

The Role of Student Feedback in Enhancing Educational Quality: A Case Study of the Faculty of Computer Science, Herat University

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Abstract

This study examines the role of student feedback in enhancing the quality of education at the Faculty of Computer Science, Herat University. The main research question addresses how the current feedback system influences educational quality, with the hypothesis that systematic integration of student feedback, combined with refined collection, analysis, and application methods, significantly improves educational quality and learning outcomes as perceived by both students and faculty. A cross-sectional study was conducted over three consecutive semesters (Spring 1403, Fall 1403, and Spring 1404) with 411 feedback forms collected through convenience sampling. Data were gathered using a 15-item questionnaire and analyzed with IBM SPSS Statistics (version 29); quantitative variables were summarized using means, while qualitative variables were presented as percentages, and relationships between qualitative variables were assessed with the Chi-square test ($p < 0.05$ considered significant). Findings indicate that student feedback acts as a dynamic and influential mechanism for improving educational quality, showing positive correlations with overall faculty performance and departmental outcomes. The results emphasize that active integration of student feedback enhances instructional effectiveness, academic processes, and student engagement. This study highlights the critical importance of feedback in creating a responsive and continuously improving university environment and provides empirical evidence supporting the strategic use of feedback mechanisms to foster teaching quality and a culture of academic excellence in higher education.

Keywords: Teaching evaluation, student feedback, continuous improvement, Herat University, quality assurance, educational quality.

Introduction

In the continuous pursuit of academic excellence, universities and higher education institutions consistently seek to refine and improve their approaches to enhance

educational quality. Among the key elements in this endeavor are quality assurance and accreditation, which serve as critical mechanisms for monitoring and sustaining academic standards (Rahimi & Ayoubi, 2023). However, one important yet underutilized resource in this process is student feedback. Despite its recognized potential to improve learning environments, effectively integrating student feedback into teaching practices often encounters multiple barriers (Molina-Moreira et al., 2023; Novák, 2023). In many cases, instructors either resist feedback due to personal or structural reasons or fail to apply it effectively, resulting in missed opportunities to enhance teaching and learning processes (Lutovac et al., 2017). While student feedback is a vital tool for assessing educational quality, the precise mechanisms through which it improves actual teaching remain unclear (Stroebe, 2016).

The connection between gathering students' perspectives and translating them into meaningful changes in curriculum content and teaching methods requires systematic and in-depth analysis (Roxå & Mårtensson, 2011) and is further influenced by the quality and timeliness of feedback as well as concerns regarding objectivity and validity (García-Jiménez, 2015; Molina-Moreira et al., 2023). Consequently, the potential of student feedback remains underexploited in many educational settings, particularly at higher education levels. Considering the increasing emphasis on continuous growth and responsiveness to student needs, examining optimal utilization of student feedback is essential (Novák, 2023). Effective feedback mechanisms not only enhance student performance but also assist instructors in refining teaching strategies and curriculum design (Carless, 2022; Lutovac et al., 2017; Surujlal, 2014).

In Afghanistan, and particularly at Herat University, systematic, data-driven research on the role of student feedback in improving educational quality is very limited. Most existing studies have been qualitative, short-term, or cross-sectional and have rarely examined trends over multiple semesters. The novelty of this study lies in collecting and analyzing student feedback data across three consecutive semesters and three departments within the Faculty of Computer Science at Herat University, combining feedback with institutional performance indicators to provide a comprehensive understanding of strengths, challenges, and trends in teaching and learning improvement within this local context.

The main aim of this research is to investigate the role of student feedback in enhancing educational quality in the Faculty of Computer Science at Herat University. The primary research question is: How does the current student feedback system at the Faculty of Computer Science influence the enhancement of educational quality? Sub-questions include the extent to which student feedback improves instructor behavior and interaction with students (fairness, mutual respect, responsiveness), enhances diverse teaching methods (group work, discussion, Q&A), and increases the use of teaching aids (projectors, charts, maps). This study hypothesizes that systematic integration of student feedback over multiple semesters can significantly improve teaching quality, student learning, and overall departmental performance, offering valuable insights for policy-making and professional development initiatives at Herat University.

The central idea of this study—that student feedback can play a key role in enhancing educational quality—is an important and increasingly prominent topic in the higher education literature. Numerous theoretical and empirical studies at both international and national levels have addressed various dimensions of this issue, including the nature of

feedback, implementation challenges, its effects on teaching improvement, and the need for its institutionalization within quality assurance structures.

One recurring concept in the literature emphasizes the role of student feedback as a fundamental tool for evaluating the effectiveness of teaching and curricula. Novák (2023) argues that feedback should not merely serve as a measure of satisfaction but should act as a primary driver for refining teaching methods. This perspective informed the design of the current study's questionnaire, which measures changes in teaching methods, course content, and instructor-student interaction, and was applied in a longitudinal analysis across three consecutive semesters.

Surujlal (2014), inspired by a service-oriented approach, likens students to university customers who can provide valuable insights regarding educational quality. This approach underpinned questions in the questionnaire that assess students' perceptions of fairness, mutual respect, and instructor responsiveness, which were subsequently used in comparative analyses across departments.

Despite these positive perspectives, empirical studies point to practical limitations in the effective implementation of feedback. For example, Ciuchi et al. (2024) and Surujlal (2014) highlight challenges such as heavy course loads, inadequate feedback tools, delayed execution, and the absence of systematic analysis. These findings informed the choice of data analysis methods and the examination of institutional barriers in applying feedback within the local context of this study.

Carless (2022) introduces the concept of "feedback literacy," in which students are not only recipients but also producers, analyzers, and active responders to feedback. These four dimensions—receiving, analyzing, producing, and responding—were operationalized in the study's questionnaire, with each dimension measured through a dedicated set of questions. Data from these sections were used in statistical analyses to identify differences between departments and trends over three semesters.

Molina-Moreira et al. (2023) emphasize that feedback should be an integral part of the teaching-learning process, providing students with clear, timely, and encouraging information. Accordingly, the current questionnaire included items assessing the quality, timing, and tone of instructor feedback, which were used to analyze the relationship between feedback quality and student satisfaction.

Sepma et al. (2018) in Estonia demonstrated that instructors experience feedback both as a professional development tool and as a means of administrative evaluation. Their findings—including limited student participation and the one-sided nature of feedback systems—informed the design of the current questionnaire to encourage two-way interaction and active student engagement.

Recent studies also stress the need to institutionalize feedback within a structured and responsive system. Farkas et al. (2023), using Q-methodology, showed that students' needs are diverse and that a uniform design is insufficient. Ciuchi et al. (2024) similarly highlighted the importance of revising feedback forms in collaboration with students. This data-driven approach was implemented in the current study through department- and semester-specific statistical analyses to identify differences in needs and perceptions.

Within the domestic literature, although dedicated studies on student feedback are limited, two key investigations on quality assurance in Afghan higher education clarify its role. Mohammad Behzad et al. (2024), using a grounded theory approach, developed a localized model of higher education quality assurance that emphasizes internal

evaluations, student participation, and the use of technology for feedback analysis as key strategies. Rahimi and Ayoubi (2023), in reviewing the state of quality assurance in Afghan higher education institutions, identified staff inexperience, lack of appropriate feedback tools, and insufficient local evaluation structures as major challenges. These findings provided the rationale for adopting a repeated cross-sectional design and developing a data collection instrument in the present study, ensuring both alignment with local conditions and the possibility for trend analysis.

Material and Method

Study Design

This study employed a repeated cross-sectional design conducted over three consecutive semesters (Spring 1403, Fall 1403, and Spring 1404) at the Faculty of Computer Science, Herat University. The main objective was to examine the role of student feedback in shaping educational quality and to analyze the relationships between student feedback, departmental performance indicators, and faculty-level outcomes.

Study Population

The target population comprised all students enrolled in the Faculty of Computer Science during the three semesters under study.

Sample Size

A total of 411 students participated in this study, contributing their feedback alongside institutional performance data. Participants were selected from students present in the three consecutive semesters. In each semester, a number of students from each class were chosen using convenience sampling to ensure adequate representation and diversity across the faculty. The sample size was determined based on conventional rules of thumb (minimum 25 students per comparison group) and standard statistical power criteria, which were deemed sufficient for the planned analyses.

Sampling Method

Participants were selected using convenience sampling, based on student availability during the semesters under investigation.

Data Collection

Data were collected using structured questionnaires, complemented by official departmental performance statistics for the three semesters. Open-ended qualitative feedback from students was also gathered to enrich and triangulate the quantitative findings.

Statistical Analysis

All data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics (version 29). Descriptive statistics were reported as means. Inferential analysis was performed by categorizing total feedback scores into "low" and "high" groups for each semester, and relationships were examined using the Chi-square test. A significance level of 0.05 was applied.

Findings

This study was conducted over three consecutive semesters (Spring 1403, Fall 1403, and Spring 1404) among the departments of Software Engineering, Information Systems, and Network Engineering at the Faculty of Computer Science. In each semester, students evaluated the instructors with whom they attended courses using an online form. This evaluation covered course materials, teaching methods, instructor behavior toward students, and the methods used by instructors to assess students. Table 1 presents the number of students and instructors across the three semesters.

Table 1. The number of students and instructors across the three semesters

Semester	Department	Number of Evaluation Forms	Number of Instructors
Spring 1403	Software Engineering	46	3
	Information Systems	27	2
	Network Engineering	48	4
Fall 1403	Software Engineering	49	3
	Information Systems	36	3
	Network Engineering	36	4
Spring 1404	Software Engineering	58	4
	Information Systems	61	5
	Network Engineering	50	4

According to Table 1, a total of 121 students participated in Spring 1403, 121 students in Fall 1403, and 169 students in Spring 1404, while 9 instructors were evaluated in Spring 1403, 10 instructors in Fall 1403, and 13 instructors in Spring 1404.

Table 2. Evaluation results of the Software Engineering Department across three semesters

No. Criterion	Spring 1403	Autumn 1403	Spring 1404
Course materials (books/lecture notes, etc.) are understandable and relevant to the subject.	53.3	68.9	76.72
Structure and volume of course materials (books/course notes) are standard and appropriate (including table of contents, introduction, smooth text, objectives of each lesson, references, suitable volume – 80 to 128 pages per credit).	56.5	65.3	84.05
Teaching of the subject follows the course policy shared at the beginning.	69.6	75.0	84.91
Instructor has mastery of the subject and is adequately prepared for teaching.	66.9	72.5	79.74
Instructor's clarity and explanation for transferring knowledge are satisfactory.	59.2	63.3	71.98
Instructor manages class environment and time appropriately.	64.1	73.0	83.19
Instructor treats students fairly and with mutual respect.	70.1	83.7	91.81
Instructor responds to students' questions in an appropriate and encouraging manner.	71.7	80.6	85.34
Instructor interacts with students impartially and without discrimination.	78.3	87.2	90.95
Instructor uses participatory teaching methods and engages students in the lesson.	69.6	72.5	80.17
Instructor applies diverse teaching methods (e.g., group work, discussion/debate, Q&A, case studies, fieldwork).	58.2	56.1	72.84
Instructor uses teaching aids (projector, charts, maps, etc.) to enhance concept delivery.	57.6	77.0	86.21
Exam questions are diverse and prepared based on course materials.	62.0	63.8	84.05
Semester grading distribution is based on class activities, daily/class assessments, or homework.	71.7	76.5	83.62
Instructor evaluates students during the semester (daily, class-based, or mid-semester).	66.9	68.9	82.76
Overall average	65.0	72.3	82.56

As shown in Table 2, the highest percentage of student satisfaction relates to the instructor's fair and respectful behavior toward students, while the lowest percentage of satisfaction pertains to course materials being understandable and relevant to the subject. The evaluation results for three semesters of the Information Systems Department are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Results of the three-semester evaluation for the Department of Information Systems

No. Criteria	Spring 1403	Autumn 1403	Spring 1404
Course materials (books/lecture notes, etc.) are understandable and relevant to the subject.	77.8	54.2	77.87
Structure and volume of course materials (books/handouts) are appropriate and standard (including table of contents, introduction, clear text, learning objectives, references, appropriate length – 80–128 pages per credit).	76.9	52.8	77.05
Teaching of the subject follows the curriculum (course policy) shared at the beginning.	87.0	68.8	88.52
Instructor is knowledgeable and adequately prepared for teaching the subject.	88.9	63.9	81.56
Instructor's clarity and ability to explain content is satisfactory.	79.6	43.8	72.13
Instructor manages classroom environment and time appropriately.	74.1	53.5	79.1
Instructor treats students fairly and with mutual respect.	88.0	75.7	89.34
Instructor responds to students' questions in a supportive manner.	88.0	71.5	84.02
Instructor treats students impartially and without discrimination.	92.6	85.4	88.93
Instructor uses participatory teaching methods and involves students in the class.	77.8	68.1	78.28
Instructor uses diverse teaching methods (e.g., group work, discussion/debate, Q&A, practical exercises, fieldwork).	63.0	48.6	74.59
Instructor uses teaching aids (e.g., projector, charts, maps) to enhance understanding.	71.3	76.4	88.11
Exam questions are diverse and based on course materials.	80.6	72.2	82.79
Semester grades are distributed based on class participation, daily/class assessments, or homework.	81.5	68.1	83.2
Instructor evaluates students during the semester (daily, class-based, or mid-semester).	75.0	65.3	77.46
Overall average	80.1	64.5	81.53

As seen in Table 3, the highest percentage of student satisfaction pertains to the instructor's fair and unbiased behavior toward students, while the lowest percentage of satisfaction relates to the instructor's clarity and effectiveness in conveying the course content.

Table 4. Three-Semester Evaluation Results of the Department of Network Engineering

No. Criterion	Spring 1403	Autumn 1403	Spring 1404
Course materials (books/lecture notes, etc.) are understandable and appropriate for the subject.	73.4	79.4	65
Structure and volume of course materials (books/handouts) are standard and appropriate (including table of contents, introduction, fluent text, objectives of each lesson, references, appropriate volume – 80 to 128 pages per credit).	74.0	74.5	72.5
Teaching of the subject follows the syllabus (course policy) prepared at the beginning.	88.0	83.2	83
The instructor is proficient in the subject and well-prepared for teaching.	67.2	82.1	67
The instructor's clarity and explanation for delivering content is satisfactory.	60.4	74.5	61.5
The instructor manages class environment and time appropriately.	78.1	85.9	79
The instructor treats students fairly and with mutual respect.	80.7	84.2	87.5
The instructor responds to students' questions in an appropriate manner.	72.4	83.2	87
The instructor treats students fairly and without discrimination.	91.2	88.0	88
The instructor uses participatory teaching methods and engages students in the class.	76.0	81.0	72
The instructor uses diverse teaching methods (e.g., group work, discussion and debate, Q&A, applications, fieldwork).	55.2	69.0	66
The instructor uses teaching aids (projector, charts, maps, etc.) for better content delivery.	57.3	86.4	84
Exam questions are diverse and prepared based on course materials.	78.7	84.2	78
Semester grading is based on class activities, daily or class assessments, or homework.	84.9	90.2	83.5
The instructor evaluates students during the semester (daily, class-based, or mid-term).	83.3	92.9	76
Overall Average	74.7	82.6	76.67

As shown in Table 4, the highest student satisfaction percentage is related to continuous semester assessments, while the lowest student satisfaction percentage pertains to the instructors' use of diverse teaching methods.

The results of the three-semester evaluation of the Faculty of Computer Science are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Results of the Three-Semester Evaluation of the Faculty of Computer Science

Number	Criterion	Spring 1403	Autumn 1403	Spring 1404
	Course materials (books/lecture notes, etc.) are understandable and appropriate to the subject.	68.2	67.5	73.20
	The structure and volume of course materials (books/lecture notes) are standard and appropriate (including table of contents, introduction, smooth text, objectives of each lesson, references, suitable volume – 80 to 128 pages per credit).	69.1	64.2	77.87
	The teaching of the subject follows the course policy shared at the beginning.	81.5	75.6	85.48
	The instructor has mastery of the subject and is well-prepared.	74.3	72.8	76.10
	The instructor's ability to explain and convey the material is satisfactory.	66.4	60.5	68.54
	The instructor manages the class environment and time appropriately.	72.1	70.8	80.43
	The instructor interacts with students fairly and with mutual respect.	79.6	81.2	89.55
	The instructor responds appropriately to students' questions.	77.4	78.4	85.45
	The instructor treats students fairly and without discrimination.	87.3	86.9	89.29
	The instructor uses participatory teaching methods and involves students in the class.	74.5	73.8	76.82
	The instructor uses diverse teaching methods (e.g., group work, debates, Q&A, applications, fieldwork).	58.8	57.9	71.14
	The instructor uses teaching aids (e.g., projector, charts, maps, etc.) to better convey concepts.	62.1	79.9	86.11
	Exam questions are diverse and based on course materials.	73.7	73.4	81.61
	Semester grades are distributed based on class activities, daily or in-class assessments, or homework.	79.4	78.3	83.44
	The instructor evaluates students during the semester (daily, in-class, or mid-semester).	75.1	75.7	78.74
	Overall average	73.3	73.1	80.25

As shown in Table 5, students in the Faculty of Computer Science were generally satisfied with the instructors' fair and non-discriminatory behavior, while the greatest challenge was observed in the use of diverse teaching methods by the instructors.

The average scores of the Software Engineering Department across the three consecutive semesters are illustrated in Figure 1.

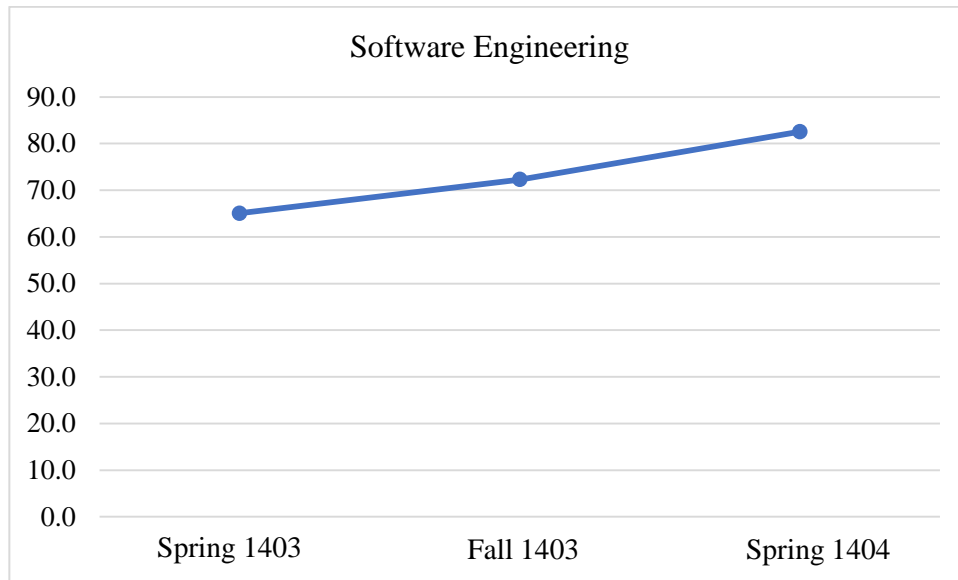


Figure 1. Average Scores of the Software Engineering Department

As shown in Figure 1, the average scores of the Software Engineering Department increased from Spring 1403 to Fall 1403 and reached their highest level in Spring 1404. The average scores of the Information Systems Department across the three consecutive semesters are presented in Figure 2.

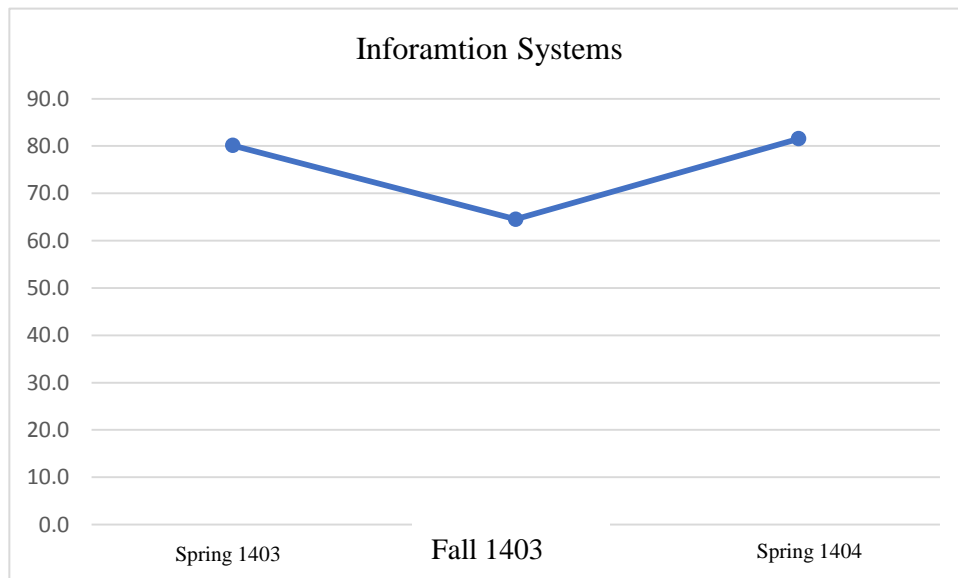


Figure 2. Average Scores of the Department of Information Systems

As shown in Figure 2, the average scores of the Department of Information Systems decreased in Fall 1403 but increased again in Spring 1404. The average scores of the Department of Network Engineering over three consecutive semesters are shown in Figure 3.

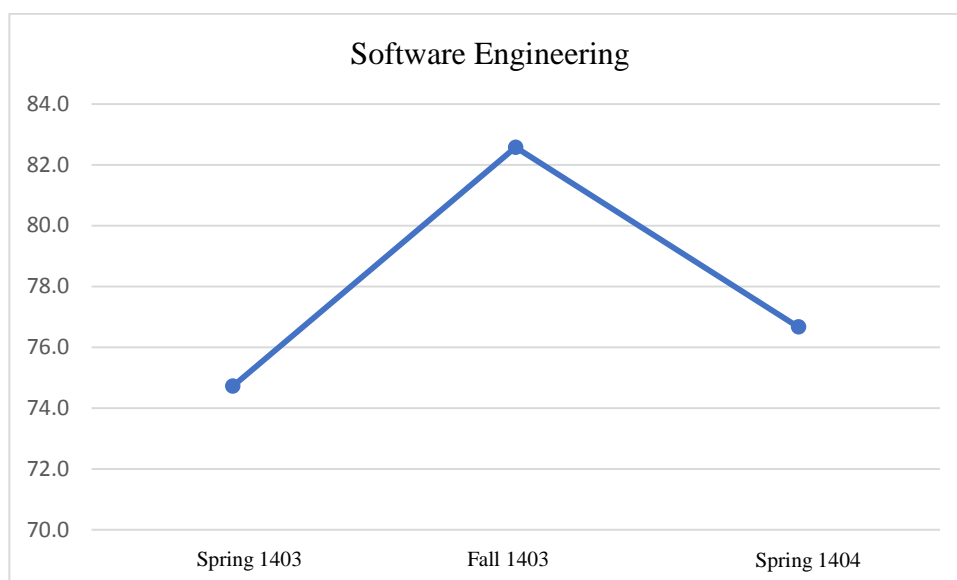


Figure 3. Average scores of the Department of Network Engineering
 As shown in Figure 3, the average scores of the Department of Network Engineering increased from Spring 1403 to Autumn 1403 and then decreased again in Spring 1404. The overall scores across the three semesters for the Faculty of Computer Science are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Results of the Three-Semester Evaluation of the Faculty of Computer Science

Semester	Low Score (<60)	High Score (≥60)	P-Value	Chi-Square
Spring 1403	59 (48.8%)	62 (51.2%)		
Autumn 1403	55 (45.5%)	66 (54.5%)	0.002	12.145
Spring 1404	51 (30.2%)	118 (69.8%)		

As shown in Table 6, there is a significant difference in scores across the semesters (Spring 1403, Autumn 1403, and Spring 1404). The scores increased in the more recent semesters.

Discussion

This study analyzed the role of student feedback in enhancing educational quality by examining data from three consecutive semesters (Spring 1403, Autumn 1403, and Spring 1404) in the Faculty of Computer Science at Herat University. The findings indicate that students’ satisfaction with instructors’ teaching improved across most indicators, although some areas exhibited notable fluctuations. These patterns suggest that student feedback is not only a key tool for improving teaching quality but also that institutional understanding and responsiveness to feedback involve specific complexities and contextual factors.

In the Department of Software Engineering, a stable upward trend was observed: the average feedback scores increased from 65% in Spring 1403 to 72.3% in Autumn 1403 and further to 82.56% in Spring 1404. This gradual growth aligns with Novák (2023), who argues that effective feedback, when systematically collected and addressed, can lead to significant improvements in teaching and learning. In contrast, the Departments of Information Systems and Network Engineering displayed greater fluctuations in scores,

which may be attributed to institutional factors such as changes in faculty composition, class sizes, and student participation in the feedback process. As Novák also notes, these differences affect the stability of feedback outcomes, highlighting that the quality and consistency of results depend not only on the feedback mechanism itself but also on the operational and structural conditions of each department.

Conversely, the Information Systems Department experienced sharp fluctuations. This department started with a relatively high average score of 80.12% in Spring 1403, dropped sharply to 64.54% in Autumn of the same year, and then recovered to 81.53% in Spring 1404. Investigations suggest that these fluctuations may be due to factors such as faculty turnover, increased class sizes, and high workloads for teaching staff. Such conditions, as reported by Surujlal (2014), can cause instability in responsiveness to feedback and reduce the effectiveness of improvement measures. This finding demonstrates that the sustainability of feedback effects depends not only on the quality of data collection and analysis but also on the institutional environment and working conditions.

The Network Engineering Department displayed a relatively stable trajectory, with scores rising from 74.72% in Spring 1403 to 82.57% in Autumn 1403 and then slightly decreasing to 76.67% in Spring 1404. These changes indicate a relative stability in the teaching performance of faculty members in this department.

At the faculty level, the overall average scores increased from 73.29% in Spring 1403 to 80.25% in Spring 1404. This positive trend reflects enhanced institutional responsiveness and adaptation to student feedback. Studies such as Farkas et al. (2023) also emphasize that the systematic use of student feedback data can practically and effectively support educational orientation and quality enhancement.

Another notable finding is the consistently high scores for the indicator “fair and respectful treatment of students by instructors” across all departments, which, according to Molina-Moreira et al. (2023) and Surujlal (2014), is a key factor in students’ perception of teaching quality. Conversely, the lowest scores were mostly associated with the use of diverse teaching methods—a challenge reported internationally—indicating the need for investment in active and participatory teaching skills.

Although this study did not directly address the concept of “feedback literacy,” the ongoing participation of students in the evaluations across three semesters, coupled with improved instructor responsiveness, indicates the gradual development of a feedback-oriented culture. This trend aligns with the perspective of Carless (2022) and Carless & Boud (2018), who emphasize active student engagement in the feedback process and the development of capacity to interpret and respond to feedback.

However, the notable fluctuations at the departmental level, particularly the sharp variations in the Information Systems Department, highlight the importance of analyzing internal contexts, departmental leadership styles, and specific teaching approaches. These findings confirm that a single approach cannot be universally applied across all departments and institutional settings; rather, traditional and structural differences must be considered (Carless & Boud, 2018).

The results of this study, in line with Roxa & Martensson (2011), demonstrate that when student feedback is effectively analyzed and utilized, it not only reveals deficiencies but also provides a foundation for targeted interventions and significant improvements in teaching quality. Temporary declines in some semesters may serve as indicators of

vulnerability in internal feedback processes, warranting further investigation in future studies.

Ultimately, these findings provide a documented, data-driven basis for strategic planning, evidence-based decision-making, and informed resource allocation. Since this study was conducted in a relatively under-researched context such as Herat University, it can serve as a model for developing similar research in other educational environments in developing regions.

Conclusion

The findings of this case study in the Faculty of Computer Science at Herat University clearly demonstrate that student feedback can play a crucial role in improving teaching quality. The significant increase in student satisfaction over three consecutive semesters, particularly in departments that responded effectively to feedback, indicates that feedback is not merely a tool for assessing educational quality but can also serve as a catalyst for real changes in teaching practices and educational interactions. The variations in progress patterns among departments revealed that the effectiveness of feedback depends on the operational capacities, management approaches, and responsiveness culture within each academic unit. These findings align with previous studies emphasizing the importance of institutional context and working conditions in sustaining the effects of feedback. Therefore, it can be concluded that, in this case study, when student feedback is systematically collected, analyzed, and considered in educational decision-making, it can serve as one of the most effective tools for enhancing teaching quality in this local context. Furthermore, the analytical framework and methodology employed in this research may provide a model for similar studies in other faculties and educational institutions in Afghanistan, provided they are adapted to local conditions and needs.

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Data Availability Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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