

Lecturer Feedback and Student Learning: A case study of a Higher Education Institution in Maldives.

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Abstract: This study explores the impact of lecturer feedback on student learning in a higher education institution in the Maldives. Recognizing feedback as a cornerstone of formative assessment, the study examines the relationship between feedback quality, timeliness, and student academic performance. A quantitative, cross-sectional survey design was employed, sampling 220 undergraduates studying from 2nd to 6th semester in the institution, using a validated questionnaire. Data were analyzed using regression analysis.

The findings reveal a moderate yet significant relationship between quality feedback and student learning, emphasizing its role in enhancing academic performance and fostering engagement. Additionally, a strong relationship was found between timely feedback and learning outcomes, highlighting its importance in enabling students to promptly address areas of improvement. The study concludes that both quality and timely feedback are critical for maximizing learning impact.

The implications suggest structured feedback mechanisms and digital platforms for real-time interactions are important to improve feedback delivery. These insights are valuable for educators and policymakers aiming to optimize feedback practices in higher education. In addition to this, the study contributes to the field highlighting the importance of structured feedback mechanisms offering practical insights for educators and policy makers seeking to enhance feedback delivery and effectiveness in higher education.

Keywords: Higher Education, Lecturer Feedback, Quality Feedback, Student learning, Timely feedback.

I. Introduction

Feedback is considered as one of the most crucial and difficult elements to facilitate and develop student learning at any level of education. It is one of the key determinants of student learning and academic achievement in the educational process. For students to take the responsibility of their own learning, feedback that is feed forward must be provided. Detailed feedback provides students with clear guidance on the nature of their studies and the steps needed for further improvement (Singh, 2019). To give clear and transparent information to the students about their learning, effective, timely feedback must be given. Effective feedback helps students to understand what they have achieved and what they need to achieve to reach their goals and how much and what effort they need to put to successfully reach the learning goals or targets (Al-Basheer et.al, 2016). Feedback is an important strategy of formative assessment. The importance of feedback in higher education remains consistent with its role in other educational contexts (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Hattie & Jaeger, 1998). According to Gibbs & Simpson (2004), students learn faster and effectively with motivation when they are informed well about how well they are doing and what they might do more for further improvement.

Similar to the significance of feedback in diverse education contexts, in higher education systems, the need and significance of feedback remains the same. The feedback provided by the lecturers in higher education institutions is considered a fundamental component to guide the students regarding their strengths and areas for improvement. Through effective feedback students' learning experience gets enhanced and promotes their critical thinking and problem solving skills thus fostering a deeper engagement with the content of study. Feedback is provided through different modes, including face to face, written or sometimes digital which keeps on evolving especially with the advancements in technology. However, despite these evolving innovations concerns regarding the quality, timeliness and clarity of feedback persists as the impact of it directly influences the student performance.

The impact of lecturer feedback on student achievement and learning is multifaceted and often context dependent. In some contexts, feedback is regarded as a crucial pedagogical tool leading to student improvement, while in other contexts it is considered as a formal requirement. Hence due to these differences, the value of feedback and the way students respond to the lecturer's feedback differently. Research shows that the impact of lecturer feedback is high when the feedback is given in a timely manner, specific, constructive and aligned with the learning targets and objectives (Williams, 2024). Despite the significance of feedback in the education system, a number of challenges lie in ensuring the effectiveness of feedback and its proper use for improving student learning and achievement.

The current research aims to explore the impact of lecturer feedback on student learning and examine the effect of timely feedback on student learning focusing on undergraduates studying from 2nd semester to 6th semester, at a higher education

institution in Maldives. Through the study an actionable insight into the effectiveness of the feedback given by the lecturers and how it can be optimized to improve student learning are intended.

II. Literature Review

Importance of lecturer feedback on student learning/achievement

Many articles have been written on lecturer feedback on students learning, the role of the lecturer, and the effects of timely feedback on students' academic performance (Morris et al., 2021; Ahmad, M., 2021; Karaman, 2021; Selvaraj et al., 2021). Feedback is one of the most crucial formative assessment and evaluation strategies that can be used to improve students' academic performance. The primary purpose of this kind of feedback is to enhance student learning (Al-Bashir et al., 2016). Student feedback can be either formative or summative. The lecturer usually initiates formative feedback during the study, intending to improve the student further.

Meanwhile, summative feedback is for institutional or department requirements at the end of the course of the study, which can be used to improve teaching practices, future course offerings, etc. (Berenson & Jeffs, 2021). Although two types of feedback exist, formative assessment feedback enhances student learning, helps them understand the nature of their knowledge, and informs lecturers about the quality of their teaching (Ecclestone & Pryor, 2003). In this matter, Morris et al. (2021) highlighted that the student's academic performance can be improved through formative assessment, emphasizing the importance of students' participation in the feedback process. As a result of feedback, students' knowledge and skills are developed. For this reason, students become more engaged in the classroom activities.

The functions of the feedback can be either directive or facilitative (Black & William, 1998). Black and William (1998) assert that directive feedback, which is more precise than facilitative feedback, enables students to proceed to the next stage of their learning or identify areas for correction or revision. Facilitative feedback provides suggestions and comments for students, guiding them to modify and correct their mistakes. Some literature suggested that the two main types of feedback are formative and summative, where formative is to develop student learning and increase student knowledge. Karaman (2021) examined the effectiveness of formative assessment and found a significant positive effect on the student's academic performance. The study emphasizes integrating diverse formative assessment practices to enhance student learning. This leads the learner to improve their self-learning and change their thinking and behavior skills, which leads to enhanced learning (Higgins et al., 2002; Shute, 2008). From these definitions, we can understand that formative feedback plays a crucial role in all learning contexts, serving multiple purposes such as evaluating achievement, fostering development, understanding competencies, and motivating students to learn (Hyland, 2000).

Quality feedback and Student learning achievement

According to Selvaraj et al. (2021), poor feedback can demotivate students, even though it influences their motivation and aids their independent learning. Furthermore, according to them, formative feedback is essential for educational improvement. Thus, the lecturer plays a crucial role in student's academic progress by giving them proper feedback and identifying the types of assessments on which they need feedback. Students should receive constructive feedback to enhance their academic performance. As Ahmad (2021) has highlighted, constructive, corrective, and evaluative feedback is essential to their academic achievement.

Moreover, Singh (2019) studied the lecturer's feedback and its impact on student learning. The study was conducted in a public university in Sarawak, Malaysia. The findings revealed a positive relationship between lecturer feedback and student performance. Furthermore, the study discovered that motivational feedback significantly influences students' academic performance, with the mode of feedback also playing a crucial role.

Faulconer, Griffith, and Gruss investigated the types of feedback that affected the performance of the students and the perception of the students in an online inorganic chemistry course and revealed that those who received positive feedback scored one grade higher than the other students who did not receive the feedback (Faulconer et al., 2021). Furthermore, Monteiro et al. (2021) discovered that positive feedback fosters a supportive classroom environment, enhancing student participation and engagement. Thus, by increasing the students' engagement, students' performance will improve. Furthermore, the study on "Exploring the Impact of Teacher Feedback on Academic Performance" highlighted the importance of providing the students with constructive feedback. According to this study, giving constructive feedback will boost the confidence of the students and will be able to identify the areas in which the students need more help (Joseph & Sivamani, 2024). Thus, it is vital to give quality feedback to the students to improve the academic performance of the students. Moreover, the studies revealed that the confidence level of the students also increases and this boost the students' academic performance

Timely feedback and student learning and student learning

Giving feedback to students is a necessary process that students eagerly await. Thus, providing feedback to the students as soon as possible is essential. According to Hasan (2024), giving timely, constructive, positive feedback will boost the students' motivation and help their academic performance; however, negative feedback will demotivate the students, and their self-confidence will harm their self-esteem, affecting their academic performance. Giving students timely feedback will clarify their

expectations for the assignment and assist them in achieving their goals. However, Culver et al. (2016b) revealed no significant impact on academic performance on the timing of the feedback given to the students; nevertheless, students express preferences for getting immediate feedback. Therefore, it is the teacher's responsibility to determine the appropriate time and location for providing feedback to students, motivating them to learn more.

In another study, Faulconer, Griffith, and Gruss found that students prefer immediate feedback for technology-based assessments (Faulconer et al., 2021). This means that it is the role of the teacher to identify the types of assessments for which students need immediate feedback. Ajogbeje (2023) highlighted in his study that immediate feedback improved the student's performance compared to those who did not receive immediate feedback. He suggested that teachers adopt strategies for immediate feedback and incorporate various techniques into their teacher training programs. Thus, giving feedback to the students is crucial for their academic improvement (Liu et al., 2023). Likewise, Joseph and Sivamani conducted a study to examine the impact of teacher feedback on the learning outcomes of the students found out that timely feedback is vital for the improvement of the academic performance of the students (Joseph & Sivamani, 2024). Hence, it is important to give constructive timely feedback to improve the students' academic performance.

III. Design and methods

A quantitative, cross-sectional survey design was employed in the current study. In the research design, participants were drawn from the population at a particular time (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The current study's population included all the students studying for bachelor's degree from the 2nd semester to the 6th semester (Sem 1-2024) at the focused institution. The reason for eliminating 1st-semester students was that they may not have received lecturer feedback during data collection period. Simple random sampling was used as a sampling method, this method allowed the researcher to choose samples drawn from the population randomly, thus allowing each member of the population equal opportunity of being selected (Creswell, 2012). The population of the current study was 465 undergraduate students, based on Kjeijce and Morgan's (1970) sample size calculation table the sample size was 210. An adapted questionnaire was used to measure the impact of lecturer feedback on student achievement. The questionnaire was adapted from Hasan (2024) and Maharma & Abusa'aleek (2022). Before administering the questionnaire, reliability was checked using SPSS and necessary modifications were brought.

Data was collected using an electronic questionnaire shared through Viber, Telegram and WhatsApp. Before conducting the data collection process ethics from the higher education institution was obtained and consent from the participants was obtained.

Both descriptive and inferential data was collected and analysed for the purpose of the study. The data was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) 25. To answer the research questions and test the research hypothesis simple linear regression was carried out using SPSS 25.

Research Hypotheses

H1: There is a significant relationship between quality feedback and student learning.

H2: There is a significant relationship between timely given feedback and student learning.

IV. Results

The Demographic analysis

Following data and tables indicates the descriptive data collected for the purpose of the current research. The descriptive data will enable the researcher and the readers to undertint the inferential data better.

Table 4.1: Gender of the respondents.

Gender					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	20	9.1%	9.1%	9.1%
	Female	200	90.9%	90.9%	100.0%
Total		220	100.0%		

According to table 4.1, 91% of the respondents are females and 9% are males. More females have participated in the study as majority of the students in the population group of this research are females.

Table 4.2: Age group of the respondents

Age					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18 - 25	48	21.8%	21.8%	21.8%
	26 - 35	24	10.9%	10.9%	32.7%
	36 - 45	88	40.0%	40.0%	72.7%
	46 and above	60	27.3%	27.3%	100.0%
Total		220	100.0%		

The data shows that most of the respondents of the research are between the age of 36 -45 years, which 40%. The least number of respondents are between the age of 26-35, which is 10.9% respectively.

Table 4.3 Enrolled program of the respondents.

Program					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Diploma	14	6.4%	6.4%	6.4%
	Bachelors' Degree	206	93.6%	93.6%	100.0%
Total		220	100.0%		

According to the descriptive data, most of the respondents of the current research are studying in Bachelor's Degree programs and that is 93.6%. The remaining 6.4% students are studying in Diploma programs.

Table 4.4 Semester of the respondents

Semester					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Sem 2	118	53.6%	53.6%	53.6%
	Sem 3	20	9.1%	9.1%	62.7%
	Sem 4	5	2.3%	2.3%	65.0%
	Sem 5	55	25.0%	25.0%	90.0%
	Sem 6	22	10.0%	10.0%	100.0%
Total		220	100.0%		

According to table 4.4 most of the respondents of the current research are studying in the second semester, which is 53.6% of the respondents. The least number of students participated in the study are studying in the semester four, that 2.3%.

The inferential statistics.

Through the inferential statistics the hypothesis of the study were tested. To test the two hypothesis of the current study linear regression analysis using SPSS was carried out.

Hypothesis 1

H1: There is a significant relationship between quality feedback and student learning.

Table 4.5: Linear regression results for the 1st hypothesis

Model Summary (DV)			
R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.70	.48	.48	.49

ANOVA (DV)					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	48.53	1	48.53	205.12	.000
Residual	51.58	218	.24		
Total	100.11	219			

Coefficients (DV)					
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.63	.18	.00	9.03	.000
QF	.65	.05	.70	14.32	.000

According to the results of the linear regression analysis carried out to test the hypothesis 1, the “R-Value” according to the illustration is 0.70 and the “R Square value” is 0.48 and the adjusted “R-Square value” is also 0.48. This indicates that 48% of the variance in the dependence variable is explained by the independent variables in the model. According to the result of the ANOVA table, the significance of the 1st hypothesis is 0.00, as this value is less than the 0.05, it can be interpreted that there is a significant relationship between the independent variable Quality Feedback (QF) and the dependent variable, Student Learning (SL). However, the strength of this relationship is moderate.

Hypothesis 2

H2: There is a significant relationship between timely feedback and student learning.

Table 4.6 Linear regression results for the 2nd hypothesis

Model Summary (DV)			
R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.91	.82	.82	.29

ANOVA (DV)					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	82.34	1	82.34	1009.98	.000
Residual	17.77	218	.08		
Total	100.11	219			

Coefficients (DV)					
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.71	.11	.00	6.40	.000
TF	.81	.03	.91	31.78	.000

The table 4.6 highlights on the results of the linear regression analysis carried out to test the 2nd hypothesis of the research. The “R-Value” according to the analysis is 0.91 and the “R Square value” is 0.82 and the adjusted “R-Square value” is also 0.82 This indicates that 82% of the variance in the dependence variable is explained by the independent variables in the model. According to the result of the ANOVA table, the significance of the 2st hypothesis is 0.000, this value is less than the 0.05. Therefore, it can be interpreted that the relationship between the independent variable Timely Feedback (TF) and the dependent variable, Student Learning (SL) is strongly significant.

Hence, it can be concluded that hypothesis 1 is supported in the model and is moderately significant and hypothesis 2 is also supported and is strongly significant.

V. Discussion

Lecturer feedback plays a vital role in improving the skills and the learning abilities of the students in an effective way. Effective feedback enables the students to identify their strengths and weaknesses, issues and gaps in their learning and the areas which need further focus and concentration. According to Obilor (2019) effective feedback also motivates the students to move forward with the next step in learning, this in the end enhances their learning as well as develops their self-esteem and self-confidence. Feedback is also a two-way gear, lecturer given feedback is used by the student to improve his learning and fill the gaps in learning, whereas the teacher or lecturer uses the information from students' performance to improve the gaps in teaching and delivering the lesson (Utha et al., 2018).

The current study explored the impact of lecturer feedback on student learning in a higher education institution in Maldives. The study was focused on two important areas in feedback which were quality feedback and timely feedback. According to the results of the study, the 1st objective of the study, to identify the significance of the relationship between quality feedback and student learning, the study resulted supporting the hypothesis 1, based on the objective 1. This is evident in literature as well, literature shows that there is a positive relationship between the lecturer feedback and student performances (Singh, 2019). In addition to this, positive feedback by the lecturer affects the performance of the students positively (Faulconer et al., 2021), which was also shown from the current research. Although the relationship with quality feedback was found significant, this showed a moderate correlation, thus, leading to considering potential factors that could contribute to student learning. These factors influencing the student learning could be students individual study habits, instructional methods, or some time could be the learning materials or resources that were used (Magulod, 2019). However, the findings of the current research were consistent with the literature.

The 2nd objective of the research was to identify the impact of the timely feedback by the lecturers on student learning. The results indicated a significant and strong relationship between timely feedback and student learning thus, supporting the research hypothesis 2. The statistical results showed an R-Square value of 0.82, which depicted that timely feedback plays an integral role in student learning and the relationship is strong. The findings of the research is supported by literature, indicating that timely given feedback boosts students' confidence in their learning process thus enhancing learning (Hasan, 2024; Ajogbeje, 2023). When timely feedback is given students get ample time to modify their learning habits and concentrate on the needy areas (Ajogbeje, 2023). Timely feedback is much preferred by students (Faulconer et al., 2021).

Hence, the results indicated that both quality and timely feedback are associated with student learning. Timely feedback has a stronger impact and is much preferred by students. With timely feedback essential decisions can be made promptly with regard to the learning process, ensuring corrective actions. Although quality feedback is provided, it will be less impactful if not provided in a timely manner. However, both types of feedback are substantial to student learning.

IV. Conclusion and Recommendation

The findings of the study highlight the significant impact of lecturer feedback on student learning within higher education institutions in the Maldives. The findings indicate that quality feedback plays a significant role in enhancing students academic performance, while fostering their self-confidence and engagement. Likewise, timeliness of feedback enables students to make necessary adjustments promptly, fostering continuous improvement in their learning process.

The findings also show that a combination of both quality and timely feedback is essential to maximize impact on student learning. Thus, higher education institutions should adopt structured feedback mechanisms where both these factors are employed. Additionally, institutes should leverage on digital platforms to enable real-time interactions and provide ongoing support for students.

These insights provide a foundation for educators and policy makers at the higher education sector to design effective feedback mechanisms that are effective and align with the demands of modern day education. Hence, policy makers can formulate strategies that prioritizes student engagement and timeliness, for fostering an environment conducive for learning and growth.

While this study provides valuable insights, there are certain limitations. The predominance of female participants and the higher concentration of students in the second semester may limit the generalizability of the findings. Thus, future research should consider expanding the sample to include diverse population such as students from different academic levels, programs and gender to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the area of research interest. In addition, it could include the role of other potential variables such as mode of feedback (written or oral) or the relationship between feedback and motivation.

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