
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Feedback Influence on Students' Emotions and Progress: Case of Kuwaiti University Students

Abdullah Rashed Alazmi

Bangor University, School of Education, Bangor, Wales, United Kingdom

Corresponding Author: Abdullah Rashed Alazmi, **E-mail:** Abdullah.Rashed775@gmail.com

| ABSTRACT

Feedback is an essential component of the assessment process. It has a significant effect not only on the emotions of the students, but also on their progress and work development. The gap that this study is attempting to bridge is how students' emotions towards feedback can change their behaviour in development and progress. This study investigated the influence of different types of feedback on the emotions of Kuwaiti students through conducting a qualitative research. Six students were interviewed (3 males and 3 females) through semi-structured interviews. Analysis of the data was done through thematic analysis. The results showed that although negative emotions can be triggered in the students by negative feedback (such as disappointment, anger and sadness), the participants thought that these negative emotions are also vital for progress. The participants thought that these negative emotions can make them motivated to improve themselves and achieve better achievements in the future. On the other hand, the study found that positive feedback is also as important and it makes the students have positive emotions which make them want to continue, as they know that they are on the right track. The way feedback is given also seems to be important. For example, the students prefer detailed and dialogic feedback. However, the participants agreed that the experience of the teacher's about giving feedback is important if there are many details (since an inexperienced teacher might provide irrelevant feedback). Finally, the study recommended that educational institutions and systems need to make more formative assessments in order to make dialogic feedback more feasible. Further, it also recommends that all teachers need to have some training in feedback literacy in order to make providing feedback as effective as possible.

| KEYWORDS

Feedback - Student Emotions – Assessment - Higher Education - Dialogic Feedback – Motivation.

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background:

Assessment is a very important component of the process of teaching and learning. It is the process of collecting essential information to decide whether a certain programme meets its goals. It also aims at determining what methods of teaching are efficient and what methods are not (Tosuncuoglu, 2018). Further, it seems that feedback in assessment has a significant role in the students' progress. Feedback in assessment also seems to have a big influence on the emotions of students (Alsaiani et al., 2024). Further, feedback is one of the most important components of effective teaching that can help in students' progress as well as learning. It seems that the students' emotions in feedback and assessment is not investigated as much as the motivational and cognitive elements of learning. However, feedback seems to have a major role on the learners' emotions (Rowe, 2017). For example, in order for the learners to have better achievements, they need to experience positive emotions like enjoyment and hope (Pekrun and Stephens, 2010 cited in Rowe, 2017). The current study will investigate positive emotions and find out their relationship with self-confidence.

On the other hand, Rowe (2017) suggested that negative emotions can generally have a harmful influence on the learner's performance and motivation such, as anger. Although feedback is a significant determiner in improving students' performance, its positive influence is largely reliant on what students do after they receive the feedback. Accordingly, the students are the main determinants in feedback efficacy (Dawson, et al., 2023). However, as student-centred feedback require much work to be done on the part of the student, students are required to be active recipients, make use of the feedback and take action (Dawson, et al., 2023).

For that reason, students need to have feedback literacy which allows the students to face the challenges and make use of the opportunities that the feedback provides (Dawson, et al., 2023). Carless and Boud (2018) defined feedback literacy as "the understandings, capacities and dispositions needed to make sense of information and use it to enhance work or learning strategies". Ilies, De Pater and Judge (2007) found that the way students feel towards feedback, whether these feelings are positive or negative, cannot be predicted by performance feedback. However, the same study also found that when the goal that the students have is not achieved, their negative reactions to feedback become more pronounced and evident in comparison with when their goals are achieved (Ilies, De Pater and Judge, 2007). Further, in their investigation about the influence of positive and negative feedback on the performance of the learners, Raftery and Bizer, (2009) found that when students receive negative feedback about their performance, they tend to do better in future cognitive performance. On the other hand, when they receive neutrally negative feedback about their performance, no significant progress in future cognitive performance occurs. In other words, it seems that negative feedback has a better positive effect on the progress of the learners in comparison with moderate or neutrally negative feedback (Raftery and Bizer, 2009).

1.2 Research Gap:

There are many studies which investigate feedback in assessment and its influence on emotions such as Rowe (2017). The study investigated the way understanding emotions can have a positive impact on the role of assessment in learning and suggested some strategies for learners and teachers to follow in order to improve learning. Further, Motro, Comer and Lenaghan (2021) focused on the influence of the feeling of sadness in specific, on future achievements. Rowe, Fitness and Wood (2014) and Ryan and Henderson (2018) had a similar focus to the current study. However, Rowe, Fitness and Wood (2014) study focused on students as well as teachers. In other words, they did not have a specific focus. Further, the study also investigated emotions with no specific focus on learners' progress as a result of their active engagement in feedback. On the other hand, Ryan and Henderson (2018) focused on the emotional reactions of students rather than their practical responses in learning and progress. Further, Värlander (2008) investigated the role of learners' emotions about feedback in higher education. However, the study was a secondary one, which had no empirical findings to build upon.

Some of the studies in the literature of education focused on the influence of feedback on the emotions of the learners such as Hill, et al. (2021). While Ilies, De Pater and Judge (2007) investigated students' emotional reactions to feedback, their study is probably out of date today. Fong and Schallert (2023) also investigated the topic but the focus was mainly on students' feelings and understanding of feedback rather than their actual active engagement. Finally, although Winstone, Nash, Parker and Rowntree (2017) investigated the engagement of learners in feedback and how they react to feedback, the study was a review rather than an empirical study. Further, while Grundmann, Scheibe and Epstude (2021) investigated the influence of negative feedback on the type of emotions which are generated as a result of it, the study did not sufficiently investigate how learners engage in learning as a result of these emotions. Thus, the studies which investigate the way students practically react to the feedback they receive do not seem sufficient as these studies had different focuses and different perspectives from the current study. They also tackled one issue at a time rather than investigating the relationship between emotions on the one hand and practical reaction, on the other. For that reason, the current study will aim to contribute to bridging the gap in literature to find the potential relationship between students' feelings towards feedback in assessment, on the one hand, and students' engagement in learning, as a result of feedback, on the other.

This study will attempt to investigate the influence of feedback in assessment on the emotions of students, through investigating the case of Kuwaiti university students. The study will find out how feedback can trigger negative or positive emotions and how these emotions can enhance or hinder students' active engagement in learning in order for them to improve.

1.3 Research Aims and Objectives:

This research aims to explore the influence of feedback in assessment on the emotions of the students, how they react and feel towards feedback and how they can progress in their learning, as a result. One of the objectives of the research is to explore how students report their feeling about the feedback they receive in assessment. Another objective of the research is to find out the extent to which learners report that the way the triggered positive and negative emotions by feedback can foster or hinder their active engagement in learning.

1.4 Significance of the Study:

This study is a significant one as it will contribute to understanding the emotions of the students which will potentially allow them to make use of feedback. Another significance that this study is expected to have is its potential major impact on the way teachers provide their feedback in assessments. It will also attempt to contribute to literature about the way teachers practice teaching as they take into consideration the influence of the type of feedback they provide in assessment on the emotions of their students. Understanding the emotions of the students towards different types of feedback can make providing feedback more effective.

1.5 Research Question:

1. How do students report feeling about the feedback they receive in assessment?
2. How do students' emotions about feedback influence their active engagement and use of feedback?

2. Literature Review:

2.1 Feedback in Assessment:

Assessment is a general term that refers to the methods and techniques that are applied to collect information about the students' ability, competence and motivation (Allan, 1999; Ekbatani and Pierson, 2000; Lambert and Lines, 2000 cited in Tosuncuoglu, 2018). It has a significant role in the processes of learning and teaching in the mainstream education (Troudi, Coombe, and Al-Hamly, 2009). There are two approaches to assessment namely: formative and summative assessments. While formative assessments aim at providing feedback to the students and teachers about the progress of the students, summative assessments are usually conducted at the end of the course to determine whether the objectives of the course have been achieved (Rao, 2018). It is also worth mentioning that formative assessment is sometimes referred to as alternative assessment or assessment for learning (Al-Nouh, Taqi and Abdul-Kareem, 2014).

In the context of formative assessment, it seems that this type of assessment has a major role in improving the students' achievement (Wiliam, 2013). Wiliam (2013) also suggested a number of strategies that can make formative assessment more effective. These strategies included: sharing the learning intentions with the students, eliciting evidence to the students demonstrating to them why they scored a certain grade, the quality of feedback that the students receive should intrigue the learners to work harder, the students can be learning resources for each other as they can be in peer-assessment where they can learn from each other's mistakes and, finally, students can own their learning when they know that making mistakes allows them to learn from them and make them work harder (Wiliam, 2013).

This also seems to be closely related to teacher feedback literacy. For example, Carless and Winstone (2023) explained that teachers should have feedback literacy in order for the feedback to be effective. They explained that teachers need to provide assessments in environments which facilitate the efficacy of feedback. Another dimension which they considered important is the relational dimension where teachers are expected to conduct feedback in a communicative manner. Further, it is important for the teachers to provide their feedback communicatively or in the form of a dialogue between students and teachers (Carless and Winstone, 2023)

Feedback can be looked at from a number of perspectives. For example, the medium of feedback can be oral or written while the component of the feedback can focus on accuracy or fluency (Hedge, 2000 cited in Al-Nwaiem, 2012). Furthermore, the feedback of the teachers in the classroom can be positive or negative. Positive feedback can enhance self-confidence in learners (Wong and Waring, 2009 cited in Al-Nwaiem, 2012) while negative, or sometimes referred to as corrective feedback, can help students be aware of what needs to be changed in order to abstain from making future mistakes (Gass and Mackey, 2006 cited in Al-Nwaiem, 2012). Negative feedback can be defined as: "feedback that identifies shortcomings of a learner's performance and provides ways to improve the work, what is called constructive feedback or what some scholars have termed feedforward feedback" (Hattie and Timperley, 2007 cited in Fong and Schallert (2023). Further, the empirical evidence found in Alliger and Williams (1993) study revealed that the achievement of goals in learners is usually associated with positive affect while the inadequate pace of progress is usually associated with negative affect (Alliger and Williams, 1993 cited in Ilies, De Pater and Judge, 2007). Thus, it is worth mentioning that different types of feedback are not received the same way on the part of the students (Winstone, et al., 2017). This is quite similar to Hill, et al. (2021) as they discussed that many students confuse 'getting it wrong' with 'being wrong'. In other words, they see negative feedback as a state of being wrong rather than an error that requires correction. As a result, Hill, et al. (2021) highlight that it is important for teachers to provide positive feedback to the learners in order for them to have an enhanced self-confidence. Consequently, learners can better understand and accept the teacher's assistance.

2.2 Feedback and Students' Emotions:

Motro, Comer and Lenaghan (2021) focused on the influence of sadness triggered by negative feedback and its influence on future performance through the use of face-based emotion recognition software. The study found that all participants had the same reaction to negative feedback as they felt sad. However, they had varied reactions about their future performance i.e. learners who had passion to reach their goals were better at overcoming the sadness so that it would not influence their performance. Rowe, Fitness and Wood (2014) also investigated the influence of feedback on learners' emotions. However, the focus was on the cognitive appraisal and the positive influence it could trigger (love or joy) or the negative influence (anger and fear). Moreover, Kluger and Denisi (1996) also investigated the influence of feedback through their historical review that investigated 3000 studies about feedback between 1903 and 1995. After establishing criteria for inclusion of these studies in their review only 131 studies met the criteria. Thus, their study found that grades tend to increase the involvement of ego in the students. On the other hand, specific feedback commenting on specific issues improved performance. Thus, when the feelings of the students are not triggered and the comments are specific, better performance can occur. In other words, positive as well as negative feedback interventions which focus on the self can have a negative influence on motivation and performance (Kluger and denisi, 1996). Winstone et al. (2017) describe a framework that form the active recipient of feedback. This framework highlight three major components namely: the nature of the feedback intervention, the way the receiver receives feedback and the interpersonal characteristics. They explain that effective feedback should apply to standards, should include continuous guidance and the way the feedback is provided. As for the way students receive feedback, they should have appraisal for themselves, need to have assessment literacy, have goals and be engaged and motivated by the feedback. As for the interpersonal characteristics, they include aspect associated with the behaviour of the feedback provider, feedback receiver, aspects of the feedback itself as well as its context (Winstone et al., 2017).

2.3 The Influence of Feedback on the Students' Progress and Motivation:

Motivation seems to be largely affected by the feedback which learners receive. A review conducted by Fong and Schallert (2023) investigated the relationship between feedback and emotions through focusing on asking the students five questions. These questions were related to what feedback means to the students, how they feel about it, how they can make any progress from it, whether they really want to make any progress through feedback and whether they receive support by others and the context where feedback takes place. The study found that receiving feedback is motivating on the part of the students. However, the study also noted that when the learners accept and understand the goal of feedback they receive on their work, they will have a better understanding of their own motivation. This will help them to improve their performance using the received feedback (Fong and Schallert, 2023). In fact, when teachers use the suitable feedback strategies, they can enhance the motivation in their students. Thus, evaluation in education, in general, is a process that includes the collection, analysis and interpretation of information in order to make decisions about the achievement of the students (Tatiana and Valentina, 2017). Many teachers also use assessment and evaluation in order to motivate their students to work harder. When teachers are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of their students, they become more capable of knowing how to motivate them (Cheng, Rogers, and Hu, 2004).

According to Williams (2011), intrinsic assessment originated from the work of Bloom in the 1960s, who investigated the influence of feedback on the students in the classroom. While many of Bloom's reviews investigated the influence of assessment on learning, they also revealed that assessment can have significant positive influence on learning, taking into consideration a number of conditions. Bloom, along with his graduate students at the University of Chicago suggested that the "normal distribution of student outcomes was not a natural outcome, but caused by the failure of the instruction to recognize differences in learners." (Williams, 2011). Thus, Bloom proposed that one-to-one tutoring can be very effective for their progress and described it as the "gold standard" that education systems can utilise. However, he also noted that this method cannot be utilised for public education, where the number of students can be big. Thus, he suggested that there should be methods for group instruction (Williams, 2011). Further, Bloom explained that the reason that one-to-one tutoring, for example, can be very effective is because the tutor can spot the errors in the students' performance and can assist through explaining as well as follow-up (Williams, 2011).

In fact, Williams (2011), Crooks, (1988) and Kluger and denisi (1996) agree that the influence of specific feedback that guides the learners about what can be improved and how it can be improved is more effective than giving students grades or scores about their performance. In his review about formal classroom-based assessment, Crooks (1988) explained that there is much emphasis on grading and very little emphasis on helping students in learning. This seems to reduce motivation and trigger anxiety in students. As a result, this can negatively affect students' attempts and efforts to progress (Crooks, 1988 p. 468 cited in Williams, 2011),

According to Henderson et al. (2019) feedback has a number of purposes. It does not only guide the students' effort for future progress, it also assists students in understanding how the decision about their grade was made and how they can spot the errors in their understanding and skill. As for teachers, feedback is the main means of communication with students. As for

educational institutions, feedback is an essential constituent of showing their academic quality (Henderson et al., 2019 cited in Winstone and Carless, 2021).

2.4 Students Active Engagement and Use of Feedback:

Providing feedback to the students cannot drastically change their performance, achievement or skills with no cooperation on the part of the student or what Winstone, et al. (2017) refer to as “proactive recipience”, as they mean the agentic use of engagement in feedback. The study also found that when learners are not able to be actively engaged with the provided feedback, this can be due to many reasons, which are not necessarily related to the way the feedback was provided. Thus, the changes on the way the feedback is provided on the content of the feedback might be very effective. This means that in order to improve the way students receive feedback the students as well as the feedback giver should be aware of the problems in the feedback and find solutions to these problems (Winstone, et al., 2017). This can probably be done through dialogic feedback, which Wood (2023) discussed where communication takes place between the feedback provider and the learners.

In the same way, Grundmann, Scheibe and Epstude (2021) also found that negative feedback is noticed to increase error awareness in students. Thus, the dilemma with negative feedback is in the negative emotions in triggers, such as sadness, anger and disappointment, on the one hand, and the subsequent actions that it also triggers in students in order for them to progress (Grundmann, Scheibe and Epstude, 2021).

Furthermore, the negative emotions that students are expected to feel as a result of negative feedback, such as anxiety or apprehension, can also be transformed into positive emotions, such as enthusiasm or enjoyment. This can happen when there is a safe learning environment and when learners receive feedback in a dialogic manner (Hill and West, 2019). In the same way, in their study on Kuwaiti ESL learners, Alqahtani and Al-enzi (2011) suggested that feedback should be conducted with communication. Similarly, Winstone et al. (2017) explain that feedback can be initiated by the feedback provider or even by the receiver. In other words, the feedback provider can provide feedback when they think it is needed and sometimes, the receiver can seek assistance. As a result, the communication between the sender and the receiver seems to be the key for effective communication (Winstone et al., 2017) It is also worth mentioning that one of the main challenges to feedback is the lack of communication between the students and the teachers. While feedback is expected to be a response to a pedagogic area, students might disagree with the point, which can trigger some negative feeling, which in turn will affect their future performance (Ali, Ahmed and Rose, 2018). This seems to be closely related to Wood (2023) in his discussion of dialogic feedback. He explained that dialogues of feedback through technology, for example, can foster the students’ ability to ask for feedback, seeking further information or even challenge or doubt certain feedback in order for them to understand the feedback more effectively and reach their goals (Wood, 2023). In the context of dialogic feedback, Wood also explained that feedback via technology allows the students to have better understanding of the feedback provided by the teachers. This is due to the fact that students feel encouraged to questions between the teacher and the student and it also lowers the formality level (Perkins, Roe, & Furze, 2024). As a result, students might feel more comfortable to ask questions and ask for help. Furthermore, the feasibility of technology can also make communication better as barriers are eliminated as it is easier in the present day to provide feedback via technology (Wood, 2020).

However, Carless and Boud (2018) also note that in order for feedback to be effective, students need to have comprehension and understanding of what feedback is in order for it to be effective. In other words, they should have some appreciation for feedback, make judgments, have control over their emotions and act in accordance with the feedback (Carless and Boud, 2018).

Thus, after reviewing the literature, it can be concluded that positive and negative feedback are both used by teachers. Each type of feedback has its own influence on the students. While negative feedback can trigger negative emotions, this might make learners more engaged in learning. However, other studies found that positive feedback is effective in students’ progress as they have enhanced self-esteem. Many types of feedback are used by the teacher. Some of them can be more effective than others. Dialogic feedback is thought to be one of the most effective. The relationship between the influence of each type of feedback, on the one hand, and their effects on the progress of the students will all be analysed in the following chapters.

3. Methodology:

3.1 Research Design:

The current research used the qualitative method as the main objective of the current research is to find out the way students report their feelings. This requires a deep understanding of their narratives. A qualitative research is usually utilised when the research question seeks to find answers about the experiences, meaning, attitude and outlook of the participants. Thus, when the required data cannot be transformed into numbers and figures, the qualitative study is expected to meet the needs of the research questions (Hammarberg, Kirkman and de Lacey, 2016). Accordingly, since the current research investigates the emotions of the participants and their emotional reaction to the feedback they receive, it seems that the qualitative method is

the most suitable method. Further, the interpretive philosophy of the current research, as suggested by Maxwell (2004), required following the qualitative method. The study suggested that the investigation of the interpretive perspective of a social phenomenon necessitates the utilisation of qualitative research since the illustration of the participants' views can be best described through the use of this method. Further, it is worth mentioning that disregarding this aspect might cause misinterpretations of the causal conclusions (Maxwell, 2004).

Qualitative research has a number of advantages. Rahman (2020) explains that this approach provides a comprehensive description of the experiences, attitudes and feelings of the participants in order to interpret these descriptions. The current study makes use of this advantage as it requires understanding the feelings and attitudes of Kuwaiti university students towards feedback. Another advantage that Rahman (2020) explains is that this approach provides a comprehensive understanding of the human experience in a given context, the current study attempted to investigate the experience of students in the context of university. Third, this approach also provides an understanding of the different voices, meanings and incidents of different people. In accordance with this, the current study attempted to understand the different experiences of different students. Fourth, the qualitative research investigates the inner experiences of the participants. This study also investigated the inner experiences of Kuwaiti university students (Rahman, 2020). Accordingly, the current research depicts the incidents from the views and understanding of the subjects. Further, the descriptions and explanations are related to a specific situation. Further, the findings can be described as subjective and might not be generalisable. Further, the research is also context specific i.e. Kuwaiti universities (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007 p.103).

The qualitative method is sometimes judged by the positivist standards. These judgments include describing the qualitative method as being a soft, inaccurate, unreliable, ungeneralisable and unverifiable (Aldag and Stearns, 1988; Lindlof, 1995 cited in Taylor and Trujillo, 2001). In the same way, the quantitative view of the qualitative studies sees the qualitative research as being unreliable since it includes small samples which are not sufficient to make generalisations. This view also sees the qualitative research as subjective rather than objective (Hammarberg, Kirkman and de Lacey, 2016). However, it is important to note that these judgements seem to be lacking reflection and also tend to suppose that the positivist epistemology is the only accurate approach to investigating organisational phenomena (Taylor and Trujillo, 2001).

A qualitative research is also expected to take validity and reliability into consideration. In accordance with Bryman (2016), the current research took into consideration internal and external reliability as well as internal and external validity. In other words, Bryman (2016) explains that external reliability is the extent to which the research can be replicated. The current research highlights that if the research is to be replicated, the same circumstances need to be taken into consideration in any future similar study. On the other hand, internal reliability is when there is more than one researcher conducting the research, the members should agree on how they view the data. However, since the current research was conducted by only one researcher, the internal reliability did not constitute a problem. The current research attempted to keep the agreement between the way the research is conducted and the theoretical framework presented as Bryman (2016) explains in his internal validity.

Further, the current research attempted to highlight the extent to which the external validity is applicable. According to Bryman (2016) external validity is to what extent the results can be applicable in different contexts or how generalizable the results can be. In this study, the results of the research are expected to be the same in similar contexts. However, this does not mean that external validity is inapplicable in other contexts.

3.2 Data Collection:

The current research attempted to use a combination of convenience and purposive sampling. Convenience sampling is a common method in qualitative research. It is a non-probability method which can be described as a less objective method than probability techniques. In his type of sampling the participants are selected by the researcher as the selection of the participants depends on their motivation to participate (Stratton, 2021). The selected participants in convenience sampling also share some specific criteria including the access to the participants, their geographical and time availability and their desire to participate. For this reason, it is also sometimes called accidental sampling as the selection of the participants can happen simply because the participants are situated close to where the researcher is conducting the collection of the data (Etikan, Musa and Alkassim, 2016). The research also used purposive sampling. Bryman (2016) explains that it is a probability sampling where the researcher chooses the participants. Taking the research questions into consideration, they were the main guidelines for selecting the participants. The inclusion criteria in the current research are undergraduate, Kuwaiti, student participants at one of the universities in Kuwait. The convenience sampling method is also low-cost, time saving and simple in comparison with other methods of sampling (Stratton, 2021). Another advantage of this technique is that the participants are usually "readily available" (Etikan, Musa and Alkassim, 2016). However, it is also worth mentioning that convenience sampling can also be biased and does not represent the whole population. (Etikan, Musa and Alkassim, 2016). As for purposive sampling, it is the intentional choice of participants depending on the qualities of participants (Etikan, Musa and Alkassim, 2016). Accordingly, the current research utilised a combination of both convenience as well as purposive sampling in investigating the influence of feedback on the

emotions of Kuwaiti university students through following the homogeneous sampling where the participants share their traits including their age, life experience and culture (Etikan, Musa and Alkassim, 2016). This is due to the fact that the participants are all Kuwaiti university students whose ages are between 18 and 25.

3.2.1 Research Tools:

The current research attempted to use interviews in data collection. Rowley, (2012) explained that interviews are usually used in qualitative studies when the researcher attempts to have an understanding of the feelings, attitudes, opinions and experiences of the participants. Interviews can generally be conducted with one person (individual interviews) or with groups (focus groups). As for the structure of the questions, they can be structured (the exact question is asked to all the participants), semi-structured or unstructured interviews. The most common kind of interview is the semi-structured interviews, where the questions vary depending on the response of the participants, as in the case of the current research (Rowley, 2012). Semi-structured interviews are used in qualitative studies when the researcher aims to find answers about a focused topic (Hammarberg, Kirkman and de Lacey, 2016). In fact, interviews are useful when the objectives of the research require an understanding of the experiences of the participants (Rowley, 2012). The research attempted to collect data through conducting individual interviews with 10 Kuwaiti university students and ask them about their experiences with feedback in assessment and how feedback can affect their emotions and consequently influence their reaction and engagement with feedback. However, only 6 participants were reached and interviewed. The research conducted semi-structured interviews with the selected Kuwaiti students via Teams. Semi-structured interviewing was selected as there is a general framework that the study is attempting to follow and the details are expected to vary. In other words, the focused topic is the influence of feedback and emotions triggered by feedback on the progress of the learner. The details and the follow up questions will vary depending on the response. Accordingly, each interview in the current research took about one hour of the participant's time. However, the duration of the interview largely depended on the participants' responses. The questions of the interview mainly asked the participant students about their learning experience in relation to the influence of feedback in assessment on their emotions. This included what type of feedback in assessment can have a positive influence and what type of feedback in assessment can have a negative influence, what kind of feedback makes them more engaged in learning. Since the research is in English, the interviews were also preferred to be conducted in English.

3.2.2 Participants:

The participants of the study are Kuwaiti students at Kuwaiti universities. Further, the research attempted to interview students of both genders (3 males and 3 females). The students were those who receive feedback on their study at one of the universities in Kuwait. Their ages varied between 18 and 25.

3.3 Data Analysis:

The current research analysed data through thematic analysis. This method of analysis analyses and interprets pattern which are spotted in the responses in the qualitative method. These spotted patterns are called themes. Each group of codes were grouped into themes. The codes are the minimal units that are spotted in the data. Codes are usually closely associated with the research question and they are the basis for the themes. It is worth mentioning that thematic analysis is applicable in many theoretical frameworks and research paradigms (Clarke, Braun and Hayfield, 2015). After conducting the interviews, the collected data was analysed through inductive thematic analysis. This was done through finding themes among the students' answers and then generate codes in order to analyse the collected data. The goal of thematic analysis is not only to brief the content of data, but also to distinguish and interpret the main aspects of the data led by the research questions. One of the main advantages of thematic analysis is its flexibility in relation to the research question, size of the sample and the method of data collection (Clarke, Braun and Hayfield, 2015).

3.4 Limitation:

One of the potential limitations of the study is the small number of participants. This can influence the results of the study as these results cannot necessarily be generalised. Another issue that can affect the generalisations of the study is that the study is conducted on Kuwaiti university students. Thus, the results of the study might not be generalised on other nationalities. However, the questions of the semi-structured interviews attempted to avoid questions that are only associated with the case of Kuwaiti students. In this way, the findings can at least be applicable on Arab university students, in general.

3.5 Ethical Considerations:

There are a number of ethical issues that the research attempted to consider. First, informed consent is one of the most important issues that the researcher needs to guarantee. Participants should voluntarily provide their consent before the start of data collection. Further, the researcher has to accept that any of the participants have the right to withdraw from the research at any point and for any reason. This was also stated in the informed consent and information sheets. Participants also have to be aware of this right as they do not have to give a justification for their withdrawal (British Educational Research Association, 2018).

This was done through clearly stating that in the information sheet and consent form. Further, the researcher has to do their best in order to guarantee that the participants of the study are aware of the reason for their participation and why their participation is important, what they are required to do, what will happen to the data they will give, how the data will be used, and who will receive the report of the analysed data (British Educational Research Association, 2018). Accordingly, the study attempted to guarantee to inform the participants that their data will be protected during the study and will be disposed of after the end of the research. This was clearly stated in the information sheet that was sent by email. Moreover, since anonymity and confidentiality are two principles are non-negotiable in any type of research, researchers need to acknowledge and guarantee the privacy, confidentiality and anonymity of their participants. Accordingly, all the participants in this study were sent copies of information sheets via email which inform them about the details of the research and informed them about the aims and objectives of the research. They were also sent a copy of informed consent in order to make them aware of the details of what will happen to the data they provide. They were also notified that they have the right to withdraw from the research at any time they want with no potential consequences. Further, their names are not revealed as they are referred to as numbers such as P1, P2, P3 etc. Further, there were no questions that were expected to cause harm or discomfort to any of the participants. In addition, if any of the participants were thought to show any kind of discomfort, the question was planned to be skipped, and they were told that they do not have to continue with the interview as they have the right to withdraw.

Data is held in accordance with The UK Data Protection Act (1998) and the GDPR, and since the National Foundation for Educational Research suggests the use of protecting passwords (British Educational Research Association, 2018), the interviews were recorded on the mobile recorder of the researcher and then were immediately moved to an encrypted device at the University of Bangor and will be stored on the University's Drive until the end of the research. All documentation and recordings will be destroyed after the end of the research.

As the British Educational Research Association (2018) stated, researchers are required to securely reserve data from any publication and must not, not any way, break the confidentiality and anonymity agreement.

4. Findings:

After conducting the interviews, they were transcribed. Since the interviews were recorded, the responses of the participants were later transcribed and these transcripts were carefully read. As a result, there were many codes spotted in the answers and these codes were implicitly included in the interview questions and in the research questions of the study. These codes were later manually grouped into themes and, thus, thematic analysis was conducted in order to reach the final conclusions. Accordingly, the spotted codes are:

Self-confidence, motivation, demotivation, sadness, disappointment, anger, negative feedback, positive feedback, detailed feedback, short feedback, general feedback dialogic feedback, work improvement and student progress.

Thus, these codes can be grouped into three major themes as follows:

1. Reactions to Feedback:

This theme includes the following codes: Self-confidence, motivation, demotivation, sadness, disappointment and anger.

2. Types of Feedback:

This theme includes the following codes: negative feedback, positive feedback, neutral feedback, detailed feedback, short feedback, general feedback and dialogic feedback

3. Effects on Students' Performance:

This theme includes: work improvement and student progress.

4.1 Reactions to Feedback :

4.1.1 Self-confidence:

The current study found that self-confidence is enhanced when the feedback is positive. It the sense that the students know that their work is acknowledged. P5 linked high self- confidence with effective feedback. He stated that if the student is self-confident and hardworking, they will be motivated about feedback. P6 also mentioned that she feels self-confident when she receives positive feedback.

4.1.2 Motivation:

The current study found that feedback can make them feel motivated to learn and work as it leads them where and how to work. P1 and P3 explained that they feel motivated about the feedback they receive when the feedback seems "related". P1 explained

that feedback can trigger her motivation when the teacher gives the feedback about what she was expecting the comments on. P3 explained that she feels motivated when the teacher is specific in the feedback “the teacher needs to be specific when they criticize my work.” Further, P5 and P6 explained that they feel motivated when they generally receive positive feedback.

4.1.3 Demotivation:

The current study found that students feel demotivated when the feedback is not very clear or confusing. P4 explained that he feels demotivated when the feedback is vague. He linked this closely with the experience of the teacher

4.1.4 Sadness:

The study is found that the feeling of sadness is important when receiving feedback since it motivates the learners to make changes about their work. For example, P4 and P5 explained the importance of feeling sad in order to have the desire to work harder. P4 explained: “We need to feel sad, disappointed and angry sometimes so we know how work and improve.”

4.1.5 Disappointment:

The study found that although students tend to feel disappointed when they receive negative feedback, they still find it useful in some occasions as they know how to improve. P1 noted that she feels disappointed when she receives negative feedback on an assignment she has worked hard on. She stated: “I feel disappointment, especially if I have worked hard. And sometimes if even if the feedback is fair, but has many negative comments I still feel disappointed.” P3, P4 and P5 explained that although they feel disappointed when they receive negative feedback, they can have benefit from it when it is clear. P6 explained that negative feedback can make her feel disappointed at first, but later this disappointment changes into a challenge.

4.1.6 Anger:

The study found that students tend to feel angry when they receive negative feedback. However, this feeling makes them want to work harder as P4 explained. P1 also explained that she feels angry when the teacher gives negative feedback about issues that she considers “unrelated”. She explained: “when I mention an idea for example, a secondary point, just to make my claim stronger.. a correct one in my assignment. But the teacher thinks that this claim is not strong enough or maybe this claim is from an old citation or whatever reason. I feel angry. I know they are right but this is not closely related to the assignment question. In situations like this yes I feel angry and demotivated.” Further, P5 explained that he feels angry when he receives negative feedback about an assignment he worked hard on, but this anger fades away and he becomes more motivated to work harder.

4.1.7 Stress:

The study found that the level of stress in the students becomes higher when they feel that the feedback is unfair for personal reasons. For example, P1 also explained that she feels stressed and anxious when the feedback given is only to spot mistakes rather than for the sake of improving the work or when the teacher wants to feel “superior”. However, P1 and P4 clarified that if the feedback acknowledges the good points in the work, they do not feel stressed, especially if the teacher starts with the positive points. In the same way P2, P3 and P4 explained that he feels stressed when he knows that the feedback is personal rather than professional.

The study also found that the level of stress about feedback is highest at the start of reading the feedback such as P6, as the feeling of responsibility towards her work make the stress levels higher. In the same way, P2 explained that it is human nature as he knows he is being assessed. Similarly, P4 stated: “the teachers really need to remember that when we read their feedback we are usually stressed because someone is judging us”

The level of stress in students is also higher when the students work hard and still they receive negative feedback, whether it is fair or unfair. P1, P2 and P4 explained that she feels stressed when they have worked hard and the feedback is still negative.

Further, the study found that the level of stress is high in learners about their feedback when they think that the teacher misunderstands an idea mentioned in their work as P5 explained or when the teacher provides too many irrelevant details as P6 explained.

4.2 Types of Feedback:

4.2.1 Negative Feedback:

The current study found that negative feedback is important in improving the work of the students when it specifies the problem and suggests the solutions, although it is not always preferable as it might not always be objective. P1 and P2 explained that although they do not always prefer to receive negative feedback, they thought that it is important in order to know where the weaknesses are. P1, P2, P3 and P5 also highlighted that the attitude of the teacher is very important. P1 stated: “if I know that the teacher is giving the feedback to make me feel bad, then I don’t think I will improve.” P3 also explained: “negative feedback

definitely has its good influence on my progress and achievement but it has to be objective". In the same way, P4 explained that negative feedback can be useful when the teacher is experienced and objective. However, when the feedback is not objective or the teacher is inexperienced, he will feel confused, stressed and distracted. Further, P5 explained that negative feedback is essential for making progress. However, if it does not clearly state what needs to be changed in the work is ineffective feedback. P6 also mentioned that she feels challenged when she receives negative feedback. She stated: "When it's negative, it's normal to feel bad. For example, stressed, disappointed, insecure, demotivated. This is normal at the beginning."

4.2.2 Positive Feedback:

P1 and P4 said that positive feedback will make them want to improve. However, P1 noted that it is also important to receive negative feedback. The important issue is that the feedback needs to be relevant. Similarly, P4 explained that positive feedback is not enough. She needs to know what needs to be changed. Further, P5 also stressed that the first comment should always be positive as it will give the first impression about the feedback. He explained that the goal of feedback should be to improve rather than criticise. P6 highlighted how positive feedback can boost her self-confidence. She stated: "As for the positive feedback, of course positive emotions will be triggered, like self-confidence, motivation happiness, sense of achievement etc."

4.2.3 Neutral Feedback:

The current study found that neutral feedback seems to have some effective influence on the learners in order for them to work harder or progress. P2 stated that neutral feedback is not very effective in improving his work. He needs to know the details of the feedback in order for him to know what he has to do to improve his work as he said: "I need clear feedback". On the other hand, P3 thought that positive feedback alone is not enough and negative feedback alone is also not enough as it arouses the negative feelings. She concluded that negative feedback in neutral terms can be the most effective among all types of feedback: "positive feedback alone is not effective. We actually need both. The neutral feedback you mentioned is also maybe effective because I think it does not arouse negative feelings in me. So maybe I would say that negative feedback in neutral terms is the best probably." P5 explained that the negative feedback that does not use harsh language can be the most effective.

4.2.4 Detailed Feedback:

The research also found that detailed feedback is important for the students as P2 and P3 explained. However, the details that are not closely relative will have a very negative effect on the students and their desire to work and progress. P1, P3, P4, P5 and P6 explained how it is essential to understand the comments, but when the comments are "off-point", as P1 says, the effect will be negative on her. The study also found that detailed feedback is a double-edged sword as the details are vital but they can also cause the students to be demotivated to learn when the details are not closely relevant. In fact, the current research found that this depends in the experience of the teacher. For instance, P1, P4 and P6 noted that effective detailed feedback will depend on the experience of the teacher, P1 stated: "this largely depends on the experience of the teacher. They should know how to give the feedback". P6 also explained that the details are more useful when they discuss the same point rather mentioning too many unrelated details.

4.2.5 Short Feedback:

The study found that concise feedback that is specific is very effective in attracting the student's attentions. Many of the participants agreed that detailed feedback will make them lose interest such as P3, especially if the details are not all related. P5 also stated: "detailed feedback that doesn't have repetition I think is fine."

4.2.6 General Feedback:

The study found that although general feedback can sometimes have some positive effects, the majority of the participants thought that it is more confusing than effective. P2 explained that he needs to know the details of the feedback: "General feedback is more confusing than useful. For example, in this point you should have provided an example. Or in this point you should have been more critical rather than saying that the general work needed more examples or should have been more critical." In the same way, P6 explained that feedback can be an inspiration for future work unless it is too general or vague. In this case it is more confusing than useful.

4.2.7 Dialogic Feedback:

The current research found that students do not always prefer to receive dialogic feedback. This depends on the competency of the student about the subject. For example, P1 explained that she prefers dialogic feedback when she is competent about the subject discussed. However, when she has not done sufficient research, she just prefers to receive the feedback and edit her work accordingly.

On the other hand, some students prefer to receive dialogic feedback in order for them to understand the details of the feedback. For example, P2, P3, P4, P5 and P6 explained that he needs to understand the details of the comments and feedback

he receives. P3 and P6 specified that sometimes there might be some miscommunication, the teacher or the student, can misinterpret an idea. For that reason, having dialogic feedback is essential for her.

4.3 Effects on Students' Performance :

4.3.1 Work Improvement:

The current research found that that the desire of learners to make improvements about their work is vitally related to the type of feedback given. The study found that positive feedback tends to enhance the desire of the students to improve. For example, P1 stated: "I would say that the positive feedback will make me want to continue working and progressing. But if I only receive positive feedback, I will think that I don't need to change anything about the way I work or do research. So negative feedback is also important." In the same way, P2 and P3 also thought that positive feedback will let them know that they are on the right track. On the other hand, P2 and P3 also explained that negative feedback will also inform them what needs to be changed in order to improve. However, P3 highlighted that constructive criticism is important for work improvement. She stated: "It is very important to have the perspective of more proficient and competent person to see what you're doing." P5 also explained that he likes to know what other people think of his work so he can see it from a different perspective in order to improve it. In the same way P6 explained how she takes feedback seriously and feels responsible for her work.

4.3.2 Student Progress:

The data of this study reveal that feedback can have a major effect on the progress of the learners as it guides them how to improve. P2 explained that "Feedback in general can lead me how to work. It makes me motivated. I know better how to work later." Further, P2 also mentioned that in order to improve, negative emotions need to be triggered. P3 and P5 also explained that they need to have some kind of evidence for the comment so that she can improve their work. P3 and P6 also mentioned the importance of detailed comments in their progress.

5. Discussion:

In accordance with the framework suggested by Winstone et al. (2017) regarding the components of successful feedback process, the current study has a number of intersections with it. For example, the current study describes some aspects of effective feedback, the emotions of the students and the way they receive this feedback and, finally, the way the feedback provider gives the feedback regarding their objectivity, experience and feedback literacy.

The results of the current study were similar to previous studies that investigated assessment and feedback. For example, similar to Rowe (2017) and Gass and Mackey (2006 cited in Al-Nwaiem, 2012), the current study linked effective feedback with progress in the students. Further, as Rowe (2017) found, the current study also found a significant effect of feedback on the emotions of the students.

In the context of effective teaching, this study adds to Rowe (2017), who found that effective teaching requires effective feedback, that teachers need to have some experience about feedback in order to teach and give feedback effectively. This is quite similar to Carless and Winstone (2023) who suggested that teachers need to have feedback literacy in order to provide effective feedback.

Although the current study found many advantages for positive feedback, the study did not investigate the relationship between positive feedback and achievement which Pekrun and Stephens (2010 cited in Rowe, 2017) explained. However, the current study implied the potential of better achievement in students when they receive positive feedback as they become more motivated, less stressed and more self-confident about their desire to work harder and improve their work. The enhanced self-confidence and motivation by positive feedback which the current study spotted is very similar to Wong and Waring (2009 cited in Al-Nwaiem, 2012) and Rowe, Fitness and Wood (2014). Further, the current study intersects with the findings of Kluger and denisi (1996). However, while they mentioned that high grades enhance the ego in the learners, the current study focused on the positive effect of positive feedback on self-confidence in learners. Another intersection is the positive influence of specific feedback on the performance of the students, which also agrees with Williams (2011) and Crooks, (1988). However, the current study does not agree with Kluger and denisi (1996) that emotions, positive and negative, of the students should not be triggered in order to allow better performance.

Different from Rowe (2017), the current study found that negative emotions, such as anger, triggered by negative feedback are more beneficial than harmful as students become more motivated to study harder and prove themselves. This transformation of emotions, sadness to motivation or disappointment to motivation, is quite similar to Hill and West (2019). As their study explained how the safe environment is important for the transformation of emotions, the current study highlighted that in order for the negative emotions to improve performance and progress through enhancing motivation, the feedback has to be objective and impersonal. This is also similar to Fong and Schallert, (2023) as they mentioned that when the students understand

the feedback, they will have higher motivation. For that reason, even when negative emotions are triggered in students, they will be more motivated because they understand the feedback and are aware of their mistakes. Understanding the feedback is, in fact, an essential part of making use of it, which Carless and Boud (2018) also explained. For that reason, even when the students have these negative emotions, when they understand the feedback that triggered these emotions, they will tend to work harder to have better performance. For example, while Motro, Comer and Lenaghan (2021) suggested that sadness makes the students have better future performance, the current study agreed that sadness and negative emotions in general are essential for the students to work harder. This is the dilemma discussed by Grundmann, Scheibe and Epstude (2021), who mentioned that negative emotions might be vital for students' motivation to improve their performance. In fact, this idea is also quite similar to Raftery and Bizer, (2009). Similar to the same study, the current study did not find a significant effect of neutral feedback on the performance of the students, as no significant emotions are aroused.

As Dawson et al. (2023) suggested, the current study found that many students tend to take feedback seriously and attempt to work harder. However, the current study also highlighted that students tend to work harder and attempt to make progress when they think that the teacher is experienced and objective. This means that the students will have better progress and development when they feel that the feedback is not personal. Thus, this complements what Winstone, et al. (2017) and Hill, et al. (2021) about the way students view feedback, in the sense that the feedback is not about them, it is rather about the work itself.

As Wiliam (2013) suggested, the current study agrees that students need to have some kind of evidence for the feedback they receive and they need to have details for each comment in the feedback. For that reason, the current study agrees with Carless and Winstone (2023), Hill and West (2019), Alqahtani and Al-enzi (2011), Ali, Ahmed and Rose (2018) and Wood (2023) that effective feedback has to be communicative and dialogic. Students need to have the right to discuss and criticise the comment and feedback they receive. This is also similar to Henderson et al. (2019 cited in Winstone and Carless, 2021), who suggested that students have the right to know the reasons behind grades and comments, and also similar to Winstone, et al. (2017), who suggested that active engagement of students is very effective for better performance. While Wood (2020, 2023) highlighted the importance of technology in providing the feedback for the sake of lowering formality and ability to have better communication, the current study did not specify the means of providing feedback. Although feedback can be oral or written, on paper or technology mediated, the study implies that in the present day, written feedback is probably almost always technology mediated.

6. Conclusion:

The influence of feedback on the process of learning, progress, performance, and students' emotions seems to be significant. In fact, it is one of the major roles of the teachers in and outside the classroom to understand this influence and provide feedback accordingly. Each type of feedback will have a different influence on the students and it is important that the teacher is aware of these differences. The study found that positive feedback will trigger positive emotional reactions such as enhanced self-confidence and high motivation. On the other hand, negative feedback can trigger negative emotional reactions such as sadness, disappointment, stress, anger and demotivation. This study highlighted the importance of positive and negative feedback on the emotions of the students. An issue that is worth highlighting in this study is that although there are many negative emotional reactions that can be triggered by some negative feedback, these negative reactions can later transform into positive reactions. For example, the study found that although students tend to feel stressed, disappointed, angry, sad or demotivated when they receive negative feedback, they still find it very useful for them to improve and make progress in their learning. In other words, this negative emotional reactions of stress, disappointment, anger, sadness and demotivation can transform into motivation. On the other hand, although students like being praised in the feedback, in order for them to have enhanced self-confidence, they also look for the comments in the teacher's feedback that tell them how to improve. In other words, not only do they tend to find positive feedback useful in order for them to know that they are on the right track, they also want to know where the weaknesses are and what needs to be changed in their work. Neutral feedback also has its influence on the students. For example, it is beneficial when teacher provides informative feedback that probably does not trigger any specific emotions. That means the students understand what needs to be changed in their work without having neither positive nor negative emotions.

Further, other types of feedback also seem to have different effects on the learners. In addition to the positive, negative and neutral feedback, other types of feedback were spotted in this study such as detailed feedback, general feedback, short feedback and dialogic feedback. For example, despite the fact that detailed feedback provides much information for the learners about their work, they sometimes find it stressful to read as the small and numerous details can imply that the teacher is attempting to find more mistakes. In this case, it is important to note that this stress will not transform into motivation as the learners are stressed because of, the what the learners finds, irrelevant details. On the other hand, general feedback is not preferred by the students as they do not have specific understanding of what has to be edited in their work. Short feedback that is focused received much praise and preference from the participants of this study. As for dialogic feedback, it was the one that was most preferred by the students. This type of feedback gives the students freedom to express, doubt and criticise any point that the

feedback provider mentions. Thus, this study concluded that the students consider that the experience of the teacher is of high importance in order to make feedback as effective as possible.

Thus, in answering the research questions of the current research, the answers can be as follows:

1. How do students report feeling about the feedback they receive in assessment?

Students tend to have different emotions towards the feedback they receive. They feel confident and motivated when they receive positive feedback. However, they feel stressed, angry, demotivated, disappointed and sad when they receive negative feedback. However, students have these strong negative emotions when they think that they have worked hard. Further, students also tend to feel demotivated when they receive detailed irrelevant feedback. On the other hand, short feedback that is focused seems to be more effective for the students as they feel more motivated to read it and follow it. Further, they also feel motivated when the feedback is dialogic where they can discuss their views with the feedback provider.

2. How do students' emotions about feedback influence their active engagement and use of feedback?

When different emotions are triggered due to the feedback given, students react differently according to the situation. For example, negative emotions will most probably make students work harder when the feedback is objective. This means students report that they will attempt to improve their work and make more progress in learning. Dialogic feedback also makes them want to prove their ideas, which facilitates their progress and work development. On the other hand, positive emotions which are triggered by positive feedback will acknowledge students work and make them more motivated to maintain their high quality work.

7. Implications and Recommendations:

It is worth mentioning that this study has an implication that students also need to have some kind of feedback literacy. This means that they need to be aware of the aims, procedures and types of feedback and remember that the feedback is about their work rather than on them personally.

There are also a number of recommendations that this study can provide. First, since the current study found a significant link between the efficacy of feedback and the experience of the teachers, this study recommends that educational institutions should provide teachers with feedback literacy in order for them to provide effective and objective feedback. Feedback can be oral or written. Another recommendation is that educational institutions need to mainstream formative feedback to allow more dialogic feedback for the students. This is due to the fact that students can hand in their work and receive feedback on it without having the opportunity to discuss their perspective. Furthermore, since the study is a qualitative one, it can be considered an insight for future more extensive, comprehensive and more generalisable studies that can be applied on all types of learners and reach conclusions that are valid and reliable in all contexts. Thus, future studies are recommended to be done on a larger sample. In addition, the current study recommends that there should be future research investigating the influence of different types of feedback on the achievement of the students. This study attempted to highlight the potential influence of feedback on students' achievement through investigating their perspective on the work improvement and their own progress when they receive different types of feedback. Accordingly, future research can be mixed researches making accurate measures of the student's achievement and their own views on the feedback they receive.

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ORCID iD (if any)

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