

## Modern Feedback System: A Survey

Subodh Garg <sup>[#1]</sup>, Sukanya Sarma <sup>[#2]</sup>, Supriya G <sup>[#3]</sup>, Saba Naureen <sup>[#4]</sup>, Dr. Prasad G R <sup>[\*5]</sup>

<sup>#</sup>UG Scholar, Dept. of CSE, BMSCE, Bangalore, India  
<sup>\*</sup>Associate Professor, Dept. of CSE, BMSCE, Bangalore, India

<sup>1</sup>gargsubodh36@gmail.com

<sup>2</sup>sukanyya14@gmail.com

<sup>3</sup>supriyag36@gmail.com

<sup>4</sup>naureensaba311@gmail.com

<sup>5</sup>prasad.cse@bmsce.ac.in

**Abstract**-The Feedback given by the stake holders about the current state of performance of any organization is essential for its growth. It provides vital information, which can be used to improve performance. In this way it provides motivation and fuels the continual improvement process. In business, it helps to deliver the best customer experiences. It forms the backbone of success of any institution or individual. It also forms the crust of good supervision in any organization. Feedback system initially started with raising hands, saying yes or no, then it evolved into answering questions through feedback forms, suggestion boxes etc. With the evolution in internet technology, it has now changed into web based, app based feedback systems etc. This paper explains different feedback systems that are currently in use and also explains about advantages and disadvantages of these systems.

**Keywords**- feedback, offline feedback system, online feedback system.

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### I. INTRODUCTION

“Feedback is the breakfast of champions” – Ken Blanchard.

Feedback is nothing but expressing one’s opinion on a product, a person’s performance on a task etc., which can be used as the basis of improvement. It is useful information given at the right time and through the right means. Feedback is useful right from grass root level like day to day lectures in classrooms, small businesses like restaurants to big organizations like MNCs. It helps to identify the weaknesses of any system and make necessary improvements. It is essential for businesses to understand customer needs and identify patterns in the behavior of the customer. In case of an event, it is necessary to keep communication lines open with the audience. It is essential to analyze the responses of the customers and prioritize the highlighted issues. It serves as the fuel for the continual process of improvement. It determines the overall success of any organization, event or individual to a great extent. Feedback can be categorized in various ways on the basis of mode of input, use, impact etc. It can be broadly classified into two main categories namely online and offline feedback. Any feedback taken via internet can be called as online feedback while the rest falls under offline feedback. Online feedback includes app-based, website-based etc. and offline includes paper-based, telephonic surveys etc. This paper details on the different ways of classifying feedback and the various advantages and disadvantages of each approach.

### II. SURVEY

#### A. Offline Feedback Systems

The feedback systems that gather meaningful information (often manually) without being controlled by or directly connected to the computer or the internet are known as offline feedback systems. These are still widely popular due to their simplicity. Some of the most commonly used offline feedback systems are as described below.

##### 1) Paper – Based Feedback Systems

The response rates of online and paper surveys is studied in one of the research paper written by Duncan d Nulty, as in [1]. The response rate for paper-based surveys is conservative because a feedback taker may hand out paper surveys to one sub-group of people rather than to all that were enrolled. But it shows that online surveys do not achieve response rates that are even close to what is achieved with paper-based surveys.

##### a) Feedback Form

The most common method to gather feedback is by asking the customer to fill the Feedback Form manually. Most of the companies use feedback forms to get information about the sales, performance and drawbacks to set their future goals. Ref. [2] says that hard copy customer feedback forms offer a great means to gather feedback from customers as it

can be given by sitting in the office or can be used during business meetings as well.

*b) Suggestion Box:*

Ref. [3] describes the use of a suggestion box can offer fresh insight, innovative thinking and impressive cost saving measures. It will make sure that the ideas and opinions of the employees are encouraged for the company's future input, as their suggestion brings up important views. Hence a properly designed, well-executed suggestion box system can encourage and motivate employees to offer their input which can be beneficial to their respective company.

*c) Feedback Columns In Newspapers And Magazines*

Feedback columns written by columnists in newspapers and magazines can also serve as means of indirect feedback. They help the readers to voice their opinions about a certain issue as well as provide feedback to the editors of the newspaper. Ref. [4] describes how newspapers and magazines also employ other writers to offer their individual opinions in the newspaper. Readers generally turn to newspapers for unbiased factual reporting, but it may give wrong information sometimes. Personal column based on wisdom and religious knowledge assists the columnists for true and genuine public opinion.

*2) Phone – Based Feedback Systems*

*a) SMS Based Surveys*

According to the recent survey, people look at their phones an average of 150 times a day. Thus, mobile surveys form an important part of the feedback process. Ross Beard, as in [2] speaks about "mPoll.me" which is a useful platform which gives users the ability to build and deliver amazing mobile surveys that are distributed via a simple text message. Feedback gathered through SMS is simple, easy to use and real-time. It can be used to know about the audience response in events, expos, conferences, shows etc., for e.g. voting systems in reality shows.

*b) Telephone Survey*

Ref. [6] describes about surveys carried out through telephones. This article defines telephone survey as a survey method in which useful information is collected either from the general public or from a specific target population. Telephone numbers are utilized effectively by trained interviewers to contact and gather the necessary information from possible respondents. The article also explains few advantages and disadvantages of telephone surveys. Ref. [7] mentions the importance such surveys in closing the loop for

upheaving customer loyalty. Such surveys are important not only to identify the loop holes but also to probe deeper into the concerns of the customer as well as to make direct interaction between the customers and the experts.

*3) Verbal Feedback Systems*

*a) Face-to-Face Feedback*

Face-to-face feedback is a common feedback methodology which gathers vital information given directly to one or more people. Ref. [8] details about how giving this kind of feedback at the right place, right time and right manner plays a great role in its effectiveness. This article also states that in such feedback it is important to sandwich negative feedback between positive feedbacks to make it constructive. People will not only hear what is being said, they will perceive the greater meaning of the tone used, voice inflection, emotion and body language. Immediate comprehension in this type of feedback leads to more effective results as compared to other types of feedback, as in [9].

*b) Raising Hands*

Raising of hands is a method of gathering feedback that has prevailed from the olden times. It is a method of letting the speaker know if a person from the audience would like to clarify any doubt or express his/her opinion about a certain topic. It also includes expressing of opinion by more than one person in support of or against a certain decision. Ref. [10] describes about the benefits of student participation in classroom discussions which is possible through raising of hands to answer any question or ask any doubts to the teacher. The article mentions that this method is simple, organized, on the spot and encourages active participation of the audience. It also helps in improving the understanding and interest of the audience regarding a specific topic. This system has lots of advantages like the cost of its implementation is very less, it is reliable, need not require any technical experts, suitable for essay writing and analysis. It also has some of the disadvantages like inaccessibility to reach everyone, limited flexibility, its lengthy process etc.

*B. Online Feedback System*

The feedback system which is controlled by or directly connected to a computer or the Internet that gathers useful information is known as online feedback system. With the advent of technology these feedback systems have become more and more popular. It can be mainly classified into two categories: Website - based feedback system and App – based feedback system.

### 1) Web – Based Feedback System

The collection and analysis of feedback can be very time – consuming, especially on large courses. Collecting feedback online can significantly speed up the process by automatically summarizing answers to the questionnaires and removing the need to decipher and transcribe the handwritten comments. Taking this into consideration many organizations had decided to carry out their Surveys and Feedback operations online. The various techniques used by these organizations and individuals to collect the user feedback and responses include email, social networking websites, audience response system (clicker) etc. Ref. [15] describes the collection of feedback using email. This web based system is a 23 item patient feedback questionnaire (PFQ) which consists of 5 domains: interpersonal skills, communication of information, patient engagement and enablement, overall satisfaction and technical competence. Here initially questionnaires were e-mailed to a random sample of patients and their feedback was collected which was first stored in the database and then e-mailed to the respective doctors, who could check the ratings and the bar chart of each item’s categories. It has various advantages such as it is good at its designated task and it provides the visual representation of the feedback which results it in being more user friendly to the viewers. Ref. [16] describes another paper which details about the collection of feedback using the respective organization’s website. In order to collect the feedback from the employees, the website was designed with sixteen questions which fall into four categories: omission in response to good performance, omission in response to poor performance, contingent reward behaviour and contingent punishment behaviour. Along with these sixteen questions another four questions were designed to assess the employee’s level of satisfaction with feedback received and understanding of job expectations. One important finding regarding how often to give a feedback was, feedback is most effective when given as close in time as possible to the behaviour you are trying to reward. Its disadvantage being, the time required for reviewing and preparing for evaluations is burdensome. Ref. [5] details about the collection of feedback using an audience response system which is also called as clicker. The wide application of clicker is in schools and colleges. The modern ARS generally consists of three elements: a wireless transmitter/receiver for the audience, a transmitter/receiver system for the feedback receiver hardwired to computer, and software to collect, analyses and project the responses. A radio frequency technology is used for the transfer of messages. The ARSs vary in features. Some have only a few buttons with no display screen. Others have multiple lines of display and keys capable of answering true false, multiple-choice, numerical answers,

and short one word sentence answers along with storage space for homework assignments. There are various advantages of using ARS such as, an increase in the attendance can be expected due to the speed and ease of use of clickers, an increase in the time spent by student preparing for class and taking this time seriously can be expected, so long as ARSs are used to promote active discussion and learning, an increase in quiz and examination scores can be expected. It was also observed that the participants who have a clicker are assumed to have a higher level of engagement because they assume they will have to answer a question utilizing a clicker. Its disadvantages include, the difficulty in carrying the cases around the different rooms, and the theft of the ARS units also proves out to be a possible disadvantage. Ref. [17] is yet another article which adds on to the knowledge gathered on ARS from [5]. This article explains in detail about the advantages as well as the challenges faced while using ARS and the future areas of research. The various benefits of using ARS such as classroom environment benefits (attendance, anonymity, attention etc.), learning benefits (interaction, contingent teaching etc.) and assessment benefits (feedback, formative assessment etc.) are explained in detail. Among the various benefits of ARS, the assessment benefits include feedback which emphasizes the fact that use of ARS improves the feedback process for both the teacher as well as the students. Also many of the benefits such as contingent teaching, formative assessment, compare etc. are based on the feedback gathered with the help of ARS. The article details the different challenges faced during the use of an ARS such as technology-based challenges, teacher-based challenges (responding to student feedback, coverage etc.) and student-based challenges (new method, discussion, negative feedback etc.) and also gives solutions for these challenges. The challenges encompass situations in which the teachers express inability to utilize the student feedback effectively as well as the impact of negative feedback on students. Lastly, it explains the key issues faced in the current research and the scope of future research. Thus it can be seen that ARS is an effective tool for gathering and utilizing classroom feedback to improve the learning process. Ref. [18] is an empirical study by Trevor Barker about an automated individual feedback and marking system. This paper is an extension of the previous work carried out in the field of automated feedback for objective learning and includes assessment of practical and essay type questions besides providing automated feedback. In the automated feedback system, a marking scheme for any subject can be created as a text file by the specific subject tutor and the individual feedback file belonging to a particular learner can be emailed automatically to the respective learner. The marks for each option, general feedback statements, individual comments for each learner

etc. can be stored dynamically within a database in a computer. This paper details the development, testing and evaluation of an automated feedback system, which would deliver well formatted and meaningful feedback to the learners in an efficient manner via email, by using a user-centred prototyping approach. The prototypes for the system were developed and then tested on the students based on practical summative assessments. These were then evaluated by considering the opinions of the students as well as internal and external markers. The drawbacks that were identified at each stage such as inflexibility, lack of detail feedback on each section of the questions etc. were removed by incorporating several improvements in the next prototype. At present, the fourth stage prototype is under consideration but it lacks robustness for reliable use. The feedback provided in this manner has various benefits such as it is flexible, timely, effective, convenient, individualized, well formatted, more secured and private etc. These qualities are highly desirable to develop an efficient feedback system. Ref. [19] is a whitepaper which details on how different features of the Oracle RightNow CX Cloud service can be used to facilitate the four key Voice of the Customer (VoC) processes i.e. listening, interpreting, reacting and monitoring. It examines each of these processes in detail. Listening to the customers is an important part of feedback system and can be done with the help of Oracle RightNow CX Cloud Service in eleven different ways – transactional surveys, broadcast surveys, site feedback, answer feedback etc. This process is further enhanced using additional services such as social monitor, support community, periodic reviews etc. The Oracle RightNow CX Cloud Service also provides tools enhanced with SmartSense feature, topic monitoring, reputation system etc. for interpreting the feedback provided by the customers. Interpretation leads to the next step i.e. reaction, in which the organisation takes necessary actions towards a constructive change, which is facilitated by Oracle RightNow CX Cloud Service through end-of-survey options, rules engine etc. Lastly, monitoring of the results of the feedback process is important to achieve continuous feedback improvements which can be done with the help of Oracle RightNow Analytics Cloud service. This whitepaper helps to gain insight on the desirable qualities of a comprehensive feedback system which will in turn facilitate an organisation to deliver the best customer experience. Ref. [22] describes that by receiving feedback from the customers, the organization gets to know what is wanted by the customers and it can also be analysed, as to why customer views vary. Ref. [29] describes another paper which details about the design & implementation of automated food ordering system with real time customer feedback for restaurants. This system implements wireless data access to servers. Ref. [30] describes another paper

which presents an overview of feedback studies and then concentrates on the problem of feedback adaptation in web-based learning systems. It also discusses about taxonomy of feedback concept with regard to its functions, complexity, time of occurrence, way of presentation, and way of its adaptation

In today's world, social networking websites have become a powerful tool to express their opinions and comments responsibly. This has revolutionized the process of giving feedback. People use social networking websites like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn etc. to give their opinions and feedback on the current topics. Ref. [2] details about the use of various tools like Sprout Social, SocialBro and Google Alerts for monitoring these social networking websites. The organizations which want to gather feedback make use of these tools to track the mentions of certain keywords pertaining to their interest. These tools notify the respective organizations whenever the specified keywords are mentioned in the social media websites. It helps to clarify doubts of the customers, learn about their opinions, get an idea about the trending issues and pro-actively engage them in conversation. It serves as an indirect method of gathering feedback. The advantages of this system are that it consumes less time, automatic summarization of the given feedback, fairly good response rate, saves paper and ink. It also has some of the disadvantages like the online surveys do not achieve the response rates close to even those achieved by the paper based surveys, the provision of anonymity in online feedback has made it very difficult to determine the percentage of people who passively or actively use this facility, with the provision of anonymity postings can sometimes be critical and harsh, a web based approach may have a large, on – time development cost.

## 2) *App-Based Feedback System*

The popularity of mobile apps has continued to rise, as their usage has become increasingly prevalent across mobile phone users. A May 2012 CommScore study reported that during the previous quarter, there is a steep rise in mobile subscribers who used apps than browsed the web on their devices, i.e.: 51.1% vs. 49.8% respectively. Taking this in consideration many organizations have now moved or planning to move their Surveys and Feedback operations to the app world. The many Android and iOS Applications and platforms used by these organizations and individuals to collect the user feedback and responses include Surveylytics, Instasurvey etc. Ref. [11] details about the Android app “Survelytics” which works as a part of Surveylytics platform where user can create feedback, deploy it on devices, conduct and analyze the survey results in real time. This app was developed by Eki Communications Pvt. Ltd. This app can be used for Product Evaluation, Traffic

Surveys etc. To work with this app a user first downloads the app on his/her Phone or Tablet and a survey is needed to be created on Surveylytics website. The user can then publish and login onto the device to see the same surveys and can upload the result. It has various advantages such as multilingual questions, multiple surveys, works both online and offline etc. Whereas its disadvantages are not user-friendly, free service for first thirty days only etc. Ref. [12] describes another android app called "Instasurvey" developed by Appdictive that makes digital surveys on tablets and smartphones simple and easy to setup, perform and evaluate. . It can hold 1-5 questions on a single page which can be answered through thumbs, stars or smileys. The user can install the survey on a device, setup the survey and present the survey by holding the device or installing the device on a kiosk. The survey can be created using the survey designer which can be accessed through the 'create new survey' icon. A pdf of the report can be generated once the results are generated and can be shared using email, Facebook or other applications. The data from the surveys can also be accessed online using Google Spreadsheets, can be exported to Microsoft Excel or as an Open Document Format. They can also be downloaded to a device by using a connection key. This app comes with a package of 100 free votes. Its advantages include simplicity, ease of use, multi-device connectivity, offline vote gathering facility etc. While its disadvantages include unavailability in laptops, lack of font control/text box control, crash reports, inability to edit the questions after the creation of a survey etc. Ref. [13] details about another such Android app known as "Easyfeedback" which can be used for any kind of store like Jewellery, Book Store, Coffee shop, Hotels, Restaurants etc. It was developed by Priyankraj Katariya. The customers provide feedback in kiosk placed at desk, exit gate, bill counter etc. Easyfeedback cloud system keeps and process all the feedback data. Through Easyfeedback.in portal, visualization of data is done and required action is taken. Finally, the dashboard and interactive reports can help to analyze and act on business's feedback. Some of its advantages are it is easy, simple, dynamic and instant. It works in offline mode and has highly customizable forms. But is not user friendly and has a complex feedback process. Also initial configuration of login details in the android app is a very tedious process. Ref. [14] describes yet another app called "QuickTapSurvey" which is a mobile survey & data collection app that allows the user to create surveys and gather responses using Android tablets without an internet connection. This app was developed by TableDabble Inc. It can display all the questions on a single screen or one at a time on different screens. To work with this app a person has to first Sign up and create a survey online using the QuickTapSurvey Administration website. Then that survey is downloaded and responses can be collected with or

without internet connection on the Android Tablet. Survey responses can then later be viewed online. The website also provides features like exporting your data to desired locations and analyzing trends in the response collected. It can collect responses with iPad or Android Tablets. Facilities like offline support, interactive features like custom keyboards (e.g. telephone, alphanumeric, numeric etc.) and shortcut keys(e.g. email address, Camera etc.), ability to import surveys from SurveyMonkey etc. are some its advantages. On the other hand, availability of free services only for first two months per user account, inability to create the survey directly from the app and crashing issues are its disadvantages. Ref. [20] describes about the app which sends feedback and suggestions to brands and companies on a simple and fast manner. It prevents users from spam and also has QR code and flash code reader. Ref. [21] is an innovative way to collect feedback and suggestion from users. It also has additional facilities like syncing with server, managing the data remotely etc. Ref. [23] tells about an app which helps to create simple customer feedback surveys in seconds. It includes features like poll via email, text, link, twitter etc. and allows 25 questions per survey. Ref. [24] describes a very powerful app, ideal for industrial strength surveys such as housing surveys, asset management and building surveys. Ref. [25] details about an android app using which the questionnaires can be downloaded to the mobile devices to allow the collection of field data. It allows mobile devices to capture photos, videos, sounds, signatures etc. Ref. [26] describes an app which is used to take the user's results and store safely on the device until uploaded to the respective user's droid SURVEY website account. A Tablet or Smartphone can be used to conduct the survey questionnaires, gather survey study results and then these can be viewed on computer for analysis. Ref. [27] describes an app with the help of which the collected data can be uploaded and be instantly made available to the user using Survey Analytics surveying solutions. It supports some unique question types like Barcode scanner, Media upload etc.. Ref. [28] details about a Mobile Data Collection Software that enables the user to create, conduct & manage laptop field surveys, PDA Surveys and electronic mobile surveys. Surveys are designed and saved to the server and then synchronized to either PDA's or Laptops for field data collection.

In general, there are lots of advantages of app-based feedback system like it is very simple and easy to use even for low tech users, helps to create highly customizable feedback forms, it works both online and offline, it gives Dynamic, instant and effective reporting, when offline, data is safely stored in the app until the device is reconnected. But it also has some of the disadvantages like it is available only on tablets and Smartphone and not on other devices such as laptops, it provides free services for only limited

number of days, crashing is the major problem in App based feedback system, the app won't allow downloading the response if the free limit is exceeded, it takes time to learn and use the App sometimes if it is not user friendly.

### III. CONCLUSION

Feedback helps to express the desirable as well as the undesirable qualities of an individual or an organization. This study helps to gain insight on the feedback system, its classification and evolution over the ages. A series of literature were selected, analyzed, and synthesized to make generalizations about the topic and review the existing background information that is relevant to this topic. The feedback system has evolved through time into more efficient, comprehensive and user-friendly systems. Initially, the offline feedback systems such as paper-based, phone-based feedback system came into being. These systems are still widely popular even though they have their own share of demerits. With the advent of the digital era, different forms of digitalized feedback systems such as web-based, app-based feedback systems became more and more popular. The collection of feedback through website helps in gathering useful information from the user 24x7 but has some disadvantages such as lack of generalization etc. App-based feedback systems prove to be an efficient means of gathering real-time feedback in the fast pacing life of man. There are various apps available for collecting different types of feedback each of which have a wide variety of features. This study aims to throw light on quite a few of them along with their merits and demerits.

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