

## PEER REVIEW HISTORY

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### ARTICLE DETAILS

<b>TITLE (PROVISIONAL)</b>	"I did not check if the teacher gave feedback": A qualitative analysis of Taiwanese post-graduate year-one trainees' talk around e-portfolio feedback-seeking behaviours
<b>AUTHORS</b>	Fu, Ren-Huei; Cho, Yu-Hsueh; Quattri, Francesca; Monrouxe, Lynn V

### VERSION 1 – REVIEW

<b>REVIEWER</b>	Naomi Winstone University of Surrey Guildford, UK
<b>REVIEW RETURNED</b>	03-Jul-2018

<b>GENERAL COMMENTS</b>	<p>Whilst the data reported in the manuscript are interesting and can potentially add to the existing body of research on engagement with feedback in medical education, I believe that in its present form the authors confuse feedback seeking with feedback recipience.</p> <p>In the definition of feedback seeking presented by the authors, the act of requesting feedback, or observing others, are identified as important dimensions. However, I believe that the paper actually presents data regarding learners' engagement with feedback, rather than feedback-seeking. This is clearly illustrated by the interview schedule which reveals that the questions address whether or not learners accessed the feedback, with no identifiable questions pertaining to feedback seeking. Furthermore, the authors introduce the findings as "the various factors that influenced their engagement" on page 11. I am not disputing the fact that these behaviours might be termed 'feedback seeking' in this context, but the stated definition of feedback seeking (requesting information or choosing to observe others) does not align with the methods for data collection nor the presentation of findings.</p> <p>As far as I can see, the study is about engagement with feedback, rather than feedback seeking, and should be re-framed as such. This would require significant rewriting, and also limits the novelty of the findings, given that engagement with feedback has been extensively studied in the context of medical education, e.g.:</p> <p>Bing-You, R. G., Bertsch, T., &amp; Thompson, J. A. (1998). Coaching medical students in receiving effective feedback. <i>Teaching and Learning in Medicine</i>, 10, 228-231. doi:10.1207/S15328015TLM1004_6</p> <p>Bing-You, R. G., Paterson, J., &amp; Levine, M. A. (1997). Feedback falling on deaf ears: residents' receptivity to feedback tempered by</p>
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	<p>sender credibility. <i>Medical Teacher</i>, 19, 40-44. doi:10.3109/01421599709019346</p> <p>Bounds, R., Bush, C., Aghera, A., Rodriguez, N., Stansfield, R. B., &amp; Santeen, S. A. (2013). Emergency medicine residents' self-assessments play a critical role when receiving feedback. <i>Academic Emergency Medicine</i>, 20, 1055-1061. doi:10.1111/acem.12231</p> <p>Burr, S. A., Brodier, E., &amp; Wilkinson, S. (2013). Delivery and use of individualised feedback in large class medical teaching. <i>BMC Medical Education</i>, 13, 63. doi:10.1186/1472-6920-13-63</p> <p>Chang, A., Chou, C. L., Teherani, A., &amp; Hauer, K. E. (2011). Clinical skills-related learning goals of senior medical students after performance feedback. <i>Medical Education</i>, 45, 878-885. doi:10.1111/j.1365-2923.2011.04015.x</p> <p>Eva, K. W., Armson, H., Holmboe, E., Lockyer, J., Loney, E., Mann, K., &amp; Sargeant, J. (2012). Factors influencing responsiveness to feedback: on the interplay between fear, confidence, and reasoning processes. <i>Advances in Health Science Education</i>, 17, 15-26. doi:10.1007/s10459-011-9290-7</p> <p>Harrison, C. J., Könings, K. D., Molyneux, A., Schuwirth, L. W. T., Wass, V., &amp; van der Vleuten, C. P. M. (2013). Web-based feedback after summative assessment: how do students engage? <i>Medical Education</i>, 47, 734-744. doi:10.1111/medu.12209</p> <p>Murdoch-Eaton, D., &amp; Sargeant, J. (2012). Maturation differences in undergraduate medical students' perceptions about feedback. <i>Medical Education</i>, 46, 711-721. doi :10.1111/j.1365-2923.2012.04291.x</p> <p>If the novelty of the study lies in the fact that it pertains to the e-portfolio context, then much stronger framing is needed to make this case.</p> <p>The presentation of the findings themselves could also be much clearer. I think that many of the quotations require stronger contextualisation, and it wasn't always clear how the illustrative quotes related to the narrative being presented.</p> <p>Stronger justification for the sample size is needed, given that many have cautioned against over-collection of data (Bowen, 2015). I appreciate that it is not always appropriate to conceive of sample size in terms of saturation, but I can see little evidence for the decision-making process with regard to sampling. I would also question whether the data are adequately captured by the reported themes, given that the theme discussed in the manuscript was present in less than half of the participants' narratives. Stronger justification and explanation is needed here. Stronger justification for the choice of analysis is also needed.</p> <p>Minor point: there is a typo on page 16, line 18: 'whist' should be 'whilst'.</p>
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<b>REVIEWER</b>	Dr Chris Harrison MB ChB PhD FRCGP
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	Brooklands Medical Practice 594 Altrincham Road, Manchester, M23 9JH, UK
<b>REVIEW RETURNED</b>	05-Jul-2018

<b>GENERAL COMMENTS</b>	<p>Overall, I enjoyed reading this interesting and well-written paper.</p> <p>In the introduction, there is quite a thorough and appropriate discussion of the literature regarding feedback seeking behaviour (FSB). There is much more superficial consideration of the literature regarding e-portfolios. The authors state there has been no previous consideration of the role of FSB in e-portfolios. However, they do not explore the role of e-portfolios in respect of other aspects of feedback. I felt the article would benefit from more balance between the two sections (FSB and e-portfolios) and in doing so I think the authors would have been able to make a more convincing case regarding the gap in the literature and the need for this study. Why was there a particular need to explore the PGY1 group? The research question should come as a logical conclusion to the introduction and at present this is not quite the case.</p> <p>In the methods section, the context is largely explained clearly. I was not sure what the authors meant by the term 'objective assessment'. Was this referring to the workplace-based assessments, which is the term in common use internationally? It would be helpful to have more description of how the e-portfolio was assessed. Was each element assessed in a summative way or were the principles of programmatic assessment used? From what is mentioned in the results, I presume it is the former.</p> <p>In the description of the design, the authors helpfully mention six of the questions that were asked. It would be helpful to see the full question schedule, perhaps as an appendix. How many questions were asked in total? Given that the interviews lasted 20 - 30 minutes, some of the answers to the questions must have been quite brief and superficial. Did the questions change over the 71 participants as information emerged, or was the schedule fixed?</p> <p>The authors claim that the participants self-selected using purposive sampling. This sampling approach does not fit with my understanding of purposive sampling. I think it should more correctly be described as convenience sampling. The authors interviewed an unusually large sample for a qualitative study. With the stated average time for the interview, they must have approximately 30 hours of data. With my comments about the number of questions asked in the time available, I wonder whether they would have obtained even richer results if they had concentrated on interviewing fewer participants in more depth. The reference at the beginning of the results section to the 39 participants who gave superficial responses bears this out.</p> <p>In the data analysis section, it is good that the transcripts were all read by two people but I was surprised that data were only coded by one person. It would have been helpful for a sample of the transcripts to be coded by more than one person, or to better justify their approach.</p> <p>Reflexivity is important in qualitative research and I was surprised not to read a consideration of this issue in the methods section.</p>
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	<p>The results section is clearly and helpfully structured. It was easy to follow and the illustrative quotes were generally helpful.</p> <p>The discussion was similarly well-structured and appropriately considered the study's limitations. The authors are right to refer to face-saving as an important factor, but I was surprised not to see reference to Shiphra Ginsburg's recent influential work in this area in relation to feedback, face-saving and written comments. Other aspects of culture are also already recognised as important in relation to feedback. Subha Ramani has written about the influence of institutional culture on feedback and I have written on how the assessment culture influences receptivity to feedback. Comparison of the authors' work with these other studies would strengthen this paper. I think their claim to a unique finding (see the top of page 19) is not justified by the other literature on feedback.</p> <p>I hope the authors find this feedback helpful and constructive.</p>
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### VERSION 1 – AUTHOR RESPONSE

Reviewers' Comments	Our Response
<p><b>Editors Comments to Author:</b> Please revise the title of your manuscript to include the research question, study design and setting. This is the preferred format of the journal. We do not accept manuscripts with declarative titles.</p>	<p>We have now changed this to read:</p> <p><i>"I did not check if the teacher gave feedback"</i>: A qualitative analysis of Taiwanese postgraduate trainees' talk around their e-portfolio feedback-seeking behaviours</p> <p>We believe that this now complies with the preferred format. We assume that the Editor did not mean for us to remove the quotation (which is declarative) as we have recently published similar types of titles in your journal this year:</p> <p><i>"And you'll suddenly realise 'I've not washed my hands"</i>: Medical students', junior doctors' and clinical educators' narratives of hygiene behaviour</p> <p><i>"I did try and point out about his dignity"</i>: A qualitative narrative study of patients' and carers' experiences and expectations of junior doctors.</p>
<p>Please revise the 'Strengths and limitations' section of your manuscript (after the abstract). This section should contain five short bullet points, no</p>	<p>We have now developed this section – we have deleted the bullet point focusing on the unique contribution and have added two further points focusing on the methods. We have also amended bullet point 3 to focus more on methods.</p>

<p>longer than one sentence each, that relate specifically to the methods.</p>	
<p><b>Reviewer: 1</b></p>	
<p>Whilst the data reported in the manuscript are interesting and can potentially add to the existing body of research on engagement with feedback in medical education, I believe that in its present form the authors confuse feedback seeking with feedback recipience.</p> <p>- In the definition of feedback seeking presented by the authors, the act of requesting feedback, or observing others, are identified as important dimensions. However, I believe that the paper actually presents data regarding learners' engagement with feedback, rather than feedback-seeking. This is clearly illustrated by the interview schedule which reveals that the questions address whether or not learners accessed the feedback, with no identifiable questions pertaining to feedback seeking. Furthermore, the authors introduce the findings as "the various factors that influenced their engagement" on page 11. I am not disputing the fact that these behaviours might be termed 'feedback seeking' in this context, but the stated definition of feedback seeking (requesting information or choosing to observe others) does not align with the methods for data collection nor the presentation of findings.</p>	<p>We politely, but strongly, disagree with this reviewer. The reviewer bases their opinion on their following comment: "However, I believe that the paper actually presents data regarding learners' engagement with feedback, rather than feedback-seeking. This is clearly illustrated by the interview schedule which reveals that the questions address whether or not learners accessed the feedback, with no identifiable questions pertaining to feedback seeking."</p> <p>We begin by addressing the issue of whether feedback seeking behavior was asked about in the interview schedule. The reviewer seems to have missed the opening questions (page 9 of the original): "<b>There are numerous reports and assessments in the e-portfolio which are followed by clinical teachers' feedback, did you read them all? If so, why? If not, why not?</b>". Some interviews then went on to focus on this issue as the respondents reported not seeking out the feedback at all. This was a surprise to us and as such became a focal point of those interviews – and therefore of our analysis presented in this paper.</p> <p>The reviewer also points to the fact that we highlight the 'usual' way in which feedback seeking occurs (note: they incorrectly label this as our definition – which it is not): "Furthermore, the authors introduce the findings as "the various factors that influenced their engagement" on page 11. I am not disputing the fact that these behaviours might be termed 'feedback seeking' in this context, but the stated definition of feedback seeking (requesting information or choosing to observe others) does not align with the methods for data collection nor the presentation of findings."</p> <p>Requesting information or choosing to observe others is the most common way in which this occurs in the literature as there is a dearth of studies looking at feedback seeking online. To clarify this issue, we have added the following sentence so that the reader might extend their understanding of what feedback seeking might look like in an online setting:</p>

	<p>“In the case of an e-portfolio, however, the ‘request’ comes in the form of returning to the online forum and reading the feedback provided.”</p> <p>As the reviewer says “I am not disputing the fact that these behaviours might be termed ‘feedback seeking’ in this context” – we sincerely hope that they can now review our work in the light of our clarifications.</p>
<p>- As far as I can see, the study is about engagement with feedback, rather than feedback seeking, and should be re-framed as such. This would require significant rewriting, and also limits the novelty of the findings, given that engagement with feedback has been extensively studied in the context of medical education.</p>	<p>We wholeheartedly agree that there is a plethora of studies on feedback engagement in the context of medical education. However, this is not the focus of our manuscript – although it is important to acknowledge that intentions to engage with feedback feeds into feedback seeking behaviours. However, we hope this link is clearer following our re-write.</p> <p>Given our explanation and clarification above we do not believe that a significant re-write is necessary and given the paucity of work in the area of (1) feedback seeking behaviours; and, more importantly, (2) feedback seeking behaviours online; we hope the novelty of our work is now apparent.</p>
<p>- If the novelty of the study lies in the fact that it pertains to the e-portfolio context, then much stronger framing is needed to make this case.</p>	<p>As mentioned above – the novelty is not about feedback engagement in the e-portfolio setting – it is about <b>feedback seeking behaviours</b> - we have revisited our introduction and feel that the focus and framing is appropriate – we assume this comment is a continuation of the reviewers’ misunderstanding and hope they will re-read our framing in the light of our clarification.</p>
<p>The presentation of the findings themselves could also be much clearer. I think that many of the quotations require stronger contextualisation, and it wasn't always clear how the illustrative quotes related to the narrative being presented.</p>	<p>We have now developed more in terms of introducing the data excerpts. Where possible, we have extended the excerpts to include more context and relevance (note, the interviews were contextual – so in the context of talking about feedback seeking, comments were made but it was the interviewer who mentioned the topic – or it was mentioned on the transcript further up the page – we have done our best to address the reviewers’ concerns. We have also added more brief excerpts that further evidence our analysis. We hope this is now sufficient.</p>
<p>Stronger justification for the sample size is needed, given that many have cautioned against over-collection of data (Bowen, 2015). I appreciate that it is not always appropriate to conceive</p>	<p>We thank the reviewer for their comment and understand their concern. We have now provided more detail in terms of our justification for the sample size as follows:</p>

<p>of sample size in terms of saturation, but I can see little evidence for the decision-making process with regard to sampling. I would also question whether the data are adequately captured by the reported themes, given that the theme discussed in the manuscript was present in less than half of the participants' narratives. Stronger justification and explanation is needed here. Stronger justification for the choice of analysis is also needed.</p>	<p>“A larger participation group than originally intended was recruited due to the fact that a number of participants’ interviews were brief as they had not accessed the feedback section of their e-portfolio (the first question of the interview). Given that our original focus was to examine engagement with feedback and differences between paper and electronic feedback we continued to accept participants into the study until we felt that sufficient data had been obtained to address these issues”</p> <p>As we do not situate our research within a grounded theory approach and feel that this issue of saturation is inappropriate [Varpio L, Ajjawi R, <u>Monrouxe LV</u>, O’Brien B, Rees CE (2017) Shedding the cobra effect: problematising thematic emergence, triangulation, saturation and member checking. <b>Medical Education</b>. 51(1)40-50], we draw on Saunders, et al. (2018) [Saturation in qualitative research: exploring its conceptualization and operationalization. <i>Quality &amp; Quantity</i>, 52(4), 1893–1907.] who highlight a range of ways in which we might determine when enough is enough. They discuss how one way to determine sample size in qualitative research is to make a judgement on whether you think you have sufficient data to answer your research questions.</p>
<p>Minor point: there is a typo on page 16, line 18: 'whist' should be 'whilst'.</p>	<p>Thank you – we have corrected this.</p>
<p>Reviewer: 2 - Overall, I enjoyed reading this interesting and well-written paper.</p> <p>In the introduction, there is quite a thorough and appropriate discussion of the literature regarding feedback seeking behaviour (FSB). There is much more superficial consideration of the literature regarding e-portfolios. The authors state there has been no previous consideration of the role of FSB in e-portfolios. However, they do not explore the role of e-portfolios in respect of other aspects of feedback. I felt the article would benefit from more balance between the two sections (FSB and e-portfolios) and in doing so I think the authors would have been able to make a more convincing case regarding the gap in the literature and</p>	<p>Thank you for your positive comment.</p> <p>In terms of having more information about the e-portfolios we have added some description about the content of e-portfolio and the connection of feedback and e-portfolio in the Introduction section. We have also discussed the different purposes of portfolios within the clinical setting – specifically for this group – and how this is now often compulsory for newly-graduated doctors. We have brought in the notion of competency-based education and the role of portfolios here. Furthermore, we have highlighted how feedback seeking is the first step towards engaging with feedback for development.</p> <p>We hope this now sufficiently sets up the need for our study.</p>

<p>the need for this study. Why was there a particular need to explore the PGY1 group? The research question should come as a logical conclusion to the introduction and at present this is not quite the case.</p>	
<p>- In the methods section, the context is largely explained clearly. I was not sure what the authors meant by the term 'objective assessment'. Was this referring to the workplace-based assessments, which is the term in common use internationally? It would be helpful to have more description of how the e-portfolio was assessed. Was each element assessed in a summative way or were the principles of programmatic assessment used? From what is mentioned in the results, I presume it is the former.</p>	<p>We have added the description of how clinical teachers evaluate their trainees and provide feedback. The assessment is performed periodically throughout the training course. Since there are no second time or re-assessments, this is a summative assessment.</p>
<p>In the description of the design, the authors helpfully mention six of the questions that were asked. It would be helpful to see the full question schedule, perhaps as an appendix. How many questions were asked in total? Given that the interviews lasted 20 - 30 minutes, some of the answers to the questions must have been quite brief and superficial. Did the questions change over the 71 participants as information emerged, or was the schedule fixed?</p>	<p>Since the design of the interview method is that of a semi-structure interview, the researcher was provided with the six questions alongside brief concepts about the aim of our research. As such – some participants spent longer talking about some aspects (e.g. feedback seeking) than others. The researcher was mindful to allow the participants to express their ideas freely albeit with some guidance. Some participants didn't get past the first question as they did not access their feedback (so subsequent questions about engagement were irrelevant). Further, some participants used the opportunity of the interview to express their dissatisfaction with the e-portfolio and so their interviews were lengthy as the interviewer did not wish to deprive them of their opportunity to have their say. We did not change the focus of our research during the interviews. However, the issue of feedback seeking was identified during the analysis (and was not a formal part of our original aim).</p>
<p>The authors claim that the participants self-selected using purposive sampling. This sampling approach does not fit with my understanding of purposive sampling. I think it should more correctly be described as convenience sampling. The authors interviewed an unusually large sample for a qualitative study. With the stated average time for the interview, they must have</p>	<p>We thank the reviewer for their helpful suggestion. We have now changed this to convenience sampling as we agree it describes our approach better.</p> <p>In terms of the number of study participants, please see our response to the first reviewer above. In terms of those who gave us superficial responses – they were participants who did not engage with the behaviours that</p>



<p>approximately 30 hours of data. With my comments about the number of questions asked in the time available, I wonder whether they would have obtained even richer results if they had concentrated on interviewing fewer participants in more depth. The reference at the beginning of the results section to the 39 participants who gave superficial responses bears this out.</p>	<p>were the topic of enquiry – or whose engagement was minimal. We agree, perhaps being clearer about the specific questions before recruiting might have led to fewer participants. However, we might not have gathered the data we did for this specific enquiry around feedback seeking as it was a new focus that was identified post-hoc.</p>
<p>- In the data analysis section, it is good that the transcripts were all read by two people but I was surprised that data were only coded by one person. It would have been helpful for a sample of the transcripts to be coded by more than one person, or to better justify their approach.</p>	<p>The data were coded by one person as the research funding only enabled us to employ a single researcher. However, the data were continually discussed by the team who brought examples back for clarification and verification as follows (added words in red): “The researchers came together several times to discuss the coding framework development. The framework was written as a document to facilitate coding consistency and analytical development. Data were coded by one person. As the data were coded, further developments of the themes were discussed with the wider team and incorporated into the final analysis in the framework document.” –</p> <p>We believe that this approach is wholly appropriate as the coding itself is not the main focus of the analysis. The coding merely enables researchers to access the data systematically. Furthermore, data are not numerated and so we see no benefit from having a second coder. The analysis itself was developed within the coding framework book which we hope we have adequately addressed.</p>
<p>Reflexivity is important in qualitative research and I was surprised not to read a consideration of this issue in the methods section.</p>	<p>We now include a section on team reflexivity.</p>
<p>The results section is clearly and helpfully structured. It was easy to follow and the illustrative quotes were generally helpful.</p>	<p>Thank you</p>
<p>The discussion was similarly well-structured and appropriately considered the study's limitations. The authors are right to refer to face-saving as an important factor, but I was surprised not to see reference to Shiphra Ginsburg's recent influential</p>	<p>We thank the reviewer very much for their suggestions on other research to include. Indeed, we were not aware of either of them. We now include a discussion of the Ginsburg paper in the discussion when we talk about face saving being an important aspect outside of an Asian culture.</p>

<p>work in this area in relation to feedback, face-saving and written comments. Other aspects of culture are also already recognised as important in relation to feedback. Subha Ramani has written about the influence of institutional culture on feedback and I have written on how the assessment culture influences receptivity to feedback. Comparison of the authors' work with these other studies would strengthen this paper. I think their claim to a unique finding (see the top of page 19) is not justified by the other literature on feedback.</p>	<p>In terms of the paper by Ramani, we have now read this. We have added this as a caveat to our claim for originality – although it actually doesn't look at feedback seeking: "Other learner-centred findings such as perceived social norms (i.e. no one else seeks feedback) and the strategic use of feedback (i.e. prospectively and retrospectively) appear to be quite novel in the FSB literature, although a consideration of the organisational culture and its impact on feedback giving and expectations has been acknowledged."</p> <p>Interestingly, it calls for work of feedback seeking – so we have also added this in our rationale in the introduction. We thank you for this.</p>
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#### VERSION 2 – REVIEW

<b>REVIEWER</b>	Christopher Harrison GP, Manchester, UK, Honorary Senior Lecturer, Keele University, UK
<b>REVIEW RETURNED</b>	14-Sep-2018

<b>GENERAL COMMENTS</b>	The authors have responded constructively to the feedback and the paper is significantly strengthened as a result. They have addressed most of my concerns expressed in my previous review. On a minor point, I am surprised that they have persisted in referring to workplace-based assessments as objective assessments, as it is very difficult to regard these assessments as objective. If that is the terminology used locally, I think it should be clarified to avoid confusion to the reader.
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#### VERSION 2 – AUTHOR RESPONSE

We thank you for your decision and have now changed the terminology from 'objective' to 'workplace-based' as suggested.