

360 DEGREE FEEDBACK: FACULTY PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

The 360-degree evaluation for faculty as suggested by AICTE is a multisource feedback tool designed to provide an assessment of faculty in the following areas: self-appraisal, contribution to society, teaching and institutional service. The purpose of 360 feedback is to facilitate self-improvement by identifying specific behaviours and relative strengths and weaknesses that can be modified or further developed. As this kind of evaluation mechanism is getting implemented for the first time in education system, it is important to understand the perception of faculty members who shall be subjected to evaluation on the parameters and weightages proposed by AICTE. This research paper is an attempt to understand the views and opinions of faculty members on this proposed 360-degree evaluation system.

Keywords: Faculty Evaluation, Feedback, Education, Student Evaluation

1. INTRODUCTION:

The 360-degree feedback system has emerged as a suitable and valuable tool for solving many snags and biases related to other traditional assessment instruments, where validity and reliability have been traditionally questioned. The 360-degree feedback system is based on the hypothesis that the assessment must be carried out from multiple evaluations of various stakeholders that include several dimensions of employees work from varied perspectives. In this sense, the results of the evaluation would benefit from greater objectivity, reliability and validity. In the management education context, it was always a need for faculty to have a robust system of evaluation to identify their contribution of work. Generally, Management institutes have evaluation surveys filled in by students and these are usually the only tool administered for evaluating faculty performance. The outcome of this type of evaluation could have a significant bias as only one set of stakeholders participates in the assessment. It is important to understand that Faculty of management education not only contributes towards teaching but also towards research publications, consultancy and service to institution. On understanding the requirements, there is a need to implement a 360-degree feedback system, which addresses the gaps in evaluating faculty contribution. AICTE has made an attempt to introduce 360-degree feedback mechanism for faculty and laid down some parameters. The process comprises of creating a data framework that maps Faculty, Students and Subjects and this data gets captured through an online mechanism. Further, the system has also proposed to disburse rewards on real time basis.

Table 1. 360 Degree parameters at a glance by applying parameters and scores as per AICTE

Teaching	25 marks	Portions covered as per syllabus and Effectiveness of Teaching.
Head of the Department	20 Marks	Faculty contribution to department in terms of organizing seminar, research papers, guide to doctoral degree students etc
Dean of the Institute	10 Marks	Faculty contribution to the organization as a whole, like in admissions, placements and other services as directed by Head of the Institution
Students Feedback	25 Marks	Syllabus coverage, pedagogy, teaching style, study material, preparing students for final exams etc
Annual confidential report	10 marks	Team work and collaboration, Inter-personnel communication, co-ordination, initiatives at institution level etc
Societal work	10 Marks	Contribution to society. Should reflect in Self-appraisal

1.1 METHODOLOGY:

One of the most challenging tasks in any educational institution is to evaluate their own faculty members. There are many ways of performance evaluations available but to evaluate faculty it is highly difficult to arrive at fixed parameters. This research paper discusses on the perspective of faculty on the 360-degree feedback recommended by AICTE. The research study captures faculty views on various parameters and weightages also attempts to understand its impact on faculty career growth. The methodology adopted in this study was virtual focused group discussion. The data was collected from the structured questionnaire which was piloted and validated. The participants of the focused group discussion were faculty members who represented from various cadres like Assistant Professors, Associate Professors and Professors. In total there were 40 participants and Focused group discussion was done in three batches of 10 participants each for about 45 to 60 minutes. The researcher played the role of a moderator and the support staff made notes meticulously. This study was confined to State of Karnataka. These participants showed homogeneity in terms of recruitment, selection, training, courses taught in general and the institutions they were associated with were all headed by Deans/Directors and all the institutions represented by participants were meeting academic norms of AICTE.

In this research convenience sampling was used to draw conclusions from a sample and to generalize the results back to the population. From each of the institute a simple random sampling list was generated for faculty members. After in depth focused group study it was found that faculty members were contented with the initiative of 360-degree feedback mechanism for their appraisal but were of the opinion that the parameters and weightages as irrational.

1.2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

The study by Bertram Opitz et. Al., 2011, compared delayed versus immediate feedback and arrived at results that participants who were received immediate feedback showed a meaningfully larger increase in performance than those who were given delayed feedback.

A study by Cashin W., 1998, displayed that many faculty members are of the opinion that the response of students in the form of feedback get influenced by the designation and position of the faculty in the institution. Cashin further narrates that faculty perceived that students get influenced also by lecture timings, topic and lecture timings. Literature also talks about correlation of faculty self-rating with that of student evaluation.

Al-Yousuf, 2007, in his study opined that evaluation by fellow faculty members, self-appraisal, and observation by reporting managers have disputed reliability as the number of appraisers are smaller in number. According Al-Yousuf, this probably is one of the vital reasons which has directed institutions to use student evaluation for faculty members teaching role. There are several in which faculty can be evaluated. It can be through student achievement as a measure or in-class performance as a measure or even it can be faculty overall contribution with due weightages given to the parameters.

Dunkin, 1997, in his study that out of several formats in which faculty can be evaluated, feedback by students is just one phase or tool to evaluate faculty performance.

Al-Hattami, 2019 came up with a constructive feedback for faculty and students. His research results showed that students and instructors agree on the importance of providing constructive feedback as a critical tool to the process of teaching and learning. The author recommends that teachers should provide their students with clear constructive feedback appropriate for their grade level and he opined that assessment followed by a constructive feedback provides an assessment of the extent to which learning outcomes of the course or the programme are reinforced and consequently met.

Musharraf Husain & Sabina Khan, 2016, says that the student's feedback is no doubt an effective tool for teachers' evaluation but he is of the opinion that other sources of feedback can also be utilized to arrive at overall assessment of a teacher.

In another study, Astitava Debroy et, al., 2019, articulates that in medical education, Students' feedback can be considered as one of the best methods of evaluation of teachers' performance. However, the authors are also of the opinion that a regular feedback mechanism should be in place and must be administered for the entire institution.

Peterson, 1998, "Few educational researchers and developers have worked on the evaluation of teachers, who, after all, are the key performers of the curriculum and the classroom... Poor practice in teacher evaluation is quietly accepted, according to teachers, administrators, and researchers." Peterson is not the only researcher who believes that current teacher evaluation practices are in dire need of change.

Scriven, 1981, in his research work quotes that, "Teacher evaluation is a disaster. The practices are shoddy, and the principles are unclear." Further, in his review he brought out that summative teacher evaluation although dated still provides us with the most comprehensive list of DOs and DON'Ts in teacher evaluation.

Stodolsky 1984, is of the opinion that evaluators are mistaken if they assume, they are observing the typical behaviour of a teacher with the usual evaluation procedure.

Ding Ding Tee & Pervaiz K. Ahmed, 2014, in their research work mentions that Feedback is widely acknowledged as the crux of a learning process. Multiplicities of research studies have been advanced to address the common issues of teachers and students for a constructive and effective feedback mechanism in the current higher educational settings. Nevertheless, existing pedagogical approaches in feedback are fragmented and ad hoc in nature. Taken in isolation, each approach fails to capture the full role and complexity of assessment feedback in the learning process.

1.3 THE APPROACH:

OBSERVATION 1: (STUDENT EVALUATION), If we look at the parameters suggested by AICTE, we can understand that Teaching and Student feedback is given equal weightages (25 marks for each category). Teaching involves reading, material preparation for class room, conducting evaluations, setting question papers, preparing answer keys, evaluating answer scripts, Mentoring, Counselling students and other services to Institution and for this student give feedback out of 25 marks and that acts as component for Faculty Reward! This rise following questions and concerns. Are students matured enough to give feedback on faculty performance only – if yes, then how to measure this? Even if we use 14 question formats on a scale of 1-5. What statistical tool can one look into to avoid error of leniency, strictness, favouritism etc and then normalise scores? What if student is not interested in a particular subject. Faculty may start compromising on his/her quality and start impressing students by being lenient with them, by overlooking their mistakes and by being extra friendly with students. The perception of faculty members is that student feedback to be considered for 360-degree feedback but with a weightage of maximum 10 marks. And they are of opinion that instead of using feedback, it would be appropriate to use appreciative inquiry, that gives qualitative inputs to faculty.

OBSERVATION 2: (RESEARCH AND CASE STUDIES), It was quite surprising to see that no marks is allotted for Case studies, Research activities and publications! This rise following questions and concerns; The role of a faculty generally comprises of Teaching-Research-Service to Institution. As per the 360 degree frame work of AICTE, no scores allotted to this category and faculty may feel deprived of smart cookie. Faculty members who have just started investing time in research activities may get distracted and overall faculty academic enrichment gets affected. Faculty members are of opinion that they should be appraised on their research activities and publication with 15 marks (allocation of marks can be: 5 marks for presenting papers in conferences/seminars, 10 marks for publication in UGC approved journals, 15 marks for Scopus etc). By creating weightage on research work, faculty members expressed that they get further motivated to contribute towards publications.

OBSERVATION 3: (EVALUATION BY DEANS AND HODs), The objective of bringing 360-degree feedback is to have transparency. Most of the management education Institutions use qualitative methods to collect feedback and later Institution generally focusses on the positive side/developmental side of the employee and nurture them further. As per 360-degree feedback mechanism of AICTE – The scores given by HODs, students, Deans will be shared with faculty. (not sure of qualitative feedback). So, it becomes

extremely important for HODs and Deans to quantify the contributions of faculty members and this makes Institutions to identify right metrics for each of the administrative tasks done by faculty. Faculty members perceive that Institutions should have reliable metrics that statistically justifies faculty their overall score and proposed that Faculty Aspiration-Cell to be formed to focus on hi-potentials with right kind of work engagement.

OBSERVATION 4: (CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY), Faculty contribution to society is very subjective. Faculty might have their own ways and means in which they serve society. For eg: Faculty might teach under-privileged children free of cost, pay fees for needy children, serve free food once or twice to destitute, volunteer in taluk/ district/state/national driven projects, Contribute of one day salary to flood-stricken areas, As volunteer in self-help groups etc. Evaluation of contribution to society is subjective and quantifying the societal contribution is very difficult. Then, any contribution done to society to be considered as equally important! In order to measure the societal contribution Institution may have to come up with right kind of parameters for eg: source of contribution, form of contribution, frequency of contribution, Short term Impact – Long term impact and so on.

OBSERVATION 5: (ANNUAL CONFIDENTIAL REPORT), This may comprise of Team work and collaboration, Inter-personnel communication, co-ordination, initiatives at institution level etc. But each of these are very subjective. There will always be an inhibition as to what goes into confidential reports and who gives scores. So, it becomes important for the Institution to configure the scores for confidential reports with applicable performance indicators.

1.4 CONCLUSION:

The 360-degree appraisal also known as multi-rater appraisal. This system has its own set of merits and demerits. What one needs to understand is that how educational system embrace this system for faculty. In higher education, AICTE has laid down some weightages against select parameters. As per its thought process the said data for 360-degree appraisal shall be collected from faculty themselves, students, heads of department, deans/director of institutions. They have also added societal contribution as a different parameter. The opinion and ratings from these stakeholders are then fed into the system called 'smart cookie'. This system will further generate comprehensive report for rewards. Even though this system looks very encouraging, it has its own challenges and loopholes. The parameter fixed doesn't cover overall activities of a faculty. Secondly giving 25marks as a weightage to students to evaluate faculty performance was not positively received by teaching community as there is a threat of immaturity amongst students while giving scores for faculty performance. The parameter doesn't substantially cover the research contribution by faculty. This is alarming gap in the holistic development of faculty members. AICTE has proposed adopting 360-degree feedback keeping in mind the upcoming performance gaps in the educational institutions. Even though implementing 360-degree feedback process in Institutions is encouraging, leaders of the academic institutions must adhere to self-awareness and create transparency in communications. A well-crafted 360-degree feedback tool and process can boost the overall team performance. Even though there are noticeable concerns in implementing 360-degree feedback in educational institutions, there has been a sincere attempt to use the feedback result more positively by educational institutions.

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