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Investigating Faculty Perceptions Regarding Academic Feedback: A Cross-Sectional Survey

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ABSTRACT

Background: Effective academic feedback is essential for enhancing teaching practices and improving student outcomes. However, faculty perceptions of academic feedback, particularly in Pakistan, remain underexplored. Understanding these perceptions is crucial for developing strategies that support faculty professional development and improve teaching effectiveness. This study addresses the gap in the literature by exploring faculty perceptions regarding feedback in medical and dental education.
Objective: To investigate faculty perceptions of academic feedback and its impact on teaching practices, professional development, and student learning.
Materials and Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted at Kabir Medical College and Sardar Begum Dental College in Peshawar, Pakistan, between November 2023 and April 2024. The study included 236 faculty members from both basic science (n=126) and clinical (n=110) departments. A self-administered survey was used to gather data on faculty perceptions of feedback. The survey instrument underwent content validation by three experts in medical education, basic sciences, and clinical disciplines. A pilot study (n=24) was conducted to test the feasibility and reliability of the questionnaire.
Results: Most faculty (94.5%) agreed that feedback helped identify areas for improvement. Most respondents (91.9%) reported that feedback motivated instructional improvement and 84.4% noted it boosted their teaching confidence. The feedback also improved lesson planning (83.9%).
Conclusion: Faculty members identify the value of academic feedback in enhancing teaching practices and raising professional development. Regular feedback is vital for improving teaching effectiveness and student learning outcomes. Our study highlights the need for targeted faculty development programs to enhance feedback practices.
Keywords: Personal growth, Professional development, Student's needs, Student Feedback, Teaching, and learning, Teaching strategies, Teacher-student relationship, Teacher satisfaction, and Interprofessional relations.

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INTRODUCTION

In the dynamic landscape of medical education, feedback is an indispensable cornerstone drawing increasing attention within faculty development programs.[1] It serves as a potent instrument through which faculty members reflect ultimately enhancing their teaching practices.[2]

The value of feedback is increasingly documented as educational institutions strive to innovate and enhance continuously. It acts as a guiding tool, enabling faculty members to navigate the complexities of medical education. Feedback helps them refine their teaching strategies to meet the evolving demands of students and the dynamic nature of the healthcare environment.[3]

While student feedback has traditionally been the primary focus, there is a growing recognition of incorporating faculty perspectives into discussions on academic assessment.[4] This shift stems from the understanding faculty members' perspectives are vital in designing strategies that enhance their professional development and facilitate effective teaching techniques.[5] Consequently, a comprehensive understanding of faculty members' perceptions is essential to developing targeted professional development approaches that nurture impactful teaching practices.

Previous research highlighted the pivotal role of faculty perspectives in enhancing the effectiveness of feedback interventions.[6] By addressing the unique experiences and challenges faculty face in their teaching, institutions can develop targeted interventions that align with their specific needs and professional goals. Such an inclusive approach creates a supportive environment where faculty feel valued, empowered, and motivated to continually refine their teaching practices.[7]

The study aimed to address the existing gap by exploring faculty perceptions regarding academic feedback. By analyzing these perceptions, the research seeks to inform the development of effective feedback mechanisms to improve teaching quality, foster professional growth, and enhance student learning outcomes. This endeavour holds significance for shaping faculty development programs, contributing to the broader goal of excellence in medical education.

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Recommendations in the health sciences emphasize enriching faculty development to go beyond focusing on teaching skills alone. Instead, these programs should encompass personal and professional values, perceived responsibilities, and teaching practices. By adopting this comprehensive approach, the overall efficacy of faculty members can be substantially enhanced.

As stewards of educational experiences, faculty expertise, teaching methodologies, and interactions play a pivotal role in student learning outcomes. Research suggests that timely, specific, and learning outcome-relevant feedback is particularly effective in enhancing student learning. Furthermore, feedback can provide faculty with insights into their strengths and areas for improvement, and boost motivation and engagement.

Understanding faculty perceptions is vital as their extensive teaching experience and mandatary certification often give them a nuanced understanding for the field compared to students.

By conducting a cross-sectional survey, this study aims to investigate faculty perceptions regarding academic feedback. The survey will gather data on faculty members' experiences with feedback, their perceived benefits and limitations, and suggestions for enhancing the feedback process.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This cross-sectional study was conducted in medical and dental colleges at Gandhara University, located in Peshawar. The study included faculty members from both basic sciences and clinical departments. Participants were selected to represent a range of educational levels, including Preclinical Education: Faculty teaching foundational sciences such as Anatomy, Physiology, Biochemistry, Pathology, and Pharmacology to MBBS and BDS students in their first and second years. Clinical Education: Faculty engaged in teaching clinical disciplines, including Medicine, Surgery, Pediatrics, Gynecology, and Operative Dentistry, to third- to final-year MBBS and BDS students. Postgraduate Training: Faculty members mentor and supervise postgraduate trainees across various specialties within the colleges. Specifically, participants were drawn from Kabir Medical College and Sardar Begum Dental College. These colleges represent private-sector educational institutions. The study targeted faculty members engaged in teaching medical and dental students, including professors, associate professors, assistant professors, lecturers, and registrars.

Ethical approval was obtained from the Ethical Review Board of Gandhara University, with certificate reference number No.GU/EthicalComitte/2023/202 Approval Date 10 November 2023. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before data collection, ensuring anonymity and confidentiality.

The sample size was calculated using the Cochran formula for cross-sectional studies, assuming a 95% confidence level, a margin of error of 5%, and an anticipated proportion (p) of faculty members with positive perceptions of feedback at 50%. The minimum required sample size was 215, and with a 10% allowance for non-response, the final sample size was set at 236 participants.

The inclusion criteria were: Faculty members actively teaching in basic sciences or clinical disciplines. Faculty members with at least one year of teaching experience in medical or dental colleges, and the willing to take part in the survey and provide informed consent. The exclusion criteria: Faculty members on extended leave or absent during the study period. As well as administrative staff or faculty members not directly engaged in teaching.

A self-administered survey, including closed-ended items, was used as the data collection instrument. The survey was designed based on an extensive literature review and underwent validation by three experts, including a medical educationalist, a basic sciences subject specialist, and a clinical subject specialist. This multidisciplinary approach ensured the content validity of the survey, making it relevant for capturing feedback practices across various educational levels and disciplines.

An invitation to participate in the study was distributed to all teaching faculty members through email and departmental announcements. A detailed consent form outlining the study's purpose, procedures, potential risks, and benefits, was provided to ensure compliance with ethical research practices. Faculty members who provided signed consent forms were included in the study.

A pilot study was conducted on a randomly selected 10% subset of the teaching faculty to test the reliability and feasibility of the survey instrument, ensuring its applicability before the main study. The pilot study data were excluded from the final analysis.

The questionnaire for this study consists of close-ended items designed to measure teachers' perceptions of receiving regular feedback using a Likert scale. The scale ranged from 1 (Strongly Disagree) 2 (Disagree) 3 (Neutral) 4 (Agree) 5 (Strongly Agree), allowing participants to express varying degrees of agreement or disagreement with the statements.

The questionnaire also gathered demographic information, age, gender, years of teaching experience, and faculty affiliation (medical or dental), to offer comprehensive participants' profiles. The survey items

were designed to assess different aspects of feedback perceptions, including frequency, clarity, relevance, and effectiveness.

The statistical analysis was performed with SPSS version 26 for analysis. The sequence of statistical analysis was as follows: Data Cleaning and Validation: Responses were reviewed to ensure completeness and incomplete or inconsistent responses were excluded from the analysis. Descriptive Statistics: Frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were calculated to summarize the demographic data and Likert scale responses. Test of Normality: The Shapiro-Wilk test was applied to determine whether the data were normally distributed. Comparative Analysis: For normally distributed data, an Independent t-test and One-way ANOVA were applied to compare perceptions across demographic groups (gender, academic major, faculty affiliation). For non-normally distributed data, the Mann-Whitney U test and the Kruskal-Wallis test were used for comparisons. A p-value of less than 0.05 was considered statistically significant.

RESULT

This cross-sectional study involved 236 faculty members from medical and dental colleges in Peshawar. Participants were selected from Kabir Medical College and Sardar Begum Dental College, representing a mix of both clinical and preclinical teaching faculty. The demographic breakdown of participants is presented in Table 01.

Table 01 shows the demographic variables of the faculty participants. The mean age of faculty members was 41.76 years (±13.473), with a majority of male faculty members (63.1%). The faculty members were predominantly lecturers (47.5%), followed by professors (21.6%). A larger proportion of faculty (61.4%) were from Kabir Medical College.

Table 01. Demographic Variables of Faculty Participants

Variable	Category	Frequency (%)
Age	Mean ± SD	41.76 ± 13.473
Gender	Male	149 (63.1)
	Female	87 (36.9)
Status	Professor	51 (21.6)
	Associate Professor	15 (6.4)
	Assistant Professor	47 (19.9)
	Registrar	11 (4.7)
	Lecturer	112 (47.5)
Institute	Kabir Medical College	145 (61.4)
	Sardar Begum Dental College	91 (38.6)

The data reveals that academic feedback positively impacts faculty across three key domains: teaching confidence, professional growth, and adaptability in teaching practices. In terms of teaching confidence, the majority of respondents (94.5%) agreed or strongly agreed that feedback helps them identify areas for improvement, with a significant p-value (0.03). Similarly, feedback was noted to enhance confidence in teaching delivery (84.4%, p=0.04) and improve understanding of teaching strengths (86.9%, p=0.02). These findings highlight the critical role of feedback in fostering self-assurance and skill refinement.

For professional growth, 83.4% of faculty recognized feedback as instrumental in their development, supported by a p-value of 0.01. Furthermore, 91.9% agreed that feedback motivates continuous improvement in teaching skills (p=0.049), while 83.5% believed it positively impacted student learning outcomes (p=0.03).

Under adaptability and teaching practices, 78% reported that feedback helped them adapt teaching styles to meet students' needs (p=0.02). Similarly, feedback enabled the creation of effective lesson plans, as noted by 83.9% of respondents (p=0.04).

There was a statistically significant difference between male and female faculty (p-value = 0.032), with female faculty having a slightly higher median perception score of 4.25 compared to male faculty at 4.00. There is no significant difference (p-value = 0.264) between faculty status groups. The borderline p-value of 0.051 between faculty members at Kabir Medical College and Sardar Begum Dental College.

Table 02. Faculty Perceptions of Academic Feedback

Category	Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	P-value
Impact on Teaching and Confidence	Feedback has helped me identify areas for improvement in my teaching practices.	56 (23.7%)	167 (70.8%)	7 (3.0%)	6 (2.5%)	-	0.03
	Receiving feedback has increased my confidence in delivering effective teaching.	70 (29.7%)	129 (54.7%)	25 (10.6%)	12 (5.1%)	-	0.04
	Feedback has allowed me to better understand and utilize my teaching strengths.	76 (32.2%)	129 (54.7%)	12 (5.1%)	19 (8.1%)	-	0.02
Impact on Professional Growth	Feedback has been instrumental in my personal and professional development as a teacher.	44 (18.6%)	153 (64.8%)	20 (8.5%)	13 (5.5%)	6 (2.5%)	0.01
	Regular feedback motivates me to continuously enhance my teaching skills.	69 (29.2%)	148 (62.7%)	12 (5.1%)	7 (3.0%)	-	0.049
	Receiving feedback has improved the learning outcomes of my students.	43 (18.2%)	154 (65.3%)	26 (11.0%)	13 (5.5%)	-	0.03
Adaptability and Teaching Practices	Feedback has guided me in adapting my teaching style to align with students' learning needs.	38 (16.1%)	146 (61.9%)	39 (16.5%)	13 (5.5%)	-	0.02
	Regular feedback has supported the creation of more effective lesson plans.	64 (27.1%)	134 (56.8%)	32 (13.6%)	6 (2.5%)	-	0.04

Table 03. Demographic Categories Statistical Analysis of Perception Scores

Variable	Category	Median Score	Statistical Test	P-value
Gender	Male	4.00	Mann-Whitney U	0.032
	Female	4.25		
Faculty Status	Professor	4.25	Kruskal-Wallis H	0.264
	Associate Professor	4.00		
	Assistant Professor	4.00		
	Lecturer	4.00		
Institute	Kabir Medical College	4.00	Kruskal-Wallis H	0.051
	Sardar Begum Dental College	4.25		

In summary, this study highlights the significant positive impact of academic feedback on faculty members' teaching confidence, professional growth, and adaptability in teaching practices. The majority of participants reported that feedback helped them improve their teaching skills, increase their confidence, and refine their lesson planning. Statistically significant results were found in the gender-based differences in

feedback perception, with female faculty members scoring slightly higher than their male counterparts. However, no significant differences were observed across faculty status groups or between the two institutions, Kabir Medical College and Sardar Begum Dental College. Overall, the findings underscore the importance of regular feedback in fostering continuous improvement and enhancing teaching effectiveness within medical and dental education.

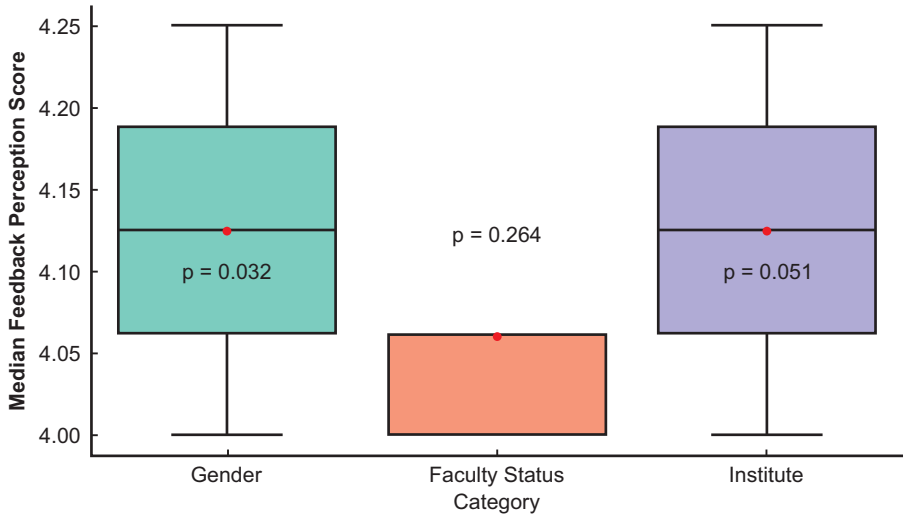


Figure 01. The box plot compares feedback perception scores across gender, faculty status, and institution. It shows a significant difference based on gender (p = 0.032), with female faculty reporting higher scores. However, no significant differences were found for faculty status (p = 0.264) or between institutions (p = 0.051).

DISCUSSION

Professional development and self-reflection emerged as key themes of the study. Our findings revealed that a significant majority of teachers (70.8%) agreed that receiving regular feedback is beneficial for identifying areas for improvement in their teaching. Moreover, 23.7% strongly agreed, emphasizing the importance of feedback in fostering self-reflection and growth. A substantial proportion of teachers (29.2% strongly agreed and 62.7% agreed) also reported that feedback serves as a motivating factor in their continuous efforts to enhance their teaching skills. These results align with previous literature that highlights feedback as a tool for professional development and a key element of reflective teaching practices.[8-10]

Student feedback was widely recognized as a valuable tool for improving teaching quality. Previous studies have shown that it helps teachers identify both strengths and areas for improvement, leading to enhancements in teaching practices and the incorporation of new methods and activities.[11-13] Following our study, where teachers expressed a strong desire for more student feedback, believing it significantly impacts their professional development.

Our study also underlines the influence of feedback on student learning outcomes. Most teachers (65.3%) agreed that regular feedback positively impacted student learning. This was consistent with research linking feedback to improved student motivation, achievement, and overall learning.[14,15] Teachers who received feedback were able to adapt their teaching styles to better meet students' needs, reinforcing the connection between feedback and improved teaching effectiveness. Teachers recognized that feedback also helped them understand their students' learning needs, further refining their teaching methods. This finding supports the work of Black and Wiliam, who highlighted the role of formative feedback in improving learning outcomes.[16]

Feedback plays a vital role in improving lesson planning effectiveness, with 56.8% of teachers agreeing that it positively influenced their ability to plan lessons more effectively. This finding was aligned with research underlining the importance of feedback in fostering effective teaching practices and assessment strategies.[17] Feedback also supports reflective teaching and strengthens teacher-student relationships, contributing to a positive and productive classroom environment, as found in recent studies.[18]

In terms of collaboration, regular feedback was found to be highly effective in fostering a sense of community among teachers, with 60.2% of participants agreeing that it helped address teaching challenges. Feedback nurtures collaboration and communication, which are important for creating a positive learning environment and effective classroom management.[7] It also plays a role in preventing conflicts, promoting empathy, and strengthening the teacher-student relationship.

Our study also found that regular feedback significantly impacts teachers' job satisfaction. A majority (57.2%) of teachers agreed that receiving feedback contributed to their overall job satisfaction. Continuous formative feedback allows teachers to reflect on their practices and enhances their self-efficacy, leading to greater job satisfaction.[19] Following previous research emphasizing the positive role of feedback in teacher development and satisfaction.[20]

Gender differences were noted in the reception of feedback, with male participants more likely to agree that regular feedback improved their connection to colleagues and the teaching community. Following previous research on gender bias in evaluations, which suggests that feedback systems may need to be adjusted to account for gender dynamics in teaching evaluations.[21]

Finally, the role of academic position in the reception of feedback was significant. Professors and assistant professors were more likely to agree that feedback improved their connection to the teaching community and helped adapt their teaching styles to meet students' needs. These findings underscore the importance of feedback in enhancing teaching effectiveness across various academic ranks. Related studies have shown that higher-ranked faculty are more likely to engage with feedback in a meaningful way, improving their pedagogical approaches.[22]

In conclusion, our study reinforces the value of regular feedback in fostering professional development, improving teaching effectiveness, and improving student learning outcomes. Feedback not only supports teachers in their continuous improvement but also contributes to a positive and collaborative learning environment, as supported by existing literature.[23]

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, our study revealed the significant benefits of feedback in the educational environment. Feedback was important for identifying areas for improvement, strengthening teaching competencies, adapting teaching methods to meet student needs, effectively resolving challenges, fostering collaboration, and increasing job satisfaction. It suggests that receiving feedback can improve the quality of teaching and motivate educators to continuously improve their skills.

Ethical Consideration

This study was approved by Institutional Review Board of Gandhara University, Peshawar, Pakistan.

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Conflict of Interest

Authors declared no conflict of interest.

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DATA SHARING STATEMENT: The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data is not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

The following authors fulfill authorship criteria as per ICMJE guidelines;

Zaib AJ, Wajid S: Substantial contribution to conception and design, drafting the manuscript, final approval, agreed to be accountable for all the work.

Khan M, Khan FM: Substantial contribution to conception and design, data acquisition, drafting the manuscript, final approval, agreed to be accountable for all the work.

Hassan B, Haris S: Analysis and interpretation of data, drafting the manuscript, final approval, agreed to be accountable for all the work.

Khan SA: Analysis and interpretation of data, critical revision, final approval, agreed to be accountable for all the work.

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