



STUDENTS' FEEDBACK SYSTEM AND CREDIBILITY OF TEACHING LEARNING PROCESS: COMPLEMENTARY OR CONTRADICTORY

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ABSTRACT

The Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations (MDGs, 2002) consider knowledge as the prime mover of development in the new millennium. How to provide quality education to large numbers at affordable cost is the primary concern of developing countries. In this context quality and excellence should be the vision of every higher education institution.

Quality has become the defining element of education in the 21st Century in the context of new social realities. Focusing quality has been a major concern in business and industry for a long time. Recently, the need of ensuring quality in educational institutions has been accepted by all the academicians, scholars and policy makers. Efforts are being made to set and provide high quality standards for dissemination of quality education. In India, set up of National Assessment & Accreditation Council has been proved as a milestone in this tedious job. This national agency is acting hard and facilitating higher education institutions to understand and implement the concept of quality in education. Addressing the higher education providers, NAAC states, "Acquisition of quality and excellence is the great challenge faced by all higher education institutions."

Further in this context, researchers are in favour of considering 'education' as a separate service quality which can be measured with special TQM tools like SERVQUAL where customers typically assess service quality by comparing the service they have actually experienced (the perceived service quality) with the service they desire or expect (their expected service quality). However, service quality in higher education is a relative concept with respect to the stakeholders in higher education and circumstances in which it is involved. Therefore, measuring service quality in education and identifying the gap is a novel approach being introduced and implemented in education sector. In every higher education institution, such gap is measured with the help of students' feedback system. Although it is a highly recommended method by NAAC for ensuring quality in teaching and learning process, effectiveness and impact of this tool is still a question of debate. So a data based study has been conducted by the authors showing the relation between quality of teaching and students' feedback. This paper is based on this data based survey and it analyses the relevance, effectiveness and impact of student feedback system on quality of teaching learning process.

KEYWORDS: Quality education, Affordable cost.

INTRODUCTION

The globalization has changed the structure of higher education. Policymakers and practitioners at every level are now focused on improving teaching-learning through evaluation, feedback and professional development. Teacher-Taught relationship is taking new dimensions. The role of the teacher in the classroom has gone through tremendous transformation from being a mere facilitator to a smart teacher who is abreast with latest technology and is more open to receive appreciation and criticism. The research shows that quality teaching matters to student learning. Education needs to be proactive not only to fulfill the expectations of society but also responsive to the global trends. Education is a qualitative concept understood by people in different ways. Quality education seeks to transmit, generate, preserve and

upgrade knowledge. The management members of various organizations takes many initiatives to provide qualitative education by introducing quality measures like feedback. Feedback not only helps in assessing the performance but also provides viable solutions for future improvement. This is one of the important tools to measure standard of quality in education of an institution and organization. Quality assurance is not an event. It is a continuous process and a relentless pursuit to achieve academic excellence. It is an ongoing, dynamic and life-long endeavor of any institution. Many academicians and research scholars have done numerous surveys to gather students' point of view towards the system of collecting feedback to ensure qualitative learning. Feedback is a process that goes through recognition, correction, encouragement, challenges, implementation and

improvement. It keeps both the teacher and the taught on right track. The collation of student feedback is a routine practice in most of the institutions. It is pertinent to note that some evaluation mechanisms in higher education have been implemented for the purpose of fulfilling an administrative obligation. There are institutions which implement the practice of feedback only for maintaining records which are essential for getting a grade from NAAC. The authors of the present paper have delved deep into the issue and pondered upon various perspectives towards feedback system shared by students and teachers. The paper is divided into five sections. Section I introduces the topic and structure of the paper. Section II focuses on the thoughts and experiences of different scholars and academicians through review of literature. Section III reveals the objectives of the study, database and research methodology used for the study. For the analysis, the questionnaire containing 22 questions based on multiple authentic perspectives has been used containing facts about the present situation. Section IV presents the results of the study highlighting the perspectives of students and teachers. The comparison of their reactions has been incorporated to reach at a final conclusion.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Over the past many years, many studies have been conducted to deal with the question of quality education. The studies have focused on various aspects of qualitative teaching-learning. There is a general agreement that teaching is a multidimensional construct that it is made up of multiple factors. Student evaluation of teaching is the most common source used to measure quality. However, students are not the only sources to obtain feedback. Feedback of Management, Principal, Head of the department, self-reflection etc. is integral to ensure quality. The evidence shows that teachers who get high ratings in different parameters of feedback are the ones who are popular among students and their results in feedback cannot be considered to be reliable and authentic. There are many mechanisms to collect student feedback, both qualitative and quantitative; including: questionnaires, discussion groups, lectures and seminars. Institutions can combine some mechanisms ensuring a mix of qualitative and quantitative feedback. Quantitative feedback (through questionnaire) can be used to provide evidence that something is going well or not so well and such evidence will normally be required for quality assurance purpose. Qualitative information (for example, through open-ended response sections of questionnaires and from student representatives) can help explain why something is going well nor not so well (Brennan J. & R. William 2004. p. 20). According to the literature (Marsh and Dunkin; 1992; Richardson, 2003; Chen and Hoshower, 2003), teaching and course evaluations can be used for four different purposes, including:

- As a formative and diagnostic feedback mechanism (for use, for example, in efforts to improve teaching and courses).

- As a summative feedback mechanism (for use, for example, in personnel and administrative decision-making).
- As a source of information for prospective students when selecting course units and lecturers.
- As a source of data for research on teaching.

Assessing the result of quality teaching, the initiatives taken prove to be cumbersome and need revision and appropriate changes from time to time. Many researchers address the paradoxes that the measurement tools of quality incorporate. They reinforce that the feedback to be effective needs to be frequent, constructive and instructive.

As Moore and Kuol (2005, p. 147) point out: Too often SET (student evaluation of teaching) systems have been compulsory, publicly displayed, uncontextualised, unsupported, simplistic and interpreted in isolated ways, features which render SET's punitive bureaucratic tools rather than supporting mechanisms through which enhanced learning environments can be created and sustained.

Other authors (e.g. Tomasco, 1980; Calderon et al., 1996) have also stressed the value in ensuring that such feedback does not focus solely on the "performance" aspects of lecture delivery, for example, but also asks pertinent questions about the students' level of engagement, commitment and interest in their programmes of study, academic environments etc. These authors discuss in some detail the problematic issue of developing institutional policy for student feedback. Transparency in feedback is the foremost requisite to ensure quality. There are organizations which do not have a transparent governance that makes teaching-learning ineffective.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To review the need of students' feedback system as a tool for affecting teaching learning process
2. To have a better understanding of perceived link between quality of higher education and feedback system from students' and teachers' perspective.
3. To compare students' and teachers' perspectives on feedback system.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DATA BASE

For the analysis purpose, a questionnaire using five point Likert Scale is developed which contains 22 questions based on multiple authentic perspectives about the present situation. Sample size of 100 teachers and 100 students pursuing and teaching different courses in three colleges of Ludhiana and Jalandhar were selected as the respondents. Primary Data collected through questionnaire has been analyzed with the help of mean score analysis of 5 point Likert Scale.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The scope of the study is limited to areas of Jalandhar and Ludhiana. Sample size is limited to 200 respondents, response of which cannot be a true representative of the universe. Biasness / ignorance of respondents in answering the questionnaire cannot be ignored.

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS**Table I: Students' Perceptions**

Q. No	Statement	Mean Score	Interpretation	Degree of validity
1.	Teacher feedback serves as an effective instrument to measure quality in teaching	1	Agree	Par
2	The management takes requisite steps to ensure quality through feedback	0.72	Agree	High
3	Students give biased feedback	0	Neutral	Par
4	Feedback encourages unfair practices as the teachers take it in an unhealthy way	0.08	Agree	Very Low
5	Students give balanced feedback and view different parameters equally	0.28	Agree	Moderate
6	Increment in salary is usually given on the basis of feedback	-0.46	Disagree	Moderate
7	Many organizations take feedback only for the record purpose	0.36	Agree	Moderate
8	Feedback is the only tool used by the management to check the performance of teachers	0.28	Agree	Moderate
9	The feedback received is communicated to teachers from time to time	0.92	Agree	Very High
10	Verbal feedback given by students during teaching hours is more effective than the written feedback taken by the management	0.64	Agree	High
11	Transparency is the most important requisite in feedback for promotion and demotion	1.16	Strongly agree	Very Low
12	Only regular students should be allowed to give feedback	0.16	Agree	Very Low
13	Students satisfy their personal grudges against teachers while giving feedback	-0.64	Disagree	Moderate
14	The management is willing to accept feedback regarding the systems and practices of its organization	0.80	Agree	Very High
15	Both management and teacher feedback are essential to ensure qualitative education	0.84	Agree	Very High
16	Teachers have an access to the management to give their feedback.	0.48	Agree	Moderate
17	Students can approach management to give their feedback	0.60	Agree	High
18	There is a feeling of fear among students while evaluating the performance of teachers	0.44	Agree	Moderate
19	Feedback given by the head of department is deemed as final	0.64	Agree	High
20	Management cross checks the feedback before taking a rigorous step against an employee	0.92	Agree	Very High
21	Feedback hardly makes any difference to senior teachers as they are reluctant to change their style of teaching	1	Agree	Par
22	Teachers should take regular feedback from students and make appropriate changes in their teaching methodologies	0.84	Agree	High

Table II: Teachers' Perception

Q. No	Statement	Mean Score	Interpretation	Degree of validity
1.	Teacher feedback serves as an effective instrument to measure quality in teaching	0.85	Agree	High
2	The management takes requisite steps to ensure quality through feedback	0.50	Agree	Moderate
3	Students give biased feedback	0	Neutral	Par
4	Feedback encourages unfair practices as the teachers take it in an unhealthy way	-0.85	Disagree	High
5	Students give balanced feedback and view different parameters equally	-0.30	Disagree	Moderate
6	Increment in salary is usually given on the basis of feedback	-0.20	Disagree	Very low
7	Many organizations take feedback only for the record purpose	0.65	Agree	High
8	Feedback is the only tool used by the management to check the performance of teachers	0.10	Agree	Very Low
9	The feedback received is communicated to teachers from time to time	0.45	Agree	Moderate
10	Verbal feedback given by students during teaching hours is more effective than the written feedback taken by the management	0.45	Agree	Moderate
11	Transparency is the most important requisite in feedback for promotion and demotion	1.15	Strongly agree	Very Low
12	Only regular students should be allowed to give feedback	1.10	Strongly Agree	Very Low
13	Students satisfy their personal grudges against teachers while giving feedback	0.40	Agree	Moderate
14	The management is willing to accept feedback regarding the systems and practices of its organization	0.80	Agree	High
15	Both management and teacher feedback are essential to ensure qualitative education	1.30	Strongly Agree	Moderate
16	Teachers have an access to the management to give their feedback.	0.5	Agree	Moderate
17	Students can approach management to give their feedback	0.55	Agree	High
18	There is a feeling of fear among students while evaluating the performance of teachers	-0.15	Disagree	Very Low
19	Feedback given by the head of department is deemed as final	0.3	Agree	Moderate
20	Management cross checks the feedback before taking a rigorous step against an employee	0.95	Agree	Very High
21	Feedback hardly makes any difference to senior teachers as they are reluctant to change their style of teaching	0.60	Agree	High
22	Teachers should take regular feedback from students and make appropriate changes in their teaching methodologies	1.40	Strongly Agree	Moderate

MEAN SCORE PARAMETERS

0	=	Neutral par with perfect
0.01 to 0.25	=	Agree with very low degree of validity
0.26 to 0.50	=	Agree with Moderate degree of validity
0.51 to 0.75	=	Agree with high degree of validity
0.76 to 0.99	=	Agree with very High degree of validity
-1.00	=	Agree par with perfect degree of validity
1.01 to 1.25	=	Strongly Agree with very low degree of validity
1.26 to 1.50	=	Strongly Agree with Moderate degree of validity
1.51 to 1.75	=	Strongly Agree with high degree of validity
1.76 to 1.99	=	Strongly Agree with very High degree of validity
2	=	Strongly Agree par with perfect degree of validity
1.00	=	Agree par with perfect degree of validity

Note: Same values are valid for negative data in context of disagree and strongly disagree

Table III: Comparative Analysis

Q. No	Statement	Mean Score Teacher Perception	Mean Score Student Perception	Inferences Teachers	Inferences Student	Degree of validity Teacher Perception	Degree of validity Student Perception
1.	Teacher feedback serves as an effective instrument to measure quality in teaching	0.85	1	Agree	Agree	High	Par
2	The management takes requisite steps to ensure quality through feedback	0.50	0.72	Agree	Agree	Moderate	High
3	Students give biased feedback	0	0	Neutral	Neutral	Par	Par
4	Feedback encourages unfair practices as the teachers take it in an unhealthy way	-0.85	0.08	Disagree	Agree	High	Very Low
5	Students give balanced feedback and view different parameters equally	-0.30	0.28	Disagree	Agree	Moderate	Moderate
6	Increment in salary is usually given on the basis of feedback	-0.20	-0.46	Disagree	Disagree	Very low	Moderate
7	Many organizations take feedback only for the record purpose	0.65	0.36	Agree	Agree	High	Moderate
8	Feedback is the only tool used by the management to check the performance of teachers	0.10	0.28	Agree	Agree	Very Low	Moderate
9	The feedback received is communicated to teachers from time to time	0.45	0.92	Agree	Agree	Moderate	Very High
10	Verbal feedback given by students during teaching hours is more effective than the written feedback taken by the management	0.45	0.64	Agree	Agree	Moderate	High
11	Transparency is the most important requisite in feedback for promotion and demotion	1.15	1.16	Strongly agree	Strongly Agree	Very Low	Very Low
12	Only regular students should be allowed to give feedback	1.10	0.16	Strongly Agree	Agree	Very Low	Very Low

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13	Students satisfy their personal grudges against teachers while giving feedback	0.40	-0.64	Agree	Disagree	Moderate	Moderate
14	The management is willing to accept feedback regarding the systems and practices of its organization	0.80	.80	Agree	Agree	High	Very High
15	Both management and teacher feedback are essential to ensure qualitative education	1.30	.84	Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderate	Very High
16	Teachers have an access to the management to give their feedback.	0.5	.48	Agree	Agree	Moderate	Moderate
17	Students can approach management to give their feedback	0.55	0.60	Agree	Agree	High	High
18	There is a feeling of fear among students while evaluating the performance of teachers	-0.15	0.44	Disagree	Agree	Very Low	Moderate
19	Feedback given by the head of department is deemed as final	0.3	0.64	Agree	Agree	Moderate	High
20	Management cross checks the feedback before taking a rigorous step against an employee	0.95	0.92	Agree	Agree	Very High	Very High
21	Feedback hardly makes any difference to senior teachers as they are reluctant to change their style of teaching	0.60	1	Agree	Agree	High	Par
22	Teachers should take regular feedback from students and make appropriate changes in their teaching methodologies	1.40	0.84	Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderate	High

FINDINGS

1. Teachers and students both agree with varying degree of validity on the following statements:

- Teacher feedback serves as an effective instrument to measure quality in teaching.
- The management takes requisite steps to ensure quality through feedback.
- Many organizations take feedback only for the record purpose.
- Feedback is the only tool used by the management to check the performance of teachers.
- The feedback received is communicated to teachers from time to time.
- Verbal feedback given by students during teaching hours is more effective than the written feedback taken by the management.
- Transparency is the most important requisite in feedback for promotion and demotion
- Only regular students should be allowed to give feedback.
- The management is willing to accept feedback regarding the systems and practices of its organization.
- Both management and teacher feedback are essential to ensure qualitative education.
- Teachers have an access to the management to give their feedback.
- Students can approach management to give their feedback.
- Feedback given by the head of department is deemed as final.

- Management cross checks the feedback before taking a rigorous step against an employee.
 - Feedback hardly makes any difference to senior teachers as they are reluctant to change their style of teaching.
 - Teachers should take regular feedback from students and make appropriate changes in their teaching methodologies.
2. **Teachers and students both disagree with varying degree of validity upon the statement that**
Increment in salary is usually given on the basis of feedback
 3. **Teachers and students both are neutral with respect to the statement that students give biased feedback**
 4. **There is difference of perceptions of teachers and students with regard to the following statements:**
 - Students perceive that there is a feeling of fear among students while evaluating the performance of teachers but teachers disagree to the above statement.
 - Teachers agree on the fact that students satisfy their personal grudges against teachers while giving feedback. However, students find this fact untrue.
 - Teachers disagree on the fact that feedback encourages unfair practices as the teachers take it in an unhealthy way whereas students agree upon this statement.

REFLECTIONS

1. **For Management:** Teachers and students both agree that teacher feedback serves as an effective instrument to measure quality in teaching. However, management should reflect on following opinions also:
 - They perceive that institutions take feedback only for record purposes.
 - Feedback given by the head of department is deemed as final.
 - Transparency is the most important requisite in feedback for promotion and demotion.
 - Only regular students should be allowed to give feedback.
 - Both management and teacher feedback are essential to ensure qualitative education.
2. **For Teachers:** Teachers must take student feedback positively and should seriously reflect on the following perceptions of students:
 - Students agree that feedback encourages unfair practices as the teachers take it in an unhealthy way.
 - Students perceive that the senior teachers are reluctant to change their style of teaching.

- Students perceive that there is a feeling of fear among students while evaluating the performance of teachers.
- Students disagree on the fact that **students satisfy their personal grudges against teachers while giving feedback.**

CONCLUSION

Student feedback system is a very important tool in assuring quality in higher education. If educational institutions are considered to be service providers then students are the service consumers. Hence their feedback and expectations are very important in total quality management. To make effective use of this tool, the purpose of evaluation should be clearly explained to students before collecting feedback. Transparency should be ensured at all levels. Students must come out of their biased perceptions while evaluating the performance of teachers. However, the feedback collected from only one source should not be the deciding factor in arriving at conclusions. The validity and reliability of feedback tools should be checked from time to time. The authors have concluded that the existing feedback practices need a thorough revision to ensure qualitative education.

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