Students As Quality Assurance Agents: An Investigation Of Feedback Mechanisms

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Abstract

In higher education institutions, feedback from students is essential because it offers insightful information that can be used to improve teaching methods and institutional environment, which in turn improves student learning outcomes. The overall growth of higher education is dependent on quality assurance techniques. The feedback from students is crucial as they are the pivot stakeholders of universities The study aims to assess the undergraduate students' Perceptions of the current feedback practices at universities and explore the preferred feedback delivery modes according to students and the effectiveness of these modes to improve the quality of higher education system. The qualitative phenomenological research design was used with a sample size of 25 students from 2 private business universities and one health sciences university. The convenient sampling technique was used to select the sample. The data was collected through four focused group discussions. Proactive questions, with semi-structured interview techniques, were asked to extract in-depth data. The data was analyzed through thematic analysis. [1]The major findings suggested that feedback taken from students regarding their teachers and university in a transparent and nonintimidating environment can bring improvement in academic quality and support systems of universities. The preferred mode of feedback delivery recommended by students is face-to-face & online feedback delivery mode. Where their identity should be hidden

***Keywords** Feedback method; Higher education; Quality assurance; Student perception; Student voice.*

Introduction

In higher education institutions, student feedback is essential because it offers insightful information that can be used to improve teaching methods and course evaluation, which in turn improves student learning outcomes (Banta, 2014;Maiya, 2023). Effective communication between educators and students depends on feedback (Carless, 2023),

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which also enables students to use performance-related inputs for personal growth (Sharma S. S., 2024). Higher education's academic performance and knowledge assessment can both benefit from effective feedback techniques (Daniel, 2024) while also facilitating adaptive feedback processing for improved academic achievement by helping to control emotions brought on the feedback (Rehman, Lashari & Abbas, 2023). Feedback is also shown to decrease mistakes, close knowledge gaps, and improve skill acquisition, which highlights the significance of students' opinions of feedback for the best use and educational experiences (Osborne, 2024; Papi, 2024; Lashari, Umrani & Buriro, 2024).

There is a knowledge vacuum regarding how well student input is integrated into higher education institutions' quality assurance procedures, despite the growing emphasis on student-centered learning (Pan, 2024; Yidana, 2023). Although universities frequently gather student feedback through various means, it is unknown how this input will affect the enhancement of academic offerings and the general calibre of the institution. By analyzing the connection between student feedback methods and perceived quality assurance efforts, this study seeks to close this gap. Student feedback is essential for improving the quality of instruction since it offers insightful information about areas for growth and effectiveness (Mandouit, 2023). Teachers can better understand how their teaching strategies affect student learning outcomes (Kamran, 2023). The promotion of student engagement, motivation, and learning outcomes is facilitated by effective feedback dynamics between educators and learners (Li, 2023; Zepke, 2024). Teacher methods, classroom surroundings, and student engagement can all be enhanced by taking prompt action based on feedback, such as assigning tasks or conducting end-of-module tests. By utilizing data analysis and visualization approaches to analyze student feedback, teachers can enhance the quality of their performance by identifying the strengths and faults in their teaching methods (Chang, 2024). Additionally, teachers should be encouraged to reflect on feedback and continuously improve their teaching practices by having follow-up interactions with students and implementing a well-designed system of evaluation for student input. This will ultimately enhance the learning outcomes for students (Park, 2024).

student feedback is essential to higher education's quality assurance. student feedback refines instructional strategies and elevates the educational process (Ryan, 2024). In addition to gathering student comments, efficient feedback mechanisms also motivate teachers to use the input to improve their teaching strategies over time (Safeek, 2024;Pysarchyk, 2024). Additionally, improving evaluation and feedback procedures in postsecondary educational settings improves academic advancement and student support, which in turn raises the standard of instruction overall (Durante, 2024;Maiya, 2023).

To fully utilize the benefits of feedback, students must practice feedback literacy, which is actively interacting with feedback to improve their learning processes. Thus, it is essential to integrate student feedback into quality assurance procedures to guarantee ongoing improvement and conformity with students' requirements and expectations.

Quality Assurance in Higher Education

The concept of quality assurance in higher education is becoming increasingly popular worldwide (Saroyan, 2023; Nygren-Landgärds, 2024). Although quality assurance systems fluctuate in capacity and maturity among nations, there is general consensus regarding the need for an efficient and successful quality assurance system (Marsden, 2024; Blind, 2024). In this setting, the fact that students are an essential component of the higher education system, and the encouragement of their involvement might be among the most important metrics in the system of quality control (Mohzana, 2024).. The institutions have started quality management procedures.

The concept of quality assurance in higher education

Establishing systems to guarantee the calibre of educational initiatives and activities, with an eye toward ongoing enhancement and conformity to global norms, is the essence of quality assurance in higher education (Kayyali, 2023; Bamusi, 2023). To promote and improve educational quality, including the establishment of institutions, the acquisition of skills, and the application of quality management systems (Abbas, 2023). Since quality assurance depends on operational state structures to be successful, post-crisis areas must have strong administrative and legislative frameworks for accrediting procedures (Miguel, 2024). Stable economic and social development requires institutionalizing quality assurance in higher education, particularly in light of the changing global economy (Pipia, 2024). Educational institutions can meet stakeholder needs, maintain competitiveness, and support the sector's overall growth and success by putting a strong emphasis on quality assurance (Kaleli, 2024).

The role of student feedback in quality enhancement

With theoretical foundations in Bandura's social cognitive theory, student feedback is essential in educational contexts (Khuhro, 2024). In fields like civil engineering, where structured and constructive criticism greatly improves student outcomes, feedback is extremely important for raising student performance (Jin X. J., 2024). The focus of feedback research has shifted to emphasize the behaviors of the recipient and feedback literacy, highlighting the significance of students' agency in making good use of feedback (Li F. &., 2024).It is important to have a thorough grasp of students' feedback processing skills before introducing new feedback delivery channels, as the usage of video feedback in online courses may not necessarily result in better student attitudes or grades (Yan, 2024). All things considered, strengthening educational outcomes and improving institutional performance require a strong feedback culture that includes components like self-efficacy promotion, continuous improvement, and flexible teaching methods (Natale, 2024).

Student feedback practices

Student Feedback Mining System, which makes use of sentiment analysis to automatically extract sentiments from student feedback, classify them as neutral, positive, or negative, and offer insightful information to institutions and instructors (Sharma N. &., 2024) . To increase student happiness and support services, text classification algorithms like Multinomial Naïve Bayes can be used to assess student feedback data, pinpoint areas that need improvement, and make data-driven decisions (Kumar N. &., 2024). Furthermore, research has demonstrated the considerable impact of student feedback motivation and engagement are influenced by perceived instructor feedback practices, such as providing constructive criticism and scaffolding feedback, underscoring the significance of feedback in educational contexts (Câmpean, 2024; Jin X. J., 2024). Additionally, research has been done on the application of deep learning techniques like convolutional neural networks and bidirectional long short-term memory to create automated systems that analyze student input more accurately than current ones while also offering insights into possible reasons of feedback (Gao, 2024;Messer, 2024).

The impact of student feedback on institutional outcomes

In Pakistani educational institutions, student input is very important in determining institutional outcomes (Lama, 2024). There is a need to gather feedback to improve instructional strategies and the calibre of education (Cahyaningrum, 2024). It has been discovered that unfavourable faculty relationships, such as misconduct and disputes, have a detrimental effect on students' academic results, underscoring the significance of cultivating favourable connections among teaching faculty (Liu, 2024). Furthermore, Pakistani higher education institutions have centralized methods for gathering student feedback; yet, in order to guide changes and guarantee quality control, the feedback loop must be properly closed (Qazi, 2024; Islam, 2024). Additionally, high-quality practices, student happiness, and institutional outcomes are positively correlated, highlighting the

significance of internal quality assurance and student input in raising the standard of education in Pakistan (Kumar P. D., 2024).

Challenges and opportunities

 Problems with student feedback and improving quality assurance include students' perceptions that feedback techniques could be better, higher education institutions (HEIs') failure to share results, which makes students feel ignored (Middleton, 2024) , students' reluctance to comment, shifts in power dynamics, time constraints, and disparities in peer feedback quality (Ilin, 2024). Possibilities exist for improving feedback literacy through training in feedback and peer review, which greatly raises the caliber of student input and carries over to other evaluations (Hill, 2024;Ignacio, 2024). Institutions can increase student learning overall and guarantee ongoing improvements in educational quality by tackling these issues and seizing growth opportunities.

Problem Statement

Quality assurance provides an organized framework within which students can provide insightful feedback on their educational experiences, allowing institutions to make well-informed decisions based on the viewpoints of stakeholders (Biggs, 2022;Steinert, 2006; Maiya, 2023). Through the use of strong data analytic tools and user-friendly interfaces, universities can gather input on facilities, teachers, and courses to improve educational quality and match programs to the needs of the contemporary job market (Osorio, 2024; Muslih, 2024). Ensuring compliance with institutional and regulatory standards through the implementation of privacy measures and scalability in feedback systems contributes to the overall improvement of higher education quality (Maiya, 2023).

Educational institutions may suffer if they do not use student feedback in quality assurance (Kayyali M. , 2023; Mireku, 2024). Furthermore, it has been discovered that while colleges routinely gather student input, they frequently fall short of using this information to improve the learning experiences of their students (Kucuk, 2024; Harg IS, 2024).Institutions can improve the overall quality assurance of educational processes and services by incorporating student feedback into decision-making processes (Sahin, 2024) (Mireku, 2024). This can help assess and revise various aspects such as teaching quality, course organization, assessment methods, and available learning resources (Oermann, 2024) (Chong, 2024) .

To improve the quality assurance of colleges worldwide, student feedback is essential. Although colleges often gather feedback, research shows a lack of efficient use of this information to enhance the educational experience for students (Baxter, 2024; Jacob, 2024). Enhancing response rates, creating relevant surveys, providing feedback to students, and presenting results as performance indicators are just a few of the strategies that may be put into practice to improve learning and teaching quality (Salman et al., 2023). Furthermore, since student perspectives play a critical role in determining the quality of education they receive, incorporating students in decision-making processes based on their feedback might result in improved educational outcomes (Buriro et al., 2024). Thus, encouraging a culture in which students are actively involved in quality assurance procedures and value their opinions can result in more student-cantered and productive learning environments (Mendoza, 2024; Sutianah, 2024).

Although the phrase "student-cantered learning" is widely used these days, it is unclear how much student input is used for quality control procedures. In practically every university, student feedback is solicited; nonetheless, the feedback's implementation must be assessed. The use of suggestions from feedback is directly correlated with the quality of higher education. This research is a step to bridge this gap by examining the feedback practices and quality assurance efforts to bring positive change in higher education institutes.

Research Objectives

1. To assess undergraduate students' perceptions of the current feedback systems at the institution for quality assurance.

2. To explore the preferred feedback delivery mode delivery mode and the perceived value of feedback for quality assurance of university.

Research Questions

1. How do undergraduate students perceive the effectiveness of current feedback mechanisms at the institution?

2. Which feedback delivery mode is preferred by the students and perceived value of feedback?

Theoretical Framework

The theory of quality enhancement highlights the significance of student feedback in enhancing higher education institutions' quality assurance. Incorporating student input into quality assurance procedures allows institutions to improve overall quality and educational results. Research emphasizes how important it is to include stakeholders in quality assurance efforts, especially students, to guarantee the sustainability and ongoing improvement of quality standards (Alzafari, 2019; Javed, 2023) The use of tools like learning analytics, social networking assessment, and stakeholder capacity building can increase students' involvement in institutional quality assurance procedures even further. Furthermore, it is critical to acknowledge the significance of student feedback in transnational education programs to track and improve graduation results and the overall student experience, which in turn fosters a good learning environment and high academic standards (Tran, 2023) (Kijima, 2024). Quality control relies on multiple presumptions: the participation of each worker in the organization in enhancing even the smallest facets of its operations. Rather than relying on significant investments, this progress is achieved through frequent minor improvements.

Inputs Customers Wants Needs **+** **Process** Total Quality Management **=** **Output** Satisfied Customer

Total Quality Management

Method and Procedure

The study is a qualitative phenomenological research design. The study included university students from 2 private business universities and one health sciences university. A convenient sampling technique was used to select the sample of 25 students. Graduate and postgraduate students from a variety of business disciplines participated in focused group discussions to collect relevant data.

This study was conducted at private universities, with 25 students and a wide range of business and health sciences degrees . A qualitative methodology was employed to provide a comprehensive grasp of students' perspectives of feedback. There were four focus groups gathered. Student volunteers from a variety of the faculty participated in the focus groups. The age ranges and academic standing of the students differed amongst the cohorts. The

University gave its ethical approval. The proactive questions with semi-structured interview approach were asked from the focused groups about the significance and function of feedback for the quality assurance of the university.

All the ethical considerations are fulfilled according to the BERA framework. permission was taken prior and the identity of the participants and the university is kept secret. The data was analysed through thematic analysis.

The following themes emerged after data analysis. After the coding and chunking two major themes erupted from the data
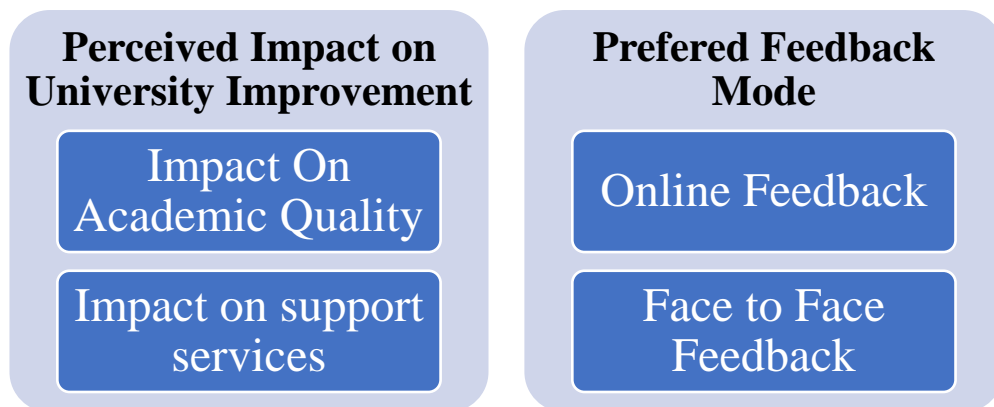

Fig2: Thematic Map

Perceived Impact on University Improvement

Impact on Academic Quality:

Fostering an educational climate that is quality-oriented requires effective leadership. To improve teaching and learning procedures, institutions need to hire qualified staff and carry out frequent audits (Shukla, 2023). Individual features, psychological attributes, and institutional culture are some of the major factors that impact teaching quality. These factors need to be given top priority by institutions when it comes to hiring and training (Mamites et al., 2022).The academic quality of any institute is dependent on teaching quality,systematic evaluation,and curriculum design and communication skills.To maintain quality, administrative and scholarly audits must be conducted regularly. According to Shukla (2023), these assessments assist institutions in identifying their strengths and faults, allowing for ongoing improvement. Improving academic quality requires both well-thought-out lesson plans and effective communication techniques. Faculty members ranked these as their top priorities (Elatawneh et al., 2022).

P1: course content and assessment methods are boring.Most of the time we already know the taught stuff so we don't take an interest in the class.

P2: Course content seems less effective for the practical implementation of those topics.

In conclusion, there is a need to revise evaluation forms as they only focus on teaching quality in academics, assessment is the key component that has a major portion in achieving the desired outcomes of any set objective. Assessment strategies should be added to the feedback form. of the English language is evaluated through MCQS which is boring as we want to learn the language rather than cram the rules blindly.

Impact on Support Services:

Student feedback is essential for improving university services because it offers valuable insights that may be used to enhance instructional methods, support systems, and overall student experiences. Universities can better adapt their services to satisfy the different demands of their student body by actively engaging with their opinions. Universities are being prompted to implement more individualized and accessible strategies as a result of feedback revealing inadequacies in the current support systems, especially for students with disabilities (Hitches et al., 2024). Students' powerful suggestions for high-leverage solutions highlight the need for services that promote diversity and agency (Hitches et al., 2024).

Because they give students the chance to shape their learning environment, student evaluations promote a feeling of community and belonging (Mair et al., 2023).

According to Maire et al. (2023), involving students in feedback processes can improve the rapport between faculty and students and foster a collaborative learning environment.

Although there is no denying the advantages of student feedback, problems including declining response rates and evaluation biases continue to exist, requiring constant innovation in feedback collection techniques (Jha et al., 2022).

P3:feedback questionnaire should include questions regarding administrative services and institutional culture too.

Conclusively, they can only give feedback related to classroom experience whereas it's the overall environment of any institution that contributes to students learning.

Preferred Feedback Mode :

The methods that allow feedback to be transferred from one entity to another, promoting improvement and communication, are referred to as feedback delivery channels. This idea includes a range of techniques and technologies that guarantee efficient feedback transmission and acquisition.

Online Feedback Mode :

The incorporation of online feedback forms for students is a pivotal factor in augmenting quality assurance inside academic establishments. These tools offer insightful data that can greatly enhance teaching and learning environments in addition to streamlining the feedback gathering process.

P2: I prefer to give my feedback online as there is no body in front of me and I can give feedback without any fear.

P2: Online feedback is convenient and I get ample time to recollect my ideas to express them better.

Students are empowered when their opinions are included into quality assurance procedures, and this is especially important in online learning environments (Secret et al., 2016) ("The voices of online students in the quality assurance process", 2022).

Feedback systems have the potential to highlight a range of student viewpoints, improving the general caliber of online courses and guaranteeing that they adhere to academic standards (Secret et al., 2016).

Face to Face Feedback Mode :

In-person student feedback is essential for improving university quality assurance procedures. This approach promotes both active engagement in the learning process and a deeper awareness of the requirements of the students. To improve learning results, teachers must reflect on their methods using student feedback (Novák, 2023). Preferred Approaches:

Although students value a variety of feedback techniques, they have a strong preference for in-person conversations since they think these are more productive than surveys that are anonymous (Mehta, 2024) .

P4:I feel through face-to-face feedback, quality assurance team can get the true picture. For me I prefer face-to-face detailed answers and online forms have limited answer space.

According to Ta et al. (2023), students play a crucial role in quality assurance, and their active participation through direct feedback methods can result in more successful quality policies.

While in-person feedback is helpful, it must be balanced with other forms of input to accommodate a range of student preferences and guarantee thorough quality assurance in higher education.

Conclusion

A key component of institutional reform is ensuring that student perspectives are heard and taken into consideration through effective feedback mechanisms.Reminding students of the steps done in response to their input is known as "closing the loop," which strengthens their position in university administration. Feedback from students has a major impact on learning that occurs later, improving academic achievement as well as engagement. Maintaining student-tutor relationships in learning environment requires high-quality feedback that is both pertinent and useful. Despite the advantages, there are still difficulties in putting feedback systems into practice successfully, especially in making sure that all student opinions are heard and that feedback results in noticeable changes. Large classroom settings have shown that incorporating technology can facilitate feedback processes, making them more engaging and instantaneous.

In conclusion, Students being the most important university stakeholders should be taken in the loop for quality assurance by taking their feedback.it is seen that feedback forms need revision as they cover only one aspect of the academy which is teaching pedagogies and teachers' behavior. there is a need to add questions in the feedback form regarding the administrative section and the university's overall culture, To escalate the scale of university performance overall institutional culture should be positive and disciplined with clear guidelines to avoid misunderstanding. In addition to this, the most sought-after feedback suggested by students are online and face-to-face. Online feedback is easy to access, the identity of students remains hidden and command over communication is not required.

Improving educational experiences requires that quality assurance procedures take into account input from students. Involving students in this process results in improvements that can be implemented based on their observations and also promotes a sense of ownership. The Scottish Quality Enhancement Framework (Gvaramadze, 2011) shows that involving students in decision-making processes can greatly increase the quality of teaching and learning.

Recommendation

- To encourage student involvement and accountability, universities need to actively notify students about the activities performed in response to their comments.
- The efficacy of feedback systems can be improved by implementing a systematic approach to program review, which guarantees that student opinion is not only gathered but also taken into consideration.
- To achieve transparent feedback, Students should be educated about the importance of feedback and the ethical consideration of anonymity should be clearly explained.

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