Lecturers' Perspective of Student Online Feedback System: a Case Study

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Abstract—This paper presents the results of a questionnaire based survey that had the objectives to obtain the perception of lecturers on the benefits or otherwise of students online feedback systems. The case study was carried out in four engineering faculties of a Malaysian public university that uses an online student feedback system, termed SUFO.
The main objective was to evaluate if the lecturers think that data from the online feedback system obtain via SUFO is fair and if it helps to improve their teaching quality. The results from lecturers' perception indicated that universities can use information from an online Student Feedback System to improve quality of teaching and learning.

Keywords—Student Online feedback sytem, teaching quality, Lecturer's perception, teaching & learning (key words)

I. INTRODUCTION

Academic analytics is now an important issue as it assists educational institutions in improving teaching quality, student achievement and retention [1]. Various methods are used to obtain the data both manually and computerized, formal and informal types of student feedback. Evolution of educational database as shown in Fig. 1 and discussed by [1], the use of online systems to collect educational data in Higher education is now a norm.

Student feedback is now a widely used source of information to evaluate and improve teaching effectiveness. It was argued by [2] that feedback should be a fundamental part of curriculum design and not just a mechanism delivered by teachers to learners.

Most research on student's feedback systems focused on students' ratings of their lecturers, students' satisfaction with their courses and course content quality [3]. However, according to [4] and [5] the usefulness of feedback is only credible if both perceptions from students and lecturers are obtained.

One of the objectives of this case study is to determine whether information obtained from an online student feedback system is used to improve quality of education of the case study university. Have the collected information been used to achieve the objective of development of SuFO (the online feedback system use in this case study)? The case study was carried out to determine whether SuFO has achieved its objectives which are to obtain views of students on the lecturers' quality in terms of teaching activities and professionalism.

This research goal is to check whether the information from SuFO benefits the university in improving the quality of education especially in the teaching aspect.

II. THE NEED FOR STUDENT FEEDBACK

Student feedback is a rich and valuable source of information for both formative and summative purposes. For this reason most institutions collect feedback from their students in many different forms. With the right manner, students' evaluations of lecturers' teaching can yield potential benefits to many stakeholders in the higher education context [6]. Institutions now use it to improve the quality of the education. With proper evaluation and interpretation, the information can be used for planning and implementing curriculum, teaching development and therefore completing quality cycle.

III. SUFO- A WEB BASED FEEDBACK SYSTEM

The study presented in this paper, focuses on the perspective of lecturers on the use of student feedback systems that aims to improve teaching and course content quality from lecturers' view on factors that obtained the student feedback rating.

As illustrated in Fig 2, a manual student feedback system was introduced in 2005; it then evolved to an online system in 2009 and subsequently two improved versions LEO (Lecturer's Evaluation Online) and SUFO (Student Feedback Online System) were introduced.

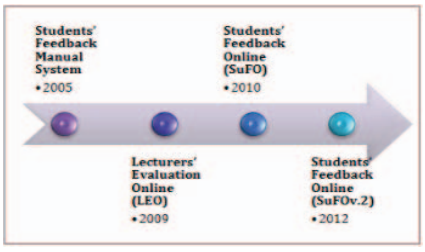

Fig 2 Evolution of Student Feedback from 2005

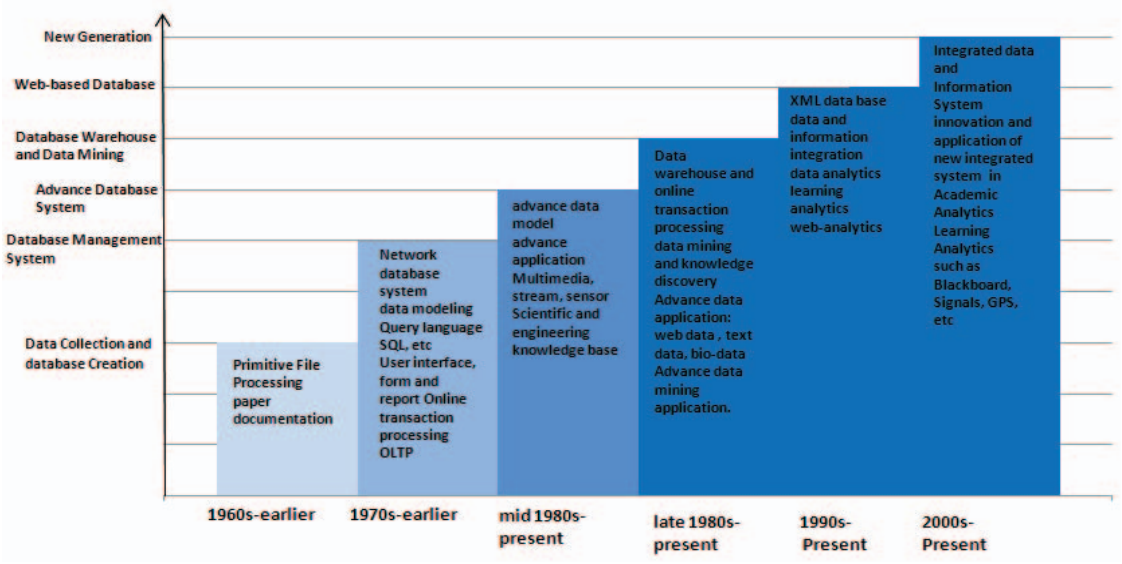

Fig 1. Evolution of educational database [1]

SuFO functions as a mechanism to facilitate faculties, academic centers, and the university branch campuses in enhancing the quality of teaching and learning activities by obtaining feedback from students. SuFO is used in Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) for all programs offered by the 24 faculties at both diploma and first degree levels. It was introduced with the objective to obtain feedback on the lecturers professionalism and teaching capabilities [5]. SuFO is available online from week 10 until one week after exam result is announced for each semester. To ensure the university gets feedback from all students, a SuFO response is made compulsory for every student before they can access their examination results for a particular semester.

The students are asked to evaluate the lecturers and the course in four categories which are:

I. Section A: Overall Impression about the course.

II. Section B: Lecturer Professionalism

III. Section C: Teaching and Learning Activities

IV. Section D: Infrastructure

Samples statements of SuFO for Section A, B and C are given in Tables 1a, 1b and 1c respectively. For statements in all sections, students are asked to evaluate on a scale of 1 (Totally do not agree) to 4 (Strongly agree) us given a scale of 1 to 4. For this case study, only sections B and C are related to lecturers teaching activities and therefore are the only sections used to obtain lecturers' perception on SuFO.

TABLE Ia. Items on (A) Overall Impression about the course

Item No	Question
A1	The course content is related to my field of study
A2	The method of assessments in this course has enhanced my learning ability

TABLE Ib. Item on (B) Lecturer Professionalism

Item No	Question
B1	The lecturer is ever ready to provide academic guidance to students
B5	Lecturer is accessible for discussion
B7	Lecturer exhibits high professionalism

TABLE Ic. Some Item on (C) Teaching and Learning Activities

Item No	Question
C1&C2	The lecturer explains the course content and method of assessments
C5	The lecturer creates environment for students to ask questions and offer opinion
C10	I enjoyed the teaching style of this lecturer

At the end of each semester, a lecturer can view his/her score, which is calculated by taking the average of overall ratings of sections B and C. Each lecturer will be scored into one of the five categories which are; Excellent (90–100), Very Good (80 -89), Good (70-79), Average (60-69) and Weak (Below 60).

IV. METHODOLOGY

A set of questionnaire which covers both open and close ended questions were emailed to all lecturers in four engineering faculties which are electrical, civil, mechanical, and chemical engineering. The questionnaire consists of 5 parts from A to E. Section A is to obtain the respondents details such as, the lecturers' background information.

Section B covers 7 statements on usage of SuFO by lecturers. It followed by benefits of SuFO to lecturers in Section C with 6 statements. Section D addresses SuFO validity with six statements. Five-point Likert Scale; 1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3 = Medium Agreement, 4 = Agree and 5 = Strongly Agree were the choices provided to the respondents.

From a total of 109 respondents, only data from 107 respondents were used since two respondents did not complete the questionnaire. Respondent profile for this case-study is given in Table II. As shown the number of female lectures outweigh the male lecturers by 156%. Thus the gender statement result analyses could be affected by this unbalanced gender ratio.

TABLE II. Respondent Profile

Gender	Male	30
	Female	77
No. of lecturers with at least 1 year working experience as an engineer	Yes	65
	No	43
Years of service	Less than 5 years (J)	9
	5 – 10 years (I)	37
	More than 10 years (S)	61

As shown in Fig. 3, the breakdown from each faculties involved are 64 from electrical engineering, 14 from civil engineering, 17 from chemical engineering and 12 from mechanical engineering.

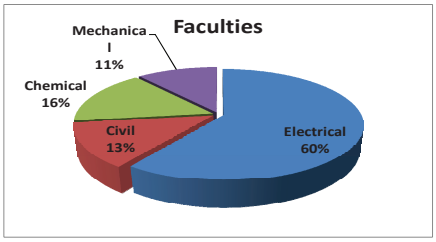

Fig 3. Breakdown of respondent for each faculty

V. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. General

Generally, the majority of results obtained for all statements were in the neutral categories. It could be assumed that the respondents have a "don't care " attitude and were not willing to give much thought to answering the statements. Therefore the neutral answers could be neglected and for most analysis, considered data only for positive (agree) or negative (disagree) answers.

Fig. 4 shows the percentage SuFO in different categories. Overall, the lowest score given is good. The majority of lecturers gain very good SuFO score. The graph also depicts that the students do not find any significant difference between the teaching abilities of male and female since the average SuFO score is similar.

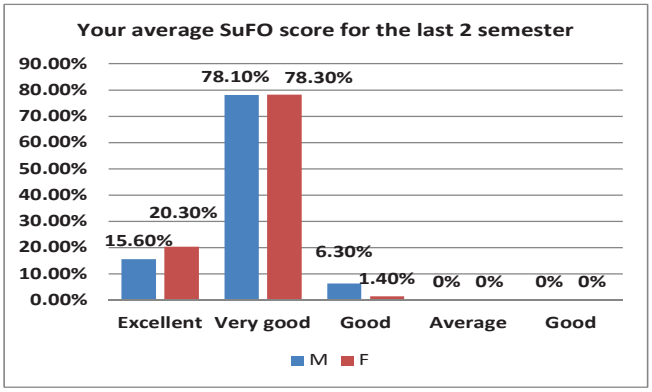

Fig. 4 Average SuFO score based on gender

Fig. 5 it clearly shows that lecturers with at least one year experience as an engineer gain higher score for SuFO. For categories Excellent and Very Good, the difference is 9.5% and 5.7% respectively.

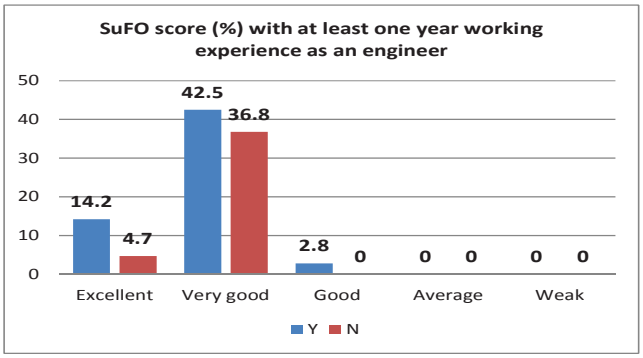

Fig. 5 Average SuFO score based whether lecturer had one year working experience as an engineer or not

Referring to Table II, 75.4% of senior lecturer, falls under 'very good' and 22.9% under 'excellent'. All juniors (9) are in category 'very good'. For lecturers work with 5 to 10 years' experience majority in the 'very good' category. As depicted no junior lecturers are in the excellent category, which is expected as there may not have enough experience to teach well.

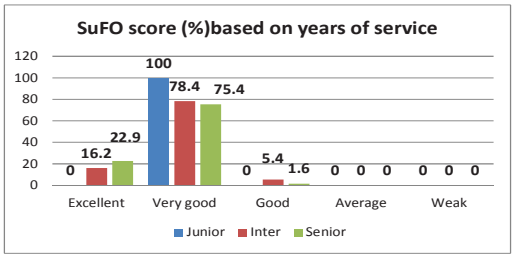

Fig. 6 Average SuFO score based years of service

B. *SuFO Usage*

Fig. 7 indicated that the majority of respondents (32.7%) chose neutral when asked whether the SuFO score is suitable to be used as a factor or as one of the criteria for promotion. From the result it also shows that combination of agree and disagree on the issue is 38.3% whilst combination of disagree and strongly disagree is about half of the value that is17.21%. Omitting the neutral respondents, most respondent agree that the SuFO score could be used as a criteria for promotion,

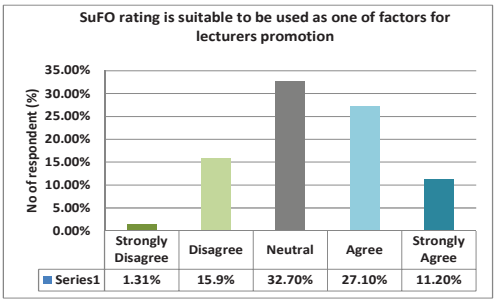

Fig 7 Lecturers' perspective on SuFO score for promotion

Fig. 8 below shows lecturers' perception on suitability of SuFO score for job promotion based on gender. It seems that the majority of female lecturers agree (41.5%) with the statement but only 24.9% of male lecturers agreed.

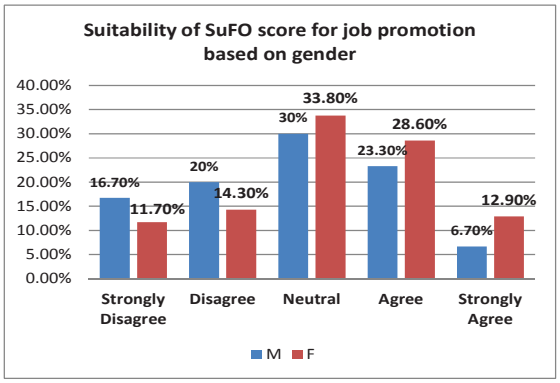

Fig 8 Lecturers' perspective on SuFO score for promotion based on gender

Comparison between lecturers' opinion on two statements; a) it is fair to use SuFO mark for yearly performance evaluation, and b) SuFO score is suitable to be used as one of factors for lecturers promotion is illustrated in Fig. 9. Overall both statement shows similar pattern for the 5-likert scale.

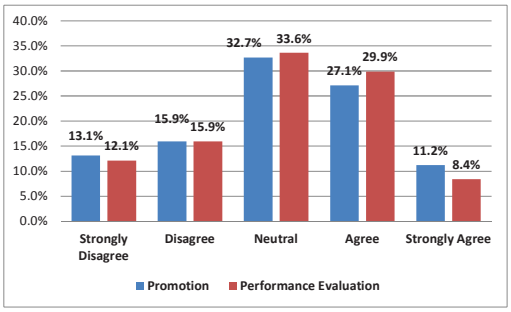

Fig 9 Lecturers' perspective on SuFO to be used for promotion and yearly performance evaluation

Fig. 10 is related to teaching and learning activities in the classroom with statement of a) In general SuFO provides genuine feedback from student on the course delivery and b) SuFO provides a reliable measure of lecturer's teaching effectiveness. The graph shows that the majority of respondent believe that the feedback from student is genuine and student evaluation on teaching effectiveness is a reliable measure.

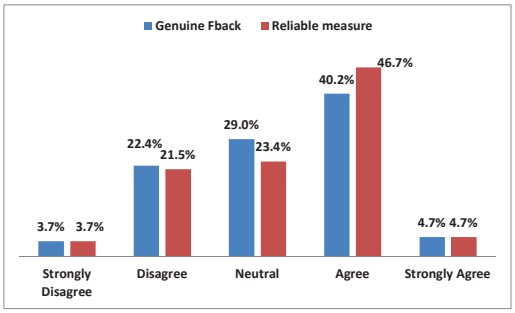

Fig 10 Lecturers' perspective on SuFO related to teaching and learning activities

C. *SuFO Benefits*

To gauge whether data from SuFO which is collected every semester is beneficial to teaching quality of lecturers three questionnaires' statements is investigated. The statements are a) I often change my teaching style base on SuFO evaluation, b) I refer to SuFO score as a measure of my strength and weakness in teaching and c) When student give low rate, I adjust to improve is investigated.

Comparison between the three statements is given in Fig 11. Respondents gave high score for scale agree in referring SuFO to see strength and weakness in teaching and also do adjustment whenever the SuFO rate from student is low. The high percentage for frequently changing teaching style based on SuFO evaluation is quite reasonable as ones need time to see the effect of changing the teaching method.

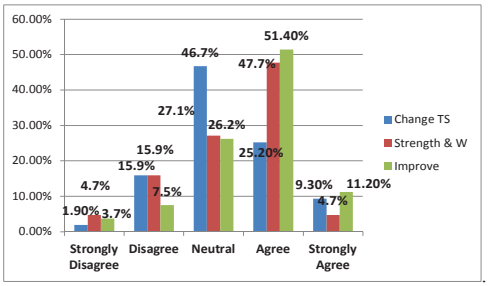

Fig 11. Improvement is made based on student rating from SuFO

D. *SuFO Validity*

Figure 12 shows the results from the statement that checks the honesty of students' evaluation in SuFO. The lecturers perception is inconclusive shown by the bell shape graph which peaks at neutral position and both positive and negative sectors have almost similar numbers of respondents. Combination of disagree and strongly disagree is 29% and from agree and strongly agree is 33%

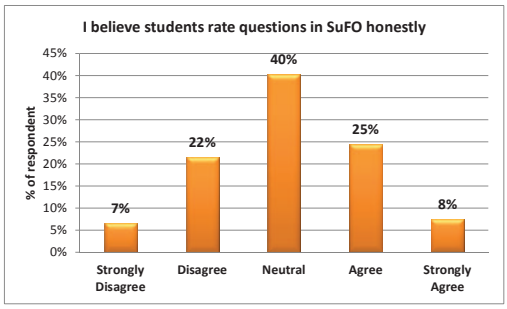

Fig 12. Lecturers' perception on honesty of SuFO rate from student

Fig. 13 is the analyses of data from two statements which are a) SuFO provides genuine feedback from students on the lecturer's professionalism and b) SuFO provides genuine feedback from students on the teaching and learning process. The result indicated the majority of respondents agree with the statements score which are 37.4% and 43% respectively. With this result, an assumption can be made that lecturers from the four engineering faculties perceived data from SuFO is trusted.

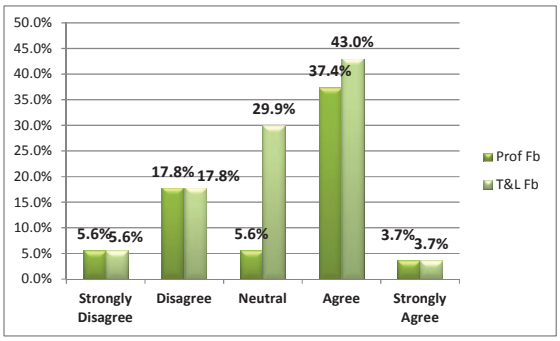

Fig 13. Lecturers' perception validity of SuFO rating

VI. CONCLUSION

The investigation showed that lecturers do not have strong believe on the honesty of student rating in general, however they have strong belief that student gave genuine feedback on lecturer's professionalism, course delivery also feedback on teaching and learning process and viewed as student given reliable measure of lecturers' teaching effectiveness.

On whether SuFO rate is suitable to be used for yearly performance evaluation and as one of criteria for job promotion, more lecturers agree even though the difference between agree than disagree only 14%.

The investigation also indicates that SuFO is suitable as a tool to improve teaching effectiveness and quality since majority used SuFO rating to see their weakness and strength and therefore adjust to improve.

In conclusion, the case study showed that a university can use information from online Student Feedback System in improving quality of education.

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