statistically significant difference in the mean ratings of respondents from different universities on their preferences for assessment feedback?

Literature review

An examination of research on students' perceptions and preferences for assessment feedback across disciplines revealed studies conducted in education, medicine, and nursing. As for education, Dawson et al. (2019) employed a qualitative approach to investigate teachers' and students' views about the feedback and what in their opinion could make the feedback effective. At the end of the study it was discovered that the teachers saw the feedback as what helps to improve learning and were of the view that timing of feedback, modalities and other tasks connected with it were what makes the feedback effective. The students on their own part were of the opinion that teachers' comments that are of high quality ie, detailed and individualised, are more effective in improving learning. Zhang (2020) investigated students' perception on the use of automated writing evaluation (AWE) and the effectiveness of AWE feedback like scoring mechanism and how students engage with feedback during revision period. Using data collected from students' written work, AWE feedback and interviews conducted on students, the researchers found out that students differed from each other on how they engaged with AWE feedback and this resulted in divergent views concerning assessment feedback and use of revision operations during the revisions and how they use different cognitive styles in their revision through their engagement with AWE feedback. Haughney et al. (2020) describing the high quality feedback in higher education from the perspective of teachers and students posited that quality feedback is high when it is timely and is given very close to initial learning. According to Haughney et al. (2020), characteristics of high quality feedback included timing, focus, means of comparison, valence, quality of clarity, how specific feedback is, and the tone used by the teacher.

In medicine, Day et al. (2020) investigated resident students' perceptions on the implementation of entrusted professional activity (EPA)-based assessments and the feedback initiative in an internal medicine programme. Applying a qualitative approach to research it was discovered through the discussion session that what students considered high quality feedback

were feedbacks given through multiple low stake assessment but according to the medical students, frequent feedback seeking is a difficult task because it increased their workload. There was therefore a need to effectively reconcile the heightened anxiety between assessment and feedback so as to make the feedback more effective.

In a systematic review conducted by Paterson et al. (2020), the researchers aimed at finding out nursing students' needs and their preferences for academic feedback in higher education. Using a qualitative research approach, 36 papers were reviewed giving rise to three themes including preferences for feedback, multimodality and emotional impact. The findings indicated that the quality of feedback was associated with the timeliness of the feedback, the balance between positive and constructive comments, direct feedback on content, clarity of language, legibility of handwriting, justification of grades, and forward-looking feedback. The researchers concluded that students preferred that evidence-based feedback be practised daily, multimodality feedback was valued and should be individualised to enable students feed forward during their learning programmes.

In summary, both teachers and students believe that feedback is most beneficial for learning improvement when it is provided promptly, closely aligned with the timing of the lessons, and communicated clearly to the students. These characteristics also show that the quality of feedback is high. From literature, there are just a few of the disciplines for which research in the area of feedback perceptions and preferences in higher education are available; such studies in Africa have been very scarce thus far. For example, in nursing: Paterson et al. (2020); Vincent et al. (2022); in medicine: Day et al. (2020), and in education: Carless and Winstone (2023); Dawson et al. (2019); Haughney et al. (2020); Zhang (2020). Recently, there is a call to see the assessment feedback as a dialogic and relational activity. The need for dialogic assessment feedback requires in effect that students should take an active role by seeking, understanding, negotiating their feedback preferences, and making use of assessment feedback in their learning; hence students' perceptions and preferences should be sought. The paucity of research in this area raises concerns about the findings' generalisability to the higher education sector as a whole. It therefore means that taking stock of the evidence on satisfying students' perceptions and preferences for assessment feedback that spans academic disciplines and continents, especially Africa while taking technological advancements into consideration is appropriate in today's education.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The current study employed a survey research design for description of the quality of feedback provided by the institutions, the frequency of providing feedback and the students' perceptions and preferences for assessment feedback. Inferential statistics were employed to determine whether there were significant differences in the mean perceptions and preferences scores of students across the sampled universities.

Participants / Sample

The study was carried out in the five states of Anambra, Imo, Abia, Enugu, and Ebonyi that make up Nigeria's southeast geopolitical zone. One of the largest ethnic groups in Nigeria, the Igbos live in the southeast. Approximately five federal universities (one for each state) and numerous other governmental, private, and educational establishments can be found in this area in Nigeria. 67 432 students from the five federal universities in southeast Nigeria made up the study's population. Because of their similar settings, three federal universities—University of Nigeria, Nsukka (Enugu

State), Alex-Ekwueme Federal University, Ndufu-Alike (Ebonyi State), and Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka (Anambra State)—were purposefully sampled; the three universities are not limited to one field or discipline. The two other universities were dropped because of their peculiar nature; one is a federal university of technology and the other is a federal university of agriculture. A sample of 300 students was drawn from the three sampled universities through accidental sampling; 100 students from each of the universities.

Instrument and Procedures

The tool for gathering data was the Students' Perceptions of and Preferences for Assessment Feedback Scale (SPPAFS), which the researchers created and had it verified by experts. The SPPAFS contained four sections. Responses regarding the quality of the institutions' feedback were solicited in Section A. In Section B, the subjects were asked to indicate how frequently their institutions provided them with different kinds of assessment feedback. Section C and D asked the students to indicate their level of agreement on items concerning their perceptions of and preferences for assessment feedback respectively. Sections A, C, and D have a structured 4-point rating scale of "strongly agree" (SA-4), "Agree" (A-3), "Disagree" (D-2), and "Strongly disagree" (SD-1). The SPPAFS was reversed when the items are negatively cued. Section B has a 5-point percentage scale remarked as, 0% (Never), 25% (Rarely), 50% (Occasionally), 75% (Often), to 100% (Very often). A draft version of the instrument was trial-tested on 30 students of a nearby state university. The feedback helped to ensure that the items of the instrument were not ambiguous and that the draft instrument was valid. Using Cronbach Alpha method, the questionnaire yielded .79, .82, .86, and .78 as reliability coefficients for each of the sections respectively. The coefficient of reliability for the overall instrument was .81. The researchers adopted the direct delivery method (DDM) of data collection using one research assistant each from the three universities. The DDM made it possible to collate all the questionnaires, registering 100% return. The 300 returned questionnaires were considered for data analysis.

Data Analysis

The collected data was presented in tables and were analysed according to research questions and hypotheses. The mean, standard deviation, and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were the descriptive and inferential statistics used to analyse the collected data. Research questions 1, 3, and 4 were analysed by the use of mean, standard deviation and one way analysis of variance (ANOVA). Mean scores from 2.50 and above were taken as a positive response (Agree), while any mean score below 2.50 was taken as negative (Disagree). For research question 2, percentages of 0% was interpreted as "Never", 25% (Rarely), 50% was taken as "occasionally" while 75% to 100% were adjudged "often" and "very often" respectively. The highest frequency of response for each item denoted the popular opinion of the students. As for the hypotheses, a p-value ≤ 0.05 was taken as significant and where such is the case, a post-hoc test was run. For the purpose of data analysis in this study, Nnamdi Azikiwe University was named NAU, University of Nigeria was UNN, while Alex-Ekwueme Federal University was FUNAI.

Results

Research question 1: What is the Quality of Assessment Feedback Provided by Higher Institutions?

Table 1

Mean Ratings of Students Responses on the Quality of Assessment Feedback Provided by the Higher Institutions

S/n	Items	N	Mean	Stan. Dev	Remarks
1	Feedbacks are hastily prepared	300	1.50	.48	Disagreed
2	Lecturers simply grade my scripts	300	1.53	.52	Disagreed
3	Feedback is related to purpose	300	2.85	.64	Agreed
4	Lecturers make elaborate comments	300	1.89	.73	Disagreed
5	Feedback provided not elaborate	300	2.58	.81	Agreed
6	Lecturers are always willing to provide feedback	300	2.05	.59	Disagreed
7	Feedback if applied, helps improve my studies	300	3.15	.54	Agreed
8	Class feedback is presented clearly	300	3.38	.51	Agreed
9	Lecturers are not active in providing feedback	300	2.74	.71	Agreed
10	I do not see my scripts, after assignment or exam	300	1.75	.62	Disagreed

Table 1 presented the mean ratings of the students' responses of the quality of assessment feedback provided by their schools. The result revealed that most of the mean scores were below 2.50. The item with the lowest mean score (1.5) is item 1 (Feedbacks are hastily prepared). Other items with low mean scores were items 2, 4, 6, and 10. Item 8 had the highest mean score (Class feedback is presented clearly). The respondents also agreed to items 3, 5, 7, and 9 with mean scores of 2.85, 2.58, 3.15, and 2.74 respectively. It should be noted that most of the items with low mean scores are negatively cued which means that students from the three institutions agreed that the quality of assessment feedback given by their institutions was high.

Research question 2: How Often do Students Receive Assessment Feedback at Higher Institutions?

Table 2

Students' Responses on the Frequency at Which Assessment Feedback is Received at Their Universities

S/ N	Items	"0%" Freq. (%)	"25%" Freq. %	"50%" Freq. (%)	"75%" Freq. (%)	"100%" Freq (%)	Remarks
1	No feedbacks	184 (63.3)	101 (33.7)	15 (5)	Nil	Nil	Never
2	Grades	2 (.7)	24 (8)	210 (70)	63 (21)	1 (.3)	Occasionally
3	Written feedback (Individual)	Nil	33 (11)	200 (66.7)	66 (22)	1 (.3)	Occasionally

4	Verbal feedback (Group)	139 (46.3)	146 (48.7)	14 (4.7)	1 (.3)	Nil	Rarely
5	Written feedback (Group)	101 (33.7)	119 (39.7)	65 (21.7)	16 (5.3)	2 (.7)	Rarely
6	Verbal feedback (Individual)	127 (42.4)	139 (46.3)	33 (11)	1 (.3)	Nil	Rarely
7	Peer feedback	39 (13)	107 (35.7)	127 (43.3)	29 (9)	Nil	Occasionally
8	Self-assessment	6 (2)	117 (39)	125 (41.7)	15 (5)	10 (3.3)	Occasionally
9	Online feedback	42 (14)	198 (66)	57 (19)	2 (.7)	1(.3)	Rarely

Table 2 showed responses of the frequency at which students received the assessment feedback in their institutions. The highest frequency of response denoted popular opinion of the students. In Item 1, 0% has the highest frequency (184) which translated to 0% (Never). Items 2, 3, 7, and 8 have frequencies "50%" each, which means that such modes of feedback were occasionally used. On the other hand, items 4, 5, 6, and 9 were represented by frequencies of "25%" each which showed that those modes of feedback were rarely provided to the students by their respective institutions.

Research Question 3: What are the Mean Ratings of Students' Responses on Their Perceptions of Assessment Feedback?

Table 3

Mean Ratings of Students' Responses on Their Perceptions of Assessment Feedback

S/N	I feel that assessment feedback from lecturers	N	Mean	Stan. Dev	Remarks
1	justifies the grade I receive	300	2.85	.63	Agreed
2	shows me that they care about the work I do	300	2.64	.68	Agreed
3	makes me improve my performance in a course	300	2.55	.65	Agreed
4	is an explanation of my grade for an assignment or exams	300	2.72	.67	Agreed
5	is well deserved	300	2.66	.76	Agreed
6	encourages me a lot □	300	2.60	.75	Agreed
7	is an individual contact with the lecturer	300	2.43	.74	Disagreed
8	helps to reduce anxiety about a course	300	2.53	.68	Agreed
9	helps me to evaluate my strengths and weaknesses	300	2.54	.65	Agreed
10	shows that they care about my success	300	2.53	.74	Agreed
11	tells me what the expectations of the lecturers are	300	2.72	.69	Agreed
12	motivates me to be more serious in my study □	300	2.50	.82	Agreed
13	helps to reinforce my learning	300	2.54	.74	Agreed
14	conveys important developmental information	300	2.78	.68	Agreed
15	is useful only when I receive a low grade	300	2.25	.66	Disagreed

Table 3 presented the mean ratings of the students' responses on their perceptions of assessment feedback. The result revealed that the students agreed with most of the items in the section; 13 items out of 15. The students however disagreed with two (2) of the items. The item with the highest mean score is item 1 (I feel that assessment feedback justifies the grade I received), while

the item with lowest mean score is item 15 (I feel that assessment feedback is useful only when I receive a low grade).

Ho1: There is no Statistically Significant Difference in the Mean Perceptions of Assessment Feedback Scores of the Three Universities

Table 4

ANOVA Test of Difference of Means Among the Students of the Three Universities on Their Perceptions of Assessment Feedback

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F	p-value	Decision
Between Groups	.432	2	.216	5.232	.006	Sig
Within Groups	12.254	297	.041			
Total	12.685	299				

Table 4 summarised the One Way ANOVA result. The hypothesis tested if perceptions of assessment feedback differed across the three universities. The three groups were NAU, UNN, and FUNAI. The ANOVA results suggested that the perceptions of assessment feedback scores across three groups significantly differed ($F_{2,297} = 5.232$, $p = .006$). The null hypothesis was therefore rejected. Thus, there is a significant difference among the mean perception of the assessment feedback scores of the three universities.

Table 5

Tukey Post-Hoc Multiple Comparisons Test

(I)UNIVERSITY	(J)UNIVERSITY	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence interval
UNIV 1	UNIV 2	-.00400	.02873	.989	-.0717 .0637
	UNIV 3	.07840	.02873	.118	.0107 .1461
UNIV 2	UNIV 1	.00400	.02873	.989	-.0637 .0717
	UNIV 3	.08240*	.02873	.012	.0147 .1501
UNIV 3	UNIV 1	-.07840	.02873	.118	-.1461 -.0107
	UNIV 2	-.08240*	.02873	.012	-.1501 -.0147

Note. * The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Since the ANOVA result suggested a significant difference in the mean perception of assessment feedback scores across the three groups, Individual differences between groups were assessed using Tukey post-hoc comparison tests (Table 5). The test indicated that the mean score for UNN ($M = 2.7113$, $SD = .21722$) was significantly different from that of FUNAI ($M = 2.4947$, $SD = .19097$), [95% C.I. = (.1501, .0147)]. The mean difference was significant (.012) at the .05 level. However, no significant differences were detected between NAU and UNN; and between NAU and FUNAI.

Research Question 4: What are the Mean Ratings of Students' Responses on Their Preferences for Assessment Feedback?

Table 6

Mean Ratings of Students' Responses on Their Preferences for Assessment Feedback

S/N	I prefer	N	Mean	Stan Dev	Remarks
1	to receive general feedback in class since it allows me to study on my own.	300	1.63	.65	Disagreed
2	verbal feedback because lecturers' written comments are often difficult to understand	300	2.81	.68	Agreed
3	individual feedback is better because I can clarify any issues with the lecturer	300	2.96	.75	Agreed
4	it when lecturers post the keys on class online platforms	300	3.19	.67	Agreed
5	it when my lecturers encourage me to think deeply about the subject matter after assignments	300	1.92	.69	Disagreed
6	individual feedback because it helps me to understand why I fail an exam	300	3.01	.68	Agreed
7	it when my lecturers focus on the questions I got wrong	300	2.35	.73	Disagreed
8	self-feedback (self-assessment) because it helps me to evaluate my performance	300	1.67	.63	Disagreed
9	peer feedback because it helps me learn from my course mates	300	3.03	.71	Agreed
10	to know my grades than to read the lecturers' comments	300	2.09	.62	Disagreed
11	general feedback in class because my course mates will not know the ones I failed	300	2.49	.68	Disagreed
12	verbal feedback because I can communicate with the lecturer and clarify information	300	3.08	.66	Agreed
13	group feedback to personal one because I can see where other students have experienced similar problems	300	2.02	.65	Disagreed
14	it when lecturers guide us to work out the answers ourselves	300	2.02	.68	Disagreed
15	written feedback because I forget verbal feedback easily	300	1.99	.66	Disagreed

Table 6 presented the mean ratings of the students' preferences for assessment feedback. The result revealed that the students agreed to 6 items (2, 3, 4, 6, 9, and 12) out of 15 items in the section, while they disagreed with 9 items. The item with the lowest mean score was the item 1 (I prefer to receive general feedback in class since it allows me to study on my own), while item 4 (I prefer it when lecturers post keys on class online platforms) had the highest mean score.

Ho2: There is no Significant Difference in the Mean Preference for Assessment Feedback Scores of the Three Universities

Table 7

Test of Difference of Means among the Students of the Three Universities on Their Preferences for Assessment Feedback

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F	p-value	Decision
Between Groups	.174	2	.087	.245	.784	NS
Within Groups	14.935	297	.356			
Total	15.109	299				

Table 7 presented One-way ANOVA test performed to compare the mean scores of assessment feedback preferences of the three universities. Since at 0.05 level of significance ($F(2, 297) = [0.245]$, $p = .784$), $p > 0.05$. The null hypothesis was therefore accepted. Thus, there was no statistically significant difference in the mean preference for assessment feedback scores of the three universities.

Discussion

From the result in Table 1, most of the mean scores on quality of the assessment feedback provided by higher institutions were below the benchmark of 2.50. Looking at the items critically, most of the items that the students disagreed with were the items that were negatively cued, meaning that the students agreed that they received quality assessment feedback from their higher institutions. However, they were of the opinion that although their lecturers provided quality feedback, the lecturers were not willing and active in the provision. The unwillingness to provide feedback may be as a result of too much workload for lecturers owing to imbalance in teacher / student ratio. The above finding was in agreement with Espasa et al. (2020) whose result showed that students at the higher institutions were generally satisfied with the feedback received from their teachers and emphasised that teachers' comments that were of high quality ie, detailed and individualised, were more effective in improving learning. It however differs from the result of Dawson et al. (2019) whose study reported that only a small number of students indicated that the assessment feedback they received was supportive, encouraging or motivating.

Furthermore, in Table 2, the second research question elicited responses from students on the frequency of receiving assessment feedback from their institutions. The result showed that the lecturers of the three institutions did not frequently give out assessment feedback. From the responses, the frequency for none of the items was highest at 75% and 100%. This means that although the feedback was given to them, they received it occasionally. The reason for this may still be because of the lack of time due to excess workload on the part of lecturers. This result supports the findings of Maggs (2014), whose study revealed that students reported the frequency or quantity of assessment feedback they received from their teachers as extremely poor.

The result from Table 3 showed that most of the students had good perceptions of the concept of assessment feedback, as they agreed to most of the items. The item with the lowest mean score was still negatively oriented, indicating that students held positive perceptions regarding the significance of assessment feedback in terms of learning and development. This result agreed with that of Van der Kleij (2019) whose result showed that students had strongly positive perceptions of the assessment feedback they received. The result was also in agreement with that of Bates et al. (2013), whose result revealed that students perceive assessment feedback as authentic, useful, and constructive as they occur in the context of supportive learning. The result however differs from the opinion of medical students in Day et al. (2020) study who felt that frequency of feedback was a difficult task because it increased their workload. A test of the null hypothesis using one-way ANOVA in Table 4 revealed that there was a statistically significant difference in the mean perceptions of assessment feedback scores of the three universities. The difference in means was from UNN and FUNAI in favour of UNN as revealed from Tukey Post-Hoc test in Table 5. However, there was no significant difference in means between UNN and NAU and between NAU and FUNAI.

From Table 6, the result revealed that the students disagreed with most of the items on their preferences for assessment feedback. The items they disagreed with were mostly the items on general feedback, group feedback, written feedback, and self-assessment. They however mostly agreed with items on individual feedbacks and feedbacks given through online modes. Recall that

the item with highest mean response was item the 4 (I prefer it when my lecturers post sample answers on the class platform). This suggests that students are highly receptive to feedback delivered through online platforms, as it may offer more timely and direct communication. This result is in consonance with that of Chung et al. (2020) whose result showed that students generally agreed that they were motivated by online teaching and learning because it afforded them the opportunity to collaborate with their peers and others and helped them improving from previous mistakes. A test of hypothesis on the difference of means from the three universities (Table 7) showed no statistically significant difference among the three universities in their preferences for assessment feedback.

The study was constrained by limited research funding. Additional funds would have permitted the researchers to expand the study sample or to conduct mixed-method research. A mixed method research would have shown the students' perceptions and preferences originally as they were and a combination of the quantitative and qualitative approaches could have made the information from the students more robust.

Conclusions and Implications

Based on the result of this study, it can be concluded that university students in Nigeria received quality feedback from their teachers, though not frequently; the students had positive perceptions about the assessment feedback as a tool that will help to improve their academic performance; the students preferred a feedback type that was timely and personalised. They were also very positive about the assessment feedback from online devices. Since from literature available to the researchers, no study on students' perceptions and preferences for assessment feedback has been carried out in African higher education especially in Nigeria, this study will add to literature for future research in this area by filling the location gap.

Based on the result of the study it was recommended that lecturers be more active in providing assessment feedback to their students and, workshops and seminars on online feedback mode be organised by university administration for lecturers to enable them have dialogical interface with their students for more productive learning. The implications of this findings for evaluators is that since the findings of the study revealed that lecturers were not willing and active in providing feedback to the students but students were yearning for online assessment feedback because it was timely and personalised, evaluators being at the heart of assessment should note that untimely the feedback do not enhance future learning. They should therefore be at the forefront in organising/attending seminars to hone their ICT skills so as to ensure more student engagement and a greater positive impact of assessment feedback on their students.

Suggestions for Future Research

This research identified several issues regarding the provision of feedback to students in higher education. These include delays in providing feedback by lecturers, resulting in feedback that does not support student learning; infrequent provision of feedback by lecturers; and underutilisation of ICT-enhanced feedback. Thus, further research could be carried out to discover the type of ICT generated feedback used by lecturers and find out the most suitable for students in higher education. Further research should also be carried out on lecturers' awareness and their competency in the use of ICT-aided assessment feedback devices. In addition other studies could be carried out about lecturers' perceptions' of and preferences for the assessment feedback in the same location so as to make comparison with the present study. Furthermore, students' perceptions of and preferences for assessment feedback in higher education could be conducted in other geopolitical zones in Nigeria and across Africa.

Acknowledgements

This research was fully funded through personal financial efforts of the authors.

Consent and Ethical Approval

The researchers obtained on paper consent to carry out this research from the research participants. Those that were not willing to participate were asked to return the questionnaire.

Competing Interest

The researchers declared that there is no competing interest.

References

- Adams, A. M., Wilson, H., Money, J., Palmer-Conn, S., & Fearn, J. (2020). Student engagement with feedback and attainment: The role of academic self-efficacy. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 45(2), 317–329. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2019.1640184>
- Ajjawi, R., Boud, D., Henderson, M., & Molloy, E. (2019). Improving feedback research in naturalistic settings. In M. Henderson, R. Ajjawi, D. Boud, & E. Molloy (Eds.), *The impact of feedback in higher education: Improving assessment outcomes for learners* (pp. 245–265). Cham: Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-25112-3_14
- Alqefari, A. N. (2022). Spicing up undergraduate collaborative writing course through feedback dialogues. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, 21(9), 250–273. <https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.21.9.15>
- Andrade, H. L., & Brookhart, S. M. (2020). Classroom assessment as the co-regulation of learning. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, 27(4), 350–372. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0969594X.2019.1571992>
- Aslan, S. A. (2022). The effect of flipped classroom approach on learning achievement, online self-regulation and interaction in synchronous distance education. *Journal of Educational Technology and Online Learning*, 5(3), 535–552. <https://doi.org/10.31681/jetol.1094205>
- Bates, J., Konkin, J., Suddards, C., Dobson, S., & Pratt, D. (2013). Student perceptions of assessment and feedback in longitudinal integrated clerkships. *Medical Education*, 47(4), 362–374. <https://doi.org/10.1111/medu.12087>
- Bevan, W. J. (2020). How to improve the student feedback process: A case study within the built environment. *International Journal of Construction Education and Research*, 16(2), 117–131. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15578771.2019.1663316>
- Brookhart, S. M. (2020). Feedback and measurement. In S. M. Brookhart & J. H. McMillan (Eds.), *Classroom assessment and educational measurement* (pp. 63–78). Routledge. <https://library.oapen.org/handle/20.500.12657/54181>
- Carless, D. (2019). Feedback loops and the longer-term: Towards feedback spirals. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 44(5), 705–714. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2018.1531108>
- Carless, D. (2022). From teacher transmission of information to student feedback literacy: Activating the learner role in feedback processes. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 23(2), 143–153. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1469787420945845>

- Carless, D., & Winstone, N. (2023). Teacher feedback literacy and its interplay with student feedback literacy. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 28(1), 150-163. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2020.1782372>
- Chong, S. W. (2021). Reconsidering student feedback literacy from an ecological perspective. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 46(1), 92-104. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2020.1730765>
- Chung, E., Noor, N. M., & Mathew, V. N. (2020). Are you ready? An assessment of online learning readiness among university students. *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development*, 9(1), 301-317. <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARPED/v9-i1/7128>
- Cohen, A., & Singh, D. (2020). Effective student feedback as a marker for student success. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 34(5), 151-165. <https://hdl.handle.net/10520/ejc-high-v34-n5-a12>
- Dawson, P., Henderson, M., Mahoney, P., Phillips, M., Ryan, T., Boud, D., & Molloy, E. (2019). What makes for effective feedback: Staff and student perspectives. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 44(1), 25-36. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2018.1467877>
- Day, L. B., Miles, A., Ginsburg, S., & Melvin, L. (2020). Resident perceptions of assessment and feedback in competency-based medical education: A focus group study of one internal medicine residency program. *Academic Medicine*, 95(11), 1712-1717. <https://doi.org/10.1097/ACM.00000000000003315>
- Espasa, A., Mayordomo, R. M., Guasch, T., & Martinez-Melo, M. (2022). Does the type of feedback channel used in online learning environments matter? Students' perceptions and impact on learning. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 23(1), 49-63. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1469787419891307>
- Esterhazy, R., & Damşa, C. (2019). Unpacking the feedback process: An analysis of undergraduate Students' interactional meaning-making of feedback comments. *Studies in Higher Education*, 44(2), 260-274. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2017.1359249>
- Gao, X. T. (2022). *The impact of context-driven assessment and feedback conceptions on university students' approaches to learning — A cross-cultural perspective* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. The University of Auckland. <https://hdl.handle.net/2292/64118>
- Grönlund, A., Samuelsson, J., & Samuelsson, J. (2023). When documentation becomes feedback: Tensions in feedback activity in Learning Management Systems. *Education Inquiry*, 14(2), 194-212. <https://doi.org/10.1080/20004508.2021.1980973>
- Haughney, K., Wakeman, S., & Hart, L. (2020). Quality of feedback in higher education: A review of literature. *Education Sciences*, 10(3), Article 60. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci10030060>
- Henderson, M., Molloy, E., Ajjawi, R., & Boud, D. (2019). Designing feedback for impact. In M. Henderson, R. Ajjawi, D. Boud, & E. Molloy (Eds.), *The impact of feedback in higher education: Improving assessment outcomes for learners* (pp. 267-285). Cham: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-25112-3_15
- Hounsell, D. (2021). Feedback in postgraduate online learning: Perspectives and practices. In T. Fawns, G. Aitken, & D. Jones (Eds.), *Online postgraduate education in a postdigital world* (pp. 39-62). Cham: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-77673-2_3

- King, J., Brundiers, K., & Fischer, D. (2024). Student agency in a sustainability-oriented assessment process: Exploring expansive learning in student-led rubric co-design. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2024.2333031>
- Maggs, L. A. (2014). A case study of staff and student satisfaction with assessment feedback at a small specialised higher education institution. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 38(1), 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2012.699512>
- Metu, I. C., Eleje, L. I., Ikwelle, A. C., & Abanobi, C. C. (2024). Assessment feedback: What was, what is and what will be. In N. N. Agu, C. A. Ugodulunwa, & N. P. M. Esomonu (Eds.), *Festschrift presentation in honour of Prof. Romy O. Okoye, Reading in teaching pedagogy, educational evaluation and research*.
- Nicol, D. (2021). The power of internal feedback: Exploiting natural comparison processes. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 46(5), 756-778. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2020.1823314>
- Nicol, D., & McCallum, S. (2022). Making internal feedback explicit: Exploiting the multiple comparisons that occur during peer review. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 47(3), 424-443. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2021.1924620>
- Palmer, N. (2020, April). Investigation to improve timeliness and quality of assessment feedback using a custom application. In *2020 IEEE Global Engineering Education Conference (EDUCON) (pp. 419-428)*. IEEE. <https://doi.org/10.1109/EDUCON45650.2020.9125132>
- Panadero, E., & Lipnevich, A. A. (2022). A review of feedback models and typologies: Towards an integrative model of feedback elements. *Educational Research Review*, 35, Article 100416. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2021.100416>
- Paterson, C., Paterson, N., & Jackson, W (2020) What are students' needs and preferences for academic feedback in higher education? A systematic review. *Nurse Education Today*, 85, Article 104236. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2019.104236>
- Robillos, R. J. (2023). Effect of metacognitive-based digital graphic organizer on learners' oral presentation skill and self-regulation of learning awareness. *International Journal of Instruction*, 16(3), 639-654. <https://e-iji.net/ats/index.php/pub/article/view/99>
- Van der Kleij, F. M. (2019). Comparison of teacher and student perceptions of formative assessment feedback practices and association with individual student characteristics. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 85, 175-189. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2019.06.010>
- Van Der Kleij, F., & Adie, L. (2020). Towards effective feedback: An investigation of teachers' and students' perceptions of oral feedback in classroom practice. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, 27(3), 252-270. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0969594X.2020.1748871>
- Vattøy, K. D., Gamlem, S. M., & Rogne, W. M. (2021). Examining students' feedback engagement and assessment experiences: A mixed study. *Studies in Higher Education*, 46(11), 2325-2337. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2020.1723523>
- Vincent, S. C., Arulappan, J., Amirtharaj, A., Matua, G. A., & Al Hashmi, I. (2022). Objective structured clinical examination vs traditional clinical examination to evaluate students' clinical competence: A systematic review of nursing faculty and students' perceptions and

experiences. *Nurse Education Today*, 108, Article 105170.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2021.105170>

Winstone, N. E., & Boud, D. (2020). The need to disentangle assessment and feedback in higher education. *Studies in Higher Education*, 47(3), 656-667.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2020.1779687>

Wittek, L. (2023). Feedback in the context of peer group mentoring: A theoretical perspective. In T. de Lange & L. Wittek (Eds.), *Faculty peer group mentoring in higher education: Developing collegiality through organised supportive collaboration* (pp. 23-37). Cham: Springer.
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-37458-6_2

Zhang, Z. V. (2020). Engaging with automated writing evaluation (AWE) feedback on L2 writing: Student perceptions and revisions. *Assessing Writing*, 43, Article 100439.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.asw.2019.100439>

Zhang, Z. V., & Hyland, K. (2022). Fostering student engagement with feedback: An integrated approach. *Assessing Writing*, 51, Article 100586. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.asw.2019.100586>

Zimmerman, B. J. (2023). Dimensions of academic self-regulation: A conceptual framework for education. In D. H. Schunk & B. J. Zimmerman (Eds.), *Self-regulation of learning and performance: Issues and educational applications* (pp. 3-21). Routledge.
<https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9780203763353-1/dimensions-academic-self-regulation-barry-zimmerman>