Teachers' Attitude to Students' Negative Feedback: It's Impact on the Teaching and Learning in Public Secondary Schools in Delta State

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ABSTRACT: *The study examined teachers' attitude to students' negative feedback: it's impact on the teaching and learning in public secondary schools in Delta State. Two (2) research questions were raised to be answered while two (2) null hypotheses were formulated to be tested in the study. The variables in the study were reviewed from relevant literature. This research is a correlational study of ex-post facto design and the population consists of all the 479 public secondary school principals and 14,877 teachers in the twenty-five (25) Local Government Areas of Delta State. The sample for this study was 48 principals and 1,487 teachers in Delta State public secondary schools selected from 13 Local Government Areas. This represented 10% of the population using the stratified random sampling technique. This involved sampling 13 Local Government Areas from twenty-five (25) Local Government Areas. Secondly, 10% of principals and teachers from 13 Local Government Areas sampled were selected using simple random technique resulting to 48 and 1,487 respectively. A self-developed questionnaire titled "Teachers' Attitude to Students' Negative Feedback Questionnaire (TASBFQ)", validated and its reliability equally determined via a pilot study using test re-test reliability technique with a coefficient index of 0.85 was used. The research questions raised were answered using simple percentage for the study. The researcher administered a total of 1,535 questionnaires to randomly selected principals and teachers from the selected public secondary schools in the study area. The researcher employed descriptive statistic of mean scores and standard deviation to provide answers to the research questions while Pearson Product Moment Statistics was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that student' negative feedback influence teachers' attitudes thereby becoming dismissive, justified, or even hostile when confronted with criticism. It was therefore recommended that there is need to encourage teachers to embrace student feedback as a valuable tool for professional development, recognizing that feedback is an opportunity to learn and improve, rather than a personal attack. Teachers should therefore undergo training on how to cope with negative feedback from students.*
Keywords: teachers' attitude, students' negative feedback, teaching and learning**,** Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of education is to instill human values and transfer knowledge and skills that promote both professional and personal development. To achieve the national goals of inclusive development and equitable justice for all members of society, education is a crucial prerequisite. Every country in the world prioritizes providing high-quality education since it is the cornerstone of socioeconomic and personal development and a gauge of the advancement of the country (Palermo, Hanish, Martin, Fabes, & Reiser, 2017).

However, teaching and learning are processes that are influenced by a myriad of factors, of which feedback is one of the most difficult to control. Feedback, which is a scale of measurement that establishes the efficacy of teaching-learning procedures, is a powerful tool that can take two forms: positive or negative. It is a reaction or response to a particular activity, according to Hattie & Timperley (2017). It is a tool for measuring, evaluating data derived from a response or reaction, and in the field of psychology, feedback is likely to be understood as knowledge of the outcomes of any behavior, considered as influencing or modifying further performance. In the absence of learning, feedback is not possible. It is a tool that teachers use to gauge their students' learning. Feedback is an essential component of the teaching process and, once some initial knowledge has been gained, it frequently has a significant impact on students' performance or the attitude of teachers toward teaching (Hattie & Timperley, 2017).

More specifically, it has been observed that negative feedback from students—such as that the instructor is not providing clear instructions, that the assignments are too easy or too difficult, that the class is boring or unengaging, etc.—influences teachers' attitudes in the classroom, making them appear dismissive, justified, or even hostile when faced with criticism. This results in teachers downplaying or minimizing students' concerns, implying that they are unfounded, and making them feel distracted, all of which have an impact on students' outcomes, including their academic engagement and aspects of their self-perceptions (Dobbs & Arnold, 2019; Matheson & Shriver, 2015).

However, more negative feedback tends to create conflictual connections with students, whereas more positive feedback fosters supportive ties between teachers and students (Allen et al., 2013; Wu, Hughes, & Kwok, 2010). Frequent negative comments from students may be the cause of instructors' demotivation. It can also lower their confidence and sense of self, which lowers productivity (LoCasale-Crouch et al., 2017). Since instructors' attitudes in carrying out their responsibilities are impacted by their pupils' unfavorable evaluations. Understanding how students assessed their performance is crucial for teachers to facilitate effective teaching and learning.

Statement to the Problem

Teachers' attitudes towards students' negative feedback are a crucial factor in fostering a supportive learning environment. Unfortunately, many teachers exhibit a defensive or dismissive

attitude when receiving negative feedback from students, hindering the opportunity for growth and improvement. This not only discourages students from sharing their concerns but also perpetuates a culture of fear and intimidation, where students feel reluctant to speak up and teachers feel unaccountable for their actions. There is need to encourage teachers to embrace student feedback as a valuable tool for professional development, recognizing that feedback is an opportunity to learn and improve, rather than a personal attack.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide to study:

1.   How does teachers' attitude to students' negative feedback impact the teaching and learning in public secondary schools in Delta State?
2.   What are the strategies that can be adopted by teachers to cope with students' negative feedback in the teaching and learning in public secondary schools in Delta State?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated in the study:

1.   There is no significant relationship between teachers' attitude and students' negative feedback in the teaching and learning in public secondary schools in Delta State
2.   There is no significant relationship on the strategies that can be adopted by teachers to cope with students' negative feedback in the teaching and learning in public secondary schools in Delta State

REVIEW

Concept of Feedback

Feedback according to Bay (2023) refers to the information or reactions received about a product, service, performance, or behavior. It is a vital concept in various contexts, including:

1.   Communication: Verbal or nonverbal responses to a message.
2.   Education: Student feedback on teaching methods or course content.
3.   Business: Customer feedback on products or services.
4.   Psychology: Constructive criticism or feedback on behavior or performance.
5.   Biology: Homeostatic regulation, where a system responds to deviations from a set point.
6.   Electronics: Feedback loops that control output signals.

Feedback serves several purposes:

i.   Improvement: Identifies areas for growth and development.
ii.   Evaluation: Assesses performance or quality.
iii.   Learning: Facilitates understanding and skill-building.
iv.   Adjustment: Allows for corrections or adjustments.
v.   Motivation: Encourages effort and progress.

Types of feedback include:

1.   Positive feedback (reinforcing desired behavior)

2.   Negative feedback (correcting undesired behavior)
3.   Negative feedback (specific, actionable suggestions)
4.   Destructive feedback (harmful, unhelpful criticism)
5.   Formative feedback (ongoing, process-oriented)
6.   Summative feedback (evaluative, outcome-oriented)

Some examples of negative feedback from students:
Negative feedback can be challenging to receive, but it provides valuable insights into areas where teaching practices can be improved, ultimately enhancing the learning experience for students. Such negative feedback can be challenging to receive, but it provides valuable insights into areas where teaching practices can be improved, ultimately enhancing the learning experience for students (Terry, 2023).

1.   The teacher is not explaining things clearly.
2.   The assignments are too difficult/too easy.
3.   The class is boring/unengaging.
4.   The teacher is not available for help outside of class.
5.   The grading is unfair/biased.
6.   The teacher is not approachable or supportive.
7.   The material is not relevant or interesting.
8.   The class is too fast-paced/too slow.
9.   The teacher is not providing enough feedback on assignments.
10.   The classroom environment is not conducive to learning.
11.   The teacher is not using technology effectively.
12.   The assignments are too repetitive/not challenging enough.
13.   The teacher is not accommodating different learning styles.
14.   The class is too large, making it hard to get individual attention.
15.   The teacher is not providing clear instructions or expectations.

Teachers' Attitudes towards Students' Negative Feedback
In particular, through varying degrees of support and conflict, teacher-student relationships shape how teachers come to view their place in the classroom, their abilities, their beliefs, and their attitude toward school (Burnett, 2019). However, research shows that when teachers reprimand pupils, they often continue to engage in the disruptive behavior (Gable et al., 2019). Teachers play a critical role in shaping students' academic careers as they are responsible for not only educating their students but also developing students' motivation to learn (DiBiase & Miller, 2012; Harter, 2012; Verschueren, Doumen, & Buyse, 2012).

Negative feedback can have numerous direct and indirect consequences on teachers' attitudes. Kim and Lee (2019) demonstrated that teachers who encountered negative feedback had a more accurate self-assessment but considerably lower self-efficacy. Rather than viewing the feedback as advantageous, it can make teachers think that they are not sufficiently competent. As one

participant in Busse (2013) study pointed out, the feedback can be so overwhelmingly negative that teachers question their own worth.

Krashen (2021) asserted that negative feedback is unwarranted and might even be harmful to the teaching and learning process. For this reason, attempts to draw the learner's attention to any form of negative feedback should be avoided. Teachers' attitudes can be affected emotionally in different ways by negative feedback. Kim & Lee (2019) and Ayduk et al. (2013) observed that receiving negative feedback led to a significant increase in uncomfortable emotions. Teachers' anxiousness increased after hearing unfavorable comments. Other emotional reactions that affected their attitude toward the teaching process included humiliation, disappointment, bewilderment, doubt, impatience, grief, remorse, discontent, and rage. A number of educators questioned the reliability or applicability of the feedback, which decreased their engagement with it and caused them to disregard its recommendations. Negative feedback also led to a decrease in confidence in students or the course as a whole. In terms of motivation, the findings were mixed; while some studies noted an increase in motivation after negative feedback, other studies found the opposite.

Similar to this, receiving unfavorable feedback alters behavior. According to Plakht et al. (2013), there is no correlation between teachers' attitudes during the teaching and learning process and negative feedback. A study by Jason (2020) shown that when teachers received unfavorable feedback from students, their behavior got worse. For instance, Yu et al. (2021) pointed out that feedback might result in progress provided coping mechanisms for negative feedback are used appropriately; otherwise, it can exacerbate issues. Negative feedback has been shown to decrease involvement and commitment to future attempts (Brown, Peterson, & Yao, 2016). Harrison (2022) observed that teachers' attitudes toward teaching and learning are influenced by the unfavorable comments (negative feedback) they receive from students. By taking on an introspective, open minded and sensitive mindset, educators can turn negative feedback into a valuable tool for growth and improvement, ultimately enhancing the learning experience for their students. Edmond (2020) identified ways students' negative feedback influence teachers' attitude as follows:

1. **Defensive**: Becoming dismissive, justified, or even hostile when confronted with criticism.
2. **Dismissive**: Downplaying or minimizing students' concerns, implying they're not valid.
3. **Distracted**: Failing to fully engage with students' feedback due to personal or professional distractions.
4. **Disheartened**: Feeling discouraged, demotivated, or demoralized by negative feedback.
5. **Open-minded**: Listening attentively, acknowledging concerns, and exploring ways to improve.
6. **Reflective**: Using feedback as an opportunity for self-reflection, growth, and development.
7. **Receptive**: Welcoming feedback, asking clarifying questions, and showing appreciation for students' input.
8. **Responsive**: Actively addressing concerns, providing explanations, and making adjustments.

9. **Collaborative**: Working with students to find solutions, fostering a sense of shared responsibility.
10. **Growth-oriented**: Viewing feedback as a chance to learn, improve, and enhance teaching practices.

Factors that increase the negative effects
The effects of negative feedback depend on some contextual factors.
► Feedback Provider:

Inequity and detachment: Research reveals that when a teacher shows indifference or distancing himself from the students' emotions, this has a negative effect on the value that students place on the task and the feedback (Fong et al., 2018; Hill et al., 2021). A quotation from 2021 exemplifies this sentiment: "Teachers need to help us with those feelings related to assessment (Hill et al., 2021). It is about judgment, and teachers need to be both kind and fair in how they assess each student."

Incomprehension: Students occasionally feel that teachers do not grasp their needs or are not on the same page (Carless, 2020).

Power imbalance: Particularly in online education, there can be a sense feeling of authority imbalance, which makes students feel uncomfortable approaching their teachers with concerns.

Strategies to help cope with Negative Feedback from Students:
Negative feedback presents a chance for development and advancement. One can transform a terrible experience into a positive one by being composed, attentively listening, and concentrating on constructive criticism. Nonetheless, there are some helpful ways to utilize students' negative feedback in this post, along with strategies teachers can use for understanding it. Carless (2020) provides coping mechanisms for dealing with negative feedback from students, including:

1. **Stay calm and composed**: Take a moment to process your emotions before responding.
2. **Listen actively**: Understand the student's concerns and perspective.
3. **Acknowledge and validate**: Recognize their feelings and show empathy.
4. **Reflect and learn**: Identify areas for improvement and grow from the feedback.
5. **Communicate openly**: Address the issue and provide clarification or solutions.
6. **Focus on constructive feedback**: Use specific, actionable comments to improve teaching practices.
7. **Develop a growth mindset**: View feedback as an opportunity for growth and development.
8. **Seek support**: Talk to colleagues, mentors, or administrators for guidance and support.
9. **Practice self-care**: Take care of your physical, emotional, and mental well-being.
10. **Reframe negative feedback**: View it as a chance to improve and enhance student learning experiences.

In another development, Derek & Denver (2024) identified steps to help cope with negative feedback as follows:

Step 1: Focus on Calming Your Thoughts and Emotions
Think about a brick wall, how firm and steady it appears. The brick wall does not look like it is going anywhere. It could be knocked down in an earthquake or a major tornado or something like that, the brick wall is permanent. It is firm, immovable, and sometimes we are like a brick wall when we get the feedback we do not like or we disagree with or maybe is unexpected.

Step 2*: Try strategies that interrupt your thoughts and provide sensory input.
The body must be calm in order for us to think clearly. Each of these ideas can help us calm down. Recognize what you're feeling. Change of scenery that might mean you need to go somewhere else just to get a break. Physical activity or exercise. Journaling or reflecting about your thoughts and emotions.

Step 3: Find the Transforming Gift in Negative Feedback
Dealing with negative feedback that might be unexpected is to use these tools to transform what we do. We can take new perspectives and new learning. We can consider what is within our control to change and if we would like to change something about it. If the feedback is reasonable and we believe it to be true we can easily adapt and make the changes needed. If we do not believe it to be true we can investigate. We can ask a lot more questions. In any case, when we get feedback there is always a gift in the feedback.

METHODOLOGY

This study is a correlational study adopting the *ex-post-facto* research design. The population for this study comprised all public secondary school principals and teachers in Delta State. There are currently 479 public secondary schools in Delta State made up of 479 principals and 14,877 teachers in the twenty five (25) Local Government Areas of Delta State. The sample for this study was 48 principals and 1,487 teachers in Delta State public secondary schools selected from 13 Local Government Areas. This represented 10% of the population using the stratified random sampling technique. This involved sampling 13 Local Government Areas from twenty-five (25) Local Government Areas. Secondly, 10% of principals and teachers from 13 Local Government Areas sampled were selected using simple random technique resulting to 48 and 1,487 respectively.

A self developed questionnaire titled "Teachers' Attitude to Students' Negative Feedback Questionnaire (TASBFQ)", validated and its reliability equally determined via a pilot study using test re-test reliability technique with a coefficient index of 0.85 was used. The research questions raised were answered using simple percentage for the study. The researcher administered a total of 1,535 questionnaire to randomly selected principals and teachers from the selected public secondary schools in the study area. The researcher employed descriptive statistic of mean scores

and standard deviation to provide answers to the research questions while Pearson Product Moment Statistics was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Table 1: Response to Teachers' Attitudes to Students' Negative Feedback

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD
1	Becoming dismissive, justified, or even hostile	720 (47.37%)	347 (22.83%)	289 (19.01%)	164 (10.79%)
2	Downplaying or minimizing students' concerns, implying they are not valid.	490 (32.23%)	510 (33.55%)	350 (23.02%)	170 (11.18%)
3	Failing to fully engage with students' feedback due to personal or professional distractions.	374 (24.61%)	501 (32.96%)	236 (15.53%)	409 (26.91%)
4	Feeling discouraged, demotivated, or demoralized by negative feedback.	241 (15.86%)	412 (27.11%)	347 (22.83%)	520 (34.21%)
5	Listening attentively, acknowledging concerns, and exploring ways to improve.	500 (32.89%)	318 (20.92%)	414 (27.24%)	288 (18.95%)
6	Using feedback as an opportunity for self-reflection, growth, and development.	613 (40.33%)	313 (20.59%)	250 (16.45%)	344 (22.63%)
7	Welcoming feedback, asking clarifying questions, and showing appreciation for students' input.	444 (29.21%)	450 (29.61%)	402 (26.43%)	224 (14.74%)

From table 1, out of 1520 respondents 720 (49.37%) and 347 (22.83%) respondents agreed that negative feedback from students make them to become dismissive, justified, or even hostile while 289 (19.01%) and 164 (10.79%) respondents disagreed. Also 490 (32.23%) and 510 (33.55%) respondents agreed that negative feedback makes teachers minimize students' concerns, implying they are not valid, while 350 (23.02%) and 170 (11.18%) respondents disagreed with the statement. In addition, 374 (24.61%) and 501 (32.96%) respondents agreed that negative feedback leads to failing to fully engage with students' feedback due to personal or professional distractions., while 236 (15.53%) and 409 (26.91%) respondents disagreed. Also, 241 (15.86%) and 412 (27.11%) respondents agreed that they feel discouraged, demotivated, or demoralized by negative feedback., while 347 (22.83%) and 520 (34.21%) respondents disagreed.

In another development, 500 (32.89%) and 318 (20.92%) respondents agreed that negative feedback makes them to listen attentively, acknowledging concerns, and exploring ways to improve, while 414 (27.24%) and 288 (18.95%) respondents think otherwise. In addition, 613 (40.33%) and 313 (20.59%) respondents agreed that they use feedback as an opportunity for self-reflection, growth, and development, while 250 (16.45%) and 344 (22.63%) respondents disagreed with the statement. More so, 444 (29.21%) and 450 (29.61%) respondents agreed that they welcome feedback, asking clarifying questions, and showing appreciation for students' input., while 402 (26.43%) and 224 (14.74%)respondents are against the statement.

Table 2: Response to Strategies to help cope with Negative Feedback

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD
1	Stay calm and composed	520 (34.21%)	347 (22.83%)	412 (27.11%)	241 (15.86%)
2	Listen actively	738 (48.55%)	222 (14.61%)	47 (3.09%)	513 (33.75%)
3	Acknowledge and validate.	400 (26.32%)	439 (28.75%)	330 (27.71%)	353 (23.22%)
4	Reflect and learn	175 (11.51%)	815 (53.62%)	249 (16.38%)	281 (18.49%)
5	Communicate openly	510 (33.55%)	350 (23.02%)	170 (11.18%)	490 (32.23%)
6	Focus on constructive feedback.	09 (0.59%)	95 (6.25%)	181 (11.91%)	1235 (81.25%)
7	Develop a growth mindset	490 (32.23%)	510 (33.55%)	350 (23.02%)	170 (11.18%)

From table 2, out of 1520 respondents 520 (34.21%) and 347 (22.83%) respondents agreed that stay calm and composed is a strategy to cope with negative feedback while 412 (27.11%) and 241 (15.86%) respondents disagreed. Also 738 (48.55%) and 222 (14.61%) respondents agreed that listen actively is a strategy to cope with negative feedback, while 47 (3.09%) and 513 (33.75%) respondents disagreed with the statement. In addition, 400 (26.32%) and 439 (28.75%) respondents agreed that acknowledge and validate is a strategy to cope with negative feedback, while 330 (27.71%) and 353 (23.22%) respondents disagreed. Also, 175 (11.51%) and 815 (53.62%) respondents agreed that reflect and learn is a strategy to cope with negative feedback, while 249 (16.38%) and 281 (18.49%) respondents disagreed.

In another development, 510 (33.55%) and 350 (23.02%) respondents agreed communicate openly is a strategy to cope with negative feedback, while 170 (11.18%) and 490 (32.23%) respondents think otherwise. In addition, 09 (0.59%) and 95 (6.25%) respondents agreed that focus on constructive feedback is a strategy to cope with negative feedback, while 181 (11.91%) and 1235 (81.25%) respondents disagreed with the statement. More so, 490 (32.23%) and 510

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(33.55%) respondents agreed that develop a growth mindset is a strategy to cope with negative feedback, while 350 (23.02%) and 170 (11.18%) respondents are against the statement.

Table 4: Pearson "r" on Teachers' Attitudes to Students' Negative Feedback

Variables	N	X	DF	r-Cal.	r-Crit.	Level of Sign	Decision
Teachers' Attitudes	1535	0.90	1520	1.73	0.58	0.05	Significant
Students' Negative Feedback		0.85					

Data in table 4 revealed Pearson product moment correlation coefficient analysis on teachers' attitudes to students' negative feedback. The mean was 0.90 and 0.85 for teachers' attitudes to students' negative feedback respectively. The calculated r - value was 1.73 while the critical r-table value was 1.58 with DF of 1520 at 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated r - value was greater than the critical r-table value, the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, there is a significant relationship between teachers' attitudes and students' negative feedback in public secondary schools in Delta State.

Table 6: Pearson "r" on Strategies to help cope with Negative Feedback

Variables	N	X	DF	r-Cal.	r-Crit.	Level of Sign	Decision
Strategies	1535	1.62	1520	1.81	1.76	0.05	Significant
Students' negative feedback		1.98					

Data in Table 6 revealed Pearson product moment correlation coefficient analysis on strategies to help cope with negative feedback. The mean was 1.62 and 1.98 for strategies and students' negative feedback respectively. The calculated r - value was 1.81 while the critical r-table value was 1.76 with DF of 1520 at 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated r - value was greater than the critical r-table value, the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, there is a significant relationship between strategies to help cope and students' negative feedback in public secondary schools in Delta State.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Findings revealed that student' negative feedback influence teachers' attitudes. This is in line with Dobbs & Arnold (2019); Matheson & Shriver (2015). Students' negative feedback such as the teacher is not explaining things clearly, the assignments are too difficult/too easy, the class is boring/unengaging etc has been found to influence teachers' attitude in their teaching thereby becoming dismissive, justified, or even hostile when confronted with criticism, downplaying or minimizing students' concerns, implying they're not valid, feeling distracted which in turn affect students' outcomes, including their academic engagement and aspects of their self-perceptions. It also showed that there are strategies to help cope with students' negative feedback. This is in line with Carless (2020) who outline strategies to help cope with students' negative feedback.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, thus, it can be concluded that student' negative feedback influence teachers' attitudes. Teachers' attitude towards students' negative feedback play a crucial role in determining how they respond to and utilize such feedback. While some teachers may view negative feedback as a personal attack or a threat to their authority, others see it as an opportunity for growth, improvement and building stronger relationship with their students. Teachers who embrace students' negative feedback as valuable resources can enhance their teaching practice, promote students learning and cultivate a positive school culture.

Recommendations
The following recommendations were made:
1. There is need to encourage teachers to embrace student feedback as a valuable tool for professional development, recognizing that feedback is an opportunity to learn and improve, rather than a personal attack.
2. Teachers should therefore undergo training on how to cope with negative feedback from students.
3. The school management should also design a template on how to get such feedback from students freely without any form of threat, punishment or intimidation.

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