Does 360 Degree Feedback help the teachers? Opinions of Secondary School Teachers’ in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

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Abstract
The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore teachers’ opinion about 360-degree feedback. The research question was how teachers perceived the 360-degree feedback? Data were collected from six participants through semi structure interview and teachers reflective journals which they kept during the implementation of the feedback. Five themes which emerged from the data were; teachers’ performance, organizational communication, relationship among the staff, motivation for effective teaching and challenges of 360-degree feedback. The findings of the study indicated that teachers had positive opinion about the feedback as it improved their teaching performance, but they also expressed some challenges related to feedback.

Keywords: 360-degree feedback, appraisal ,teachers ’performance,

Introduction
Teaching is a profession that has the capacity to transform and alter individuals 'knowledge, skills and attitudes to strengthen and develop people. This is a complex process performby teachers at educational institutions. In order to improve their capacities and efficacy and to ensure that teachers perform their duties in such a manner that child development occurs to the optimum level they are appraised by different performance appraisal methods (Asira,
Performance appraisal is a significant element of management and administration. It evaluates employees’ potentialities and provides developmental opportunities, it also shows an employee’s achievements and supplies inputs to training and rewards (Fleenor, 2008). It is the process of monitoring employees’ performance against set standards to provide feedback to perform work with quality (Gilley, 2008). Organizations carried out performance appraisal to take certain decisions but the ideal performance appraisal helps employees to improve their performance (DeNizi, 2006). There are different methods of performance appraisal. Traditional methods of performance appraisal are more structured and give more attention to personal attributes of employees whereas modern methods are less structured and give more attention to the performance improvement aspects of employees (Eisalou, 2012).

360-degree feedback is one of the modern methods of performance appraisal. It is a tool that evaluates performance through different sources as bosses, peers, colleagues and clients. It diminishes subjective aspects and gives error free results for evaluation (Decenzo, 2016). 360-degree feedback is more valid, accepted, perfect and precise evaluation of the workforce capacities and performance outputs because evaluation is carried out objectively as contrary to subjective evaluation by a single person. According to Hosain (2016) 360-degree feedback gives a comprehensive view about the employee performance and improves the workforce performance that helps organization to preserve their competitive advantage and enhances organization confidence and workforce reservation. 360-degree feedback provides quality dialogue, supporting environment, trust, and working relationships (Morison, 2011). In this type of feedback teachers are more satisfied and happy in their intellectual stimulation, students’ interaction, cooperation with other employees, administrative assistance and support, clarity and job security (Kazi, 2018). It improves the quantity of accomplishments, job knowledge, job specific skills, and teamwork (Ouko, 2008). 360-degree feedback gives teachers insight and self-reflection, removes self-bias, improves motivation, and helps in the assessment of training needs (Kumari, 2017).

The above discussion shows that the advantages of 360-degree feedback are diverse and is considered helpful in improving the teachers’ performance. It is important the schools should use 360-degree feedback in order to improve the performance of their teachers but it is pertinent to find out teachers’ opinion about 360-degree feedback. The main purpose of this research was to investigate the opinion of Secondary School teachers about the 360-degree feedback.

**Methodology**
The researchers used qualitative approach in this study. The study took place in six boy’s schools in which 360-degree feedback was applied for three months. Six male secondary school teachers participated in the study willingly with teaching experience ranged from 5 to 11 years having Master Degree of Science/Arts and M.Ed. Semi structured interview and teachers’ reflective journals were used to collect the data. Interview protocol was developed. Before conducting the interview pilot testing was done to validate and improve the interview protocol. Six teachers were interviewed about their opinion towards 360-degree feedback. The protocol was employed
to lead the interview with appropriate process. During the interview, probe questions were asked from the teachers for further clarification. The interviews were transcribed. Open coding technique was adopted and themes were drawn from the data. Summary of the findings was presented to the interviewees to confirm that their personal opinion have accurately presented in the emergent themes and findings. For member checking, verbatim quotes were presented to them to confirm the accuracy of quotes. For triangulation, interviews and reflective journals were used. All the six participants confirmed that their personal opinion of 360-degree feedback have been presented accurately.

Findings

Teachers’ Performance
Majority of the participants were of the view that 360-degree feedback improved their teaching. They commented that first it was troubling to hear about feedback from colleagues and rating from students, but it improved their teaching. One respondent commented “When I first heard the views of colleagues about my teaching, it was discouraging and irritating then I heard several colleagues and principal and thought that it was important and gave attention to my teaching weaknesses.” Some respondent expressed their views that it enhanced their self-awareness. One participant commented, “It enlightened me what techniques of teaching should I develop.” The respondents commented that they had changed and improved their teaching as a result of engaging in 360-degree feedback. One respondent reported, “I have modified my teaching practices due to 360-degree feedback”. Some respondents appreciated the feedback discussion process. One respondent commented: “I think the discussion process helped me greatly in my teaching”. The participants ascribed the improvement in their teaching performance to several aspects within 360-degree feedback. Those included weekly observation, development meetings, pre-conferences and post-conferences before and after observations, and other coaching conversations. One of the participants replied: “It was like coaching. First targets were set in the meeting, then they pointed out my weak points and feedback was provided on these weak points. I focused on these weaknesses till they improved”.

In the reflective journal, the participants also expressed that 360-degree feedback improved their performance. One participant noted, “it was a kind of best training that I received in my teaching career.” Another participant noted, “I learned so many things about teaching in this feedback.” One participant commented, “This feedback changed my teaching performance.”

Organizational Communication
The interviewees expressed that the feedback had positive effects on organizational communication. One interviewee commented, “It promoted a free environment for expression and open communication. Before this we couldn’t talk with principals like that. Now I can express my problems with principal easily and without any hesitation”.

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Another participant expressed his opinion about the trust and clarity of the feedback. He commented, “The communication and interaction of the feedback promote and improve environment of trust and clarity. This was the first time I saw such an interactive environment especially the principal took interest”. The teachers said that the clarification of roles, responsibilities, and expectations clearly affected the two way communication positively. One participant said, “If one does not know the expectations, responsibilities and roles expected from him,…. it will not be possible for him to perform well. So this type of interactive communication is necessary to understand each other”. Another participant commented, “this provided a good chance for supportive and friendly environment to solve teaching related problems and difficulties”.

In reflective journal, one participant noted, “Now I can express myself with principal”.

**Relationship among Staff**
Majority of the respondents were of the view that relationship among staff improved. A teacher contended that “it opened the channels for a rater and ratee to talk about the strong and weak areas and to find solution for the weak areas which is very significant in teaching.” It showed that mutual interaction was developed in the feedback process. Another participant pointed out that “it strengthened the relationships in a positive way among the staff. They cared about the views of each other. It is also good for team building and interactions.”

One participant noted in his journal “This feedback provided opportunities to interact with each other.” It is concluded that a friendly relationship was created by the feedback process which is necessary for a happier and productive environment.

**Motivation for Effective Teaching**
Most of the participants reported that regular dialogue and discussion, supportive feedback, regular goals and expectations setting contributed as powerful motivators to learn and modify teaching practices. The 360-degree feedback first created nervousness, but then it was welcomed by the teachers because it stated what is effective teaching as it is standard based. The principals were working as coaches and served as motivators for improving teaching practices. One teacher related that 360-degree feedback motivated him by fulfilling his needs and trying new things. One participant praised the positive feedback, “one tries his best when he is fed back positively and not negatively. He is motivated by positive feedback to fill the gap between the actual performance and the expected performance.” In reflective journal, one participant noted, “I want to keep this feedback on, to develop myself and to keep good.”

**Challenges of 360-Degree Feedback**
360-degree feedback has great advantages but it also has some challenges and drawbacks. The advantages of 360-degree feedback are greater than challenges. Majority of respondents are of the view yet more time is needed for implementation of the feedback, observations of performance and analysis of data. One participant commented that “it needs a lot of time to
manage and analyze the feedback.” Another participant commented, “the feedback meeting needs time; sometimes it stressful for us to give time because we had to take another class.”

Some interviewees also raised the issue of cost. They said that it needed additional cost which is not possible for schools and the department does not give extra fund for this type of program implementation.

Some participants pointed out the issues of extensive training for raters and coaches. They said that raters and feedback givers should be given extensive training. One of the participants commented, “Feedback is a professional and difficult task, so it is necessary to give more training to those who rate others and provide feedback.”

**Discussion and Conclusion**

This study investigated the opinion of secondary school teachers about 360-degree feedback. The major findings of the study were that majority of the participant perceived that 360-degree feedback improved their teaching performance, promoted communication in the organization, improved their relationships with students, teachers and head masters and motivated them for effective teaching. The findings are aligned with findings in the existing literature which shows positive thinking about the feedback. Kumari (2017) investigated the employees’ opinion towards 360-degree feedback performance appraisal system and found that 360-degree feedback helped the employees to analyze and express their developmental needs, give workers insight of what is expected of them, and give an opportunity of self-reflection. Moreover, peer appraisal removes self-bias, the appraiser and appraise jointly understand their roles and targets that helps in the assessment of training needs. They further indicated that 360-degree feedback improved employees’ motivation and improved their performance which increased their productivity. The findings of this study are also consistent with Mahar (2010) who investigated teachers’ opinion regarding 360-degree feedback in his descriptive study. He found that 360-degree feedback is more useful than conventional appraisal in developing professional goals, identifying professional developmental needs and focusing on students achievements. Another study by Alexander (2012) illustrated in his research study that 360-degree feedback provides an environment of relationship building in the organization and this relationship affects others and is affected by others. Relationship is of great value that the feedback provides to any organization. Morison (2011) explored the opinion of participants about 360-degree feedback in his qualitative research study. The interviews with participants in 360-degree feedback indicated the significant aspects; among them is the quality of dialogue when discussing the feedback, the nature of supporting environment, the level of trust, and the quality of working relationships that the participants perceived. These findings are also support the findings of our study. Shamsi (2014) conducted a survey research study in public and private sector universities in Sindh about the impact of 360-degree feedback on employees’ satisfaction. The researcher of this study found that teacher perceives 360-degree feedback positively and was more satisfied and happy with different types of activities. They were of the view that it stimulates their intellect and improve interaction with students, other employees and administrative staff.
The study also found that 360-degree feedback has some drawbacks which create challenges for the employers and employees while implanting this. The challenges were; extra cost, more time and student rating. These findings are in line with the findings of Aderhold (2001) comparative research study. He found that the students do not want to hurt their teachers and thus overrate on the scale. Also, it is a lengthy process, because more time is needed for training, implementation, analysis and follow-up; it needs more cost for different activities in the 360-degree feedback process.

Based on the information obtained from this study, it is concluded that the teachers perceive the 360-degree feedback positively. So it is recommended that 360-degree feedback may be implemented at school level in order to improve the quality of teaching. Further researches may be conducted with larger samples. It also recommended that policy may consider an effective system of evaluation to increase teachers' performance and development.

References


