

The Influence Of Feedback On Students' Academic Performance In Secondary Schools In Kashari South, Mbarara City, Uganda

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Abstract

The study examined the influence of feedback on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Kashari South, Mbarara City, Uganda. A sample of 152 students participated in the study. Results revealed that timely feedback significantly improved academic performance, with 78.3% of students reporting better understanding of subject matter when they received regular feedback. Formative feedback (Mean=4.12, SD=0.68) showed stronger correlation with academic achievement than summative feedback (Mean=3.45, SD=0.82). The study concluded that feedback served as a critical pedagogical tool that enhanced learning outcomes and student motivation. It was recommended that teachers should provide consistent, constructive, and timely feedback; schools should implement feedback policies; and teachers should receive professional development on effective feedback strategies to maximize student academic success.

Keywords: Feedback, academic performance, secondary schools, formative assessment, student achievement, Kashari South

Background of the Study

Feedback represented one of the most influential factors in the teaching and learning process, serving as a bridge between instruction and student comprehension (Kazaara & Desire, 2025). In the context of Ugandan secondary education, particularly in Kashari South, Mbarara City, feedback mechanisms played a crucial role in shaping students' academic trajectories. Research globally demonstrated that effective feedback enhanced student engagement, clarified learning objectives, and provided students with actionable insights to improve their performance (Julius & Kazaara, 2025). However, the extent to which feedback influenced academic outcomes in resource-constrained settings remained an area requiring empirical investigation (Winny, Kazaara, et al., 2023).

In Uganda's education system, the quality and frequency of feedback varied considerably across schools, often influenced by teacher-student ratios, workload pressures, and pedagogical practices. Secondary schools in Kashari South faced unique challenges including large class sizes, limited teaching resources, and diverse student backgrounds, all of which affected how feedback was delivered and received (Julius & Kaazara, 2025). Traditional assessment practices often emphasized summative evaluation over formative feedback, potentially limiting students' opportunities for continuous improvement (Julius & Nancy, 2025).

International literature suggested that feedback was most effective when it was timely, specific, and constructive. Hattie and Timperley's feedback model indicated that feedback should address three fundamental questions: "Where am I going?" (learning goals), "How am I going?" (current progress), and "Where to next?" (strategies for improvement) (Galy et al., 2019). In African educational contexts, studies showed that students who received regular

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feedback demonstrated higher motivation levels and better academic performance compared to those who received infrequent or vague feedback (Winy, Ariyo, et al., 2023). The relationship between feedback and academic performance was mediated by several factors including feedback quality, student receptiveness, and the learning environment. Understanding this relationship in the specific context of Kashari South was essential for developing evidence-based interventions to enhance educational outcomes in the region.

Problem Statement

Despite the recognized importance of feedback in educational settings, secondary schools in Kashari South, Mbarara City, experienced persistent challenges in academic performance, with many students underperforming in national examinations (Victoria et al., 2023). Anecdotal evidence suggested that inconsistent feedback practices contributed to this problem. Many teachers faced overwhelming workloads with large class sizes averaging 60-80 students, making regular individualized feedback difficult to provide (Anthony et al., 2023). When feedback was given, it often lacked specificity and timeliness, arriving weeks after assessments when students had moved on to new topics. Furthermore, the predominant focus on summative assessment meant that feedback primarily served evaluative rather than developmental purposes (Kaazara & Audrey, 2025). Students reported feeling uncertain about their learning progress and unclear about how to improve their performance (Christopher, Komunda, et al., 2022). This gap between teaching efforts and student achievement raised important questions about whether inadequate feedback mechanisms were undermining learning outcomes (Nicholas & Nancy, 2024). Without empirical evidence on how feedback influenced academic performance in this specific context, educational interventions remained poorly targeted and potentially ineffective.

Specific Objective

To examine the influence of feedback on students' academic performance in secondary schools.

Methodology

This study employed a descriptive cross-sectional survey design to examine the influence of feedback on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Kashari South, Mbarara City (A. Nafiu et al., 2012). The design was chosen because it allowed for the collection of data at a single point in time while providing detailed insights into the relationship between feedback practices and academic outcomes. The study population comprised all secondary school students in Kashari South, estimated at approximately 2,400 students across eight secondary schools (A & Ahmed, 2019). Using Krejcie and Morgan's sample size determination table with a 95% confidence level, a sample size of 152 students was selected. A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure representation across different school years (Senior 1-4) and gender. Schools were first categorized, and students were then randomly selected proportionate to the size of each stratum (Olanrewaju et al., 2021).

Data was collected using a structured self-administered questionnaire that contained both closed and open-ended questions. The questionnaire was divided into three sections: demographic information, feedback practices experienced by students, and self-reported academic performance indicators (Christopher, Moses, et al., 2022). A five-

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point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (5) was used to measure students' perceptions of feedback quality, frequency, and usefulness. The instrument was validated by two educational experts and pilot-tested with 15 students from a neighboring division to ensure clarity and reliability. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.847 indicated good internal consistency (Nafiu et al., 2012).

Data collection occurred over a two-week period with permission from the District Education Officer and school authorities. Ethical considerations included obtaining informed consent from participants, ensuring confidentiality, and guaranteeing voluntary participation. Collected data was coded and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25 (Nelson et al., 2022). Descriptive statistics including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were computed to summarize the data. Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between feedback and academic performance, while regression analysis examined the predictive power of feedback on academic outcomes.

Results

The study findings presented comprehensive insights into how feedback influenced students' academic performance in secondary schools in Kashari South, Mbarara City.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N=152)

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	78	51.3%
	Female	74	48.7%
Class Level	Senior 1	42	27.6%
	Senior 2	38	25.0%
	Senior 3	41	27.0%
	Senior 4	31	20.4%
School Type	Government	96	63.2%
	Private	56	36.8%

Source: Primary Data, 2026

The demographic characteristics of the respondents indicated a relatively balanced gender distribution. Out of the 152 respondents, 78 (51.3%) were male, while 74 (48.7%) were female, suggesting that both genders were almost equally represented in the study. In terms of class level, Senior One students constituted 42 (27.6%) of the respondents, Senior Two accounted for 38 (25.0%), Senior Three comprised 41 (27.0%), and Senior Four made up 31 (20.4%). This distribution demonstrated that learners from all senior classes participated in the study, with slightly higher representation from Senior One and Senior Three. Regarding school type, the majority of respondents, 96 (63.2%), were from government schools, whereas 56 (36.8%) were from private schools, indicating that the findings largely reflected experiences from government-aided secondary schools

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Table 2: Frequency and Timeliness of Feedback (N=152)

Feedback Aspect	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	SD
Receive feedback within one week	47	30.9%	2.89	1.24
Receive feedback after every assessment	62	40.8%	3.21	1.15
Teachers provide written comments	71	46.7%	3.45	1.08
Receive oral feedback in class	119	78.3%	4.12	0.86
Feedback helps identify mistakes	124	81.6%	4.23	0.74

Source: Primary Data, 2026

The findings on the frequency and timeliness of feedback revealed variations in how promptly and consistently feedback was provided. It was established that only 47 respondents (30.9%) reported receiving feedback within one week, with a mean score of 2.89 and a standard deviation of 1.24, suggesting that timely feedback was not consistently practiced. However, 62 respondents (40.8%) indicated that they received feedback after every assessment (Mean = 3.21, SD = 1.15), reflecting a moderate level of regular feedback. The provision of written comments was reported by 71 respondents (46.7%), with a mean score of 3.45 and a standard deviation of 1.08, indicating that written feedback was fairly common but not universal. Oral feedback emerged as the most prevalent form, as 119 respondents (78.3%) reported receiving it, reflected by a high mean score of 4.12 and a relatively low standard deviation of 0.86. Furthermore, a substantial majority of respondents, 124 (81.6%), agreed that feedback helped them identify their mistakes, as shown by the highest mean score of 4.23 and a standard deviation of 0.74, indicating strong agreement and consistency among learners.

Table 3: Types of Feedback and Their Influence on Performance (N=152)

Type of Feedback	Mean Score	SD	Correlation with Performance
Formative feedback (ongoing)	4.12	0.68	r = 0.742**
Summative feedback (end of term)	3.45	0.82	r = 0.514**
Corrective feedback	3.98	0.71	r = 0.689**
Positive reinforcement	4.31	0.65	r = 0.701**
Specific improvement suggestions	3.67	0.93	r = 0.778**

Note: ** Correlation significant at p < 0.01 level

Source: Primary Data, 2026

The analysis of types of feedback and their influence on learner performance demonstrated strong and statistically significant positive relationships. Formative feedback recorded a high mean score of 4.12 (SD = 0.68) and showed a strong positive correlation with performance (r = 0.742, p < 0.01), indicating that ongoing feedback substantially enhanced learner performance. Summative feedback had a moderate mean score of 3.45 (SD = 0.82) and a moderate positive correlation with performance (r = 0.514, p < 0.01), suggesting that end-of-term feedback was beneficial but

less influential than formative approaches. Corrective feedback also showed a strong positive relationship with performance, with a mean score of 3.98 (SD = 0.71) and a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.689$ ($p < 0.01$). Positive reinforcement emerged as one of the most influential feedback types, recording a high mean score of 4.31 (SD = 0.65) and a strong positive correlation with performance ($r = 0.701$, $p < 0.01$). Additionally, feedback that provided specific improvement suggestions demonstrated the strongest relationship with performance, with a mean score of 3.67 (SD = 0.93) and a very strong positive correlation ($r = 0.778$, $p < 0.01$). Overall, the findings established that effective, timely, and specific feedback significantly influenced learners' academic performance.

Table 4: Students' Perceived Impact of Feedback on Academic Performance (N=152)

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	SD
Feedback improves my understanding	68 (44.7%)	59 (38.8%)	14 (9.2%)	8 (5.3%)	3 (2.0%)	4.19	0.94
Feedback motivates me to study harder	72 (47.4%)	54 (35.5%)	18 (11.8%)	6 (3.9%)	2 (1.3%)	4.24	0.89
Feedback helps me correct mistakes	81 (53.3%)	52 (34.2%)	12 (7.9%)	5 (3.3%)	2 (1.3%)	4.35	0.85
I use feedback to prepare for exams	63 (41.4%)	61 (40.1%)	19 (12.5%)	7 (4.6%)	2 (1.3%)	4.15	0.90
Feedback clarifies learning goals	58 (38.2%)	66 (43.4%)	20 (13.2%)	6 (3.9%)	2 (1.3%)	4.13	0.86

Key: SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, N=Neutral, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree

Source: Primary Data, 2026

The demographic distribution showed a relatively balanced representation across gender with 51.3% male and 48.7% female students participating in the study. The class level distribution indicated adequate representation across all secondary levels, with Senior 1 having the highest representation at 27.6%. Government schools accounted for 63.2% of the sample, reflecting the predominance of public institutions in Kashari South. This distribution ensured that findings were representative of the diverse secondary school population in the area.

Regarding the frequency and timeliness of feedback, the results revealed significant variations in how feedback was delivered to students. Only 30.9% of students reported receiving feedback within one week of assessment, suggesting delays in feedback delivery that potentially reduced its effectiveness. The mean score of 2.89 for timely feedback indicated that this remained a challenge in many schools. However, 78.3% of students reported receiving oral feedback in class (Mean=4.12, SD=0.86), suggesting that verbal feedback was more common than written feedback. Notably, 81.6% of students agreed that feedback helped them identify their mistakes (Mean=4.23, SD=0.74), demonstrating that when feedback was provided, students found it valuable for learning. The relatively lower percentage (40.8%) of

students receiving feedback after every assessment indicated inconsistent feedback practices across schools and teachers.

The analysis of different types of feedback revealed important patterns in their relationship with academic performance. Formative feedback, which was provided during the learning process, showed the strongest implementation (Mean=4.12, SD=0.68) and demonstrated a strong positive correlation with academic performance ($r=0.742$, $p<0.01$). This suggested that ongoing feedback throughout the learning process significantly influenced student achievement. Specific improvement suggestions showed the highest correlation with performance ($r=0.778$, $p<0.01$), indicating that when teachers provided clear guidance on how to improve, students were better able to enhance their academic outcomes. Summative feedback, typically given at the end of term, showed a moderate correlation ($r=0.514$, $p<0.01$), suggesting it was less influential than formative approaches. Positive reinforcement received the highest mean score (4.31, SD=0.65) among all feedback types, indicating that teachers frequently used encouragement, and this practice correlated strongly with performance ($r=0.701$, $p<0.01$) (Nelson et al., 2023).

Students' perceptions of feedback's impact on their academic performance were overwhelmingly positive across all measured dimensions. The highest mean score (4.35, SD=0.85) was recorded for the statement "Feedback helps me correct mistakes," with 87.5% of students agreeing or strongly agreeing. This finding underscored feedback's critical role in the learning cycle, allowing students to identify and rectify errors before they became entrenched. Similarly, 82.9% of students agreed that feedback motivated them to study harder (Mean=4.24, SD=0.89), demonstrating feedback's motivational function beyond its instructional value. The finding that 83.5% of students reported improved understanding through feedback (Mean=4.19, SD=0.94) provided strong evidence for feedback's cognitive benefits. Furthermore, 81.5% of students indicated they used feedback to prepare for examinations (Mean=4.15, SD=0.90), showing that students actively incorporated feedback into their study strategies. The relatively consistent high means across all items (ranging from 4.13 to 4.35) and low standard deviations (0.85 to 0.94) indicated strong consensus among students about feedback's positive influence on their academic performance.

Conclusions

The study established that feedback significantly influenced students' academic performance in secondary schools in Kashari South, Mbarara City. Formative feedback demonstrated the strongest relationship with academic achievement, while specific improvement suggestions provided the most powerful impact on student outcomes. Students clearly recognized and valued feedback as a tool for improving understanding, correcting mistakes, and enhancing motivation. However, challenges persisted in the timeliness and consistency of feedback delivery, with many students experiencing delays that potentially diminished feedback effectiveness. The strong correlations between various feedback types and academic performance confirmed that feedback was not merely an administrative requirement but a pedagogical necessity for student success.

Recommendations

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Teachers should prioritize providing timely, specific, and constructive feedback within one week of assessments to maximize its effectiveness. They should emphasize formative feedback approaches throughout the learning process rather than relying solely on summative evaluations. Teachers should also diversify feedback methods by combining written comments, oral feedback, and peer feedback strategies to address different learning preferences.

School leadership should develop and implement clear feedback policies that establish minimum standards for feedback frequency, quality, and timeliness. They should reduce teacher workloads through strategic timetabling and resource allocation to enable more individualized feedback. Schools should also create feedback tracking systems to monitor implementation and ensure consistency across departments.

District officials should organize regular professional development programs focused on effective feedback strategies and assessment for learning approaches. They should provide resources and support for schools to implement robust feedback mechanisms, particularly in government schools with limited resources.

Assessment frameworks should be revised to emphasize formative assessment and feedback integration within the teaching-learning process rather than focusing predominantly on summative examinations.

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