Lecturer Professionalism, Teaching and Learning Activities: Accounting Students' Perceptions

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Abstract
Quality teaching in colleges or universities hinges on both lecturer professionalism and the design of effective teaching and learning activities. This study utilizes data from the Student Feedback Online (SUFO) survey of the Financial Accounting and Reporting course for the semester of March 2025– August 2025 extracted from a public university in Malaysia, University A's online feedback system to investigate students' perceptions of these dimensions. Descriptive statistical analysis was employed to evaluate the responses. The findings show that overall, the students place a higher score on lecturer professionalism and lecturer's teaching and learning activities, with satisfaction rating of 82.54% and 80.95% respectively. Professionalism, which is defined by approachability, accessibility, clear communication, and academic guidance, was highlighted as a key factor in building supportive learning environments. Similarly, students valued clear explanations, interactive participation, and prompt feedback, underlining the importance of active learning approaches in fostering engagement. The findings imply that professionalism and pedagogical strategies work in tandem to enhance the need for higher institutions to adopt student feedback mechanisms that can enhance teaching effectiveness. This paper concludes by discussing the implications of these findings, the limitations of the study, and directions for subsequent research.
Keywords: Lecturer Professionalism, Teaching and Learning Activities, Feedback Online, Accounting Student, Perception

Introduction
Universities globally have placed growing emphasis on the importance of quality assurance, accountability and student-centred learning as essential attributes of institutional transformation (Ai Tran et al., 2025; Tinapay et al., 2024; Aithal et al., 2024). In Malaysia, the transformative plan that aims to fulfil local requirements and elevate the nation's educational institution to international standards is the Malaysian Education Blueprint 2015-2025 of Higher Education (MEBHE). It highlights ten strategic transformations, several of which were targeted at increasing graduate outcomes, elevating the quality of teaching and learning, and

placing students at the centre of educational transformation (MOHE, 2015). It stresses the significance of lecturers' professionalism and teaching effectiveness and lays the groundwork for student evaluations that gauge and enhance the teaching standards.

Teaching and learning are a fundamental process by which educational institutions facilitate the development, application, and transmission of knowledge, skills, and values. According to Freeman et al. (2014) effective teaching requires subject-matter competency, pedagogy, evaluation, communication, as well as the development of inclusive learning environments. Study by Auerbach et al. (2018) specified that effective teaching imparts knowledge, encourages learners to participate actively, think critically, and build skills for self-learning, which can prepare them to navigate an increasingly complex world.

The diverse attributes of effective teaching justify the need for educational institutions to have reliable instruments for evaluation and enhancement of the teaching effectiveness. A widely adopted instrument is the student evaluation of teaching (SET) or student feedback system, which allows interactions from students through ratings and comments on their educational experiences. Previous research indicated that SET is among the most common mechanism for assessing teaching effectiveness in higher education, being widely implemented across universities worldwide (Zhao et al., 2022.; Ching., 2019; Almakadma et al., 2023; Katende et al., 2024). Other than capturing student perspectives on teaching clarity, lecturer professionalism, course organisation, and learning outcomes, SET provides valuable insights toward continuous improvement, curriculum development, and lecturer career growth (Constantinou et al., 2022; Keane et al., 2005; Boerboom et al., 2015

A Malaysian public university adopts structured student feedback online system known as *Student Feedback Online* (SUFO), which is implemented each semester for all courses. Through SUFO, students are empowered to give anonymous feedback on their courses and lecturers, in terms of their overall impression about the course, lecturer professionalism, teaching and learning activities, and infrastructure (Eng et al., 2015). This feedback is crucial for enhancing teaching quality and improving the overall educational experience. Other than an evaluation mechanism, feedback is also a formative tool that guides lecturers to engage in self-reflection, modify teaching practices, and contribute toward excellence in academic settings (Anderson et al, 2005; Eng et al., 2015).

Lecturer professionalism incorporates attributes such as punctuality, preparedness, ethical conduct, fairness, communication skills, and approachability, rather than just the technical skills (Salam et al., 2021). It greatly influences students' perceptions of teaching effectiveness and overall learning experiences, with direct influence on motivation, engagement, and academic achievement. The MEBHE stresses the significance of lecturer professionalism in fostering student-centred learning, placing it as a foundation of continuous quality improvement and institutional accountability (MOHE, 2015).

In addition to professionalism, teaching and learning activities are another critical component of effective pedagogy. Rouben et al. (2023) pointed out that effective teaching and learning activities are aligned with well-defined learning outcomes, integrate real- world assessment methods, and include ongoing feedback mechanisms. Meanwhile Freeman et al. (2014) asserted that better academic performance is driven by active learning strategies. The

effectiveness of teaching and learning strategies should be assessed through student perceptions, for example, whether they feel engaged, supported, and mentally challenged. Therefore, feedback systems like SUFO can provide insights into lecturer professionalism and teaching activities, enabling institutions to link student perceptions with institutional improvement. This is evidenced by Ariffin et al. (2019) who found that using digital platforms for student evaluation has supported accountability in Malaysian higher education.

Besides that, various international research confirms the importance of feedback-intensive teaching and student evaluations. Research indicates that feedback mechanisms that are timely, specific, and accompanied by professional development support can enhance teaching effectiveness (Otani et al., 2012; Uttl et al., 2017). This study explores students' perceptions of lecturer professionalism and teaching activities using SUFO survey data from an accounting program at University A, a public university in Malaysia. This study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on quality assurance and professional development in higher education. By doing so, it aligns with Malaysia's national goals of ensuring teaching excellence, enhancing student outcomes, and positioning Malaysian universities within the global higher education landscape.

Literature Review
Lecturer Professionalism

Lecturer professionalism is widely recognized as a key determinant of teaching quality performance as it has positive relationships with student achievement (Susanti et al., 2025; Darling, 2000). Professionalism includes experts of subject matter, competence, accountability to the profession, commitment to life-long learning, respect for others, and human qualities such as empathy, honesty, fairness, integrity, morality, communication, collaboration, moral leadership, and adherence to legal and ethical practices, has been linked to positive outcomes in students' moral development, emotional intelligence, and academic success (Salam et al., 2021; Nurfidah & Fandir, 2025). Lecturer professionalism emphasises the lecturer's personality, such as their behaviour in carrying out their duties, and is reflected in their commitment to improve their teaching quality to achieve educational outcomes and improve academic success (Hulu et al., 2024). Similar prior studies, Zakaria et al. (2021) found that in the context of education in Malaysia, the findings showed that the level of lecturers' professionalism and students' success were recorded very high. It shows that there was a significant relationship between lecturers' professionalism and students' academic success. This is also in accordance with Prasetyo et al. (2022) that lecturer's professionalism has a significant positive impact on student performance. The findings highlight the students were more likely to attend classes, engage in discussions, thus, professionalism had a significant positive impact on student performance. It was also found that professional lecturer shows an appropriate attitude in both academic and non-academic settings, maintaining a positive demeanour and demonstrating their expertise in their own field. The students consider their lecturer to be trustworthy and reliable which in return improves their motivation to excel in class.

According to Faulkner et al. (2021), lecturers who are easy to access and approach provide a comfortable and safe environment where students feel more comfortable asking questions. This is very helpful for students and one of the contributors to their academic success. In the context of learning at the higher education level, when lecturers are consistently approachable, this situation is a key factor in increasing student engagement, satisfaction with

the lecturer, and improving student academic performance. Positive relationships between faculty and students, fostered by lecturers who have good personality traits and are responsive to student needs, have been associated with higher levels of engagement and the use of more engaging learning strategies (Mattanah et al., 2024). Research on lecturer presence reveals high levels of student satisfaction and high levels of learning when lecturers are actively involved and responsive, both in and outside the classroom learning environment (Prananto et al., 2025). Overall, these findings highlight the importance of the role of approachable and accessible lecturers in fostering a positive learning environment and improving the quality of student learning.

According to Batool et al. (2018), lecturer qualifications and professionalism practices have the most effective impact on achieving excellent academic results among students. Furthermore, studies by (Qurtubi, 2023) had revealed that institutions' performance are determined by the lecturer's performance in which is primarily influenced by professionalism combined with teaching competence and effective human resource management. This thus significantly influences teaching performance and student satisfaction. In addition, lecturer professionalism also entails considerations of the management of interpersonal relationships such as treatment towards students, feedback on their output and learning environments (Bakar & Quah, 2023)

Teaching and Learning
The design of teaching and learning activities directly involves understanding, applying, and maintaining knowledge over time. Effective activities are aligned with well-defined learning outcomes, integrate real- world assessment methods, and include ongoing feedback mechanisms (Rouben et al., 2023). The design of effective learning activities demands not only technical expertise but also professional judgment to meet diverse student needs, especially in hybrid or online contexts (Kwan, 2025). Furthermore, well-structured teaching activities encourage active student engagement in the classroom, gain deeper understanding, and improve academic performance. The higher the educational landscape, the more vocal it is towards significant changes in connecting the entire world. The use of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) in colleges and universities around the world is a key aspect of this global change.

This strategic move positions institutions, lecturers and students to compete on international stage and embrace future challenges. According to Lo and Othman (2023), knowledge was crucial to developing lecturer's English as Medium of Instruction (EMI) instructional competency, hence lecturers possessed a satisfactory level of inculcating the academic subjects through EMI. Course planning, clarity of the learning outcomes, assessment method are often found to influence student's perceptions and matter in the learning process and EMI settings (Lo & Othman, 2023).

The assessment of student feedback, commonly administered through the SUFO system, fulfills a dual function by offering a summative evaluation of teaching performance while concurrently serving as a formative tool for continuous improvement in teaching quality. Student feedback provides lecturers with practical insights into the effectiveness of teaching methods, course and subject content, and learning activities (Brandmo & Gamlem, 2025). However, the effectiveness of student feedback depends on its quality and integration into

lecturers' professional practice. SUFO thus fits within the broader lecturer's professionalism who approach student feedback as information for continuous development rather than only a conclusive judgement, can adjust their teaching and learning strategies design to meet student needs more effectively.

Although lecturer professionalism and the design of effective teaching and learning activities have been widely studied, empirical investigations into SUFO as a formative mechanism remain limited within higher education, especially in Malaysia. Prior studies tend to focus on student satisfaction surveys of teaching quality (Zakaria et al., 2022), but few explore how SUFO data can be used to enhance teaching practices, lecturer professionalism, and improve student academic performances (Nasruddin et al., 2022). By investigating SUFO in this study, the objective is to add to the existing body of knowledge by offering empirical evidence on the understanding of how student feedback mechanisms interact with lecturer professionalism and teaching activity design to improve student outcomes.

Higher education in Malaysia has generally adopted SUFO widely as a primary tool for assessing teaching effectiveness and lecturer professionalism (Ariffin et al., 2024). Previous studies have focused on aspects such as the reliability of the instrument, lecturer perspectives, and the dual role of SUFO as an element of the formative and summative assessment mechanism (Mandal, 2019). While these studies have contributed valuable insights into the governance and perceptions of SUFO, they have tended to ignore its potential influence on student academic achievement. Similarly, international literature on student assessment practices highlights that most instruments primarily measure student satisfaction rather than providing direct indicators of learning outcomes (Watson et al., 2024). A prior study by Alwaely et al. (2023) suggests that there are links between lecturer evaluation, professional development, and increased student achievement. However, most of this research is outside the Malaysian context and does not incorporate the use of data from SUFO.

Consequently, limited evidence exists regarding the extent to which SUFO scores reflect lecturer professionalism in relation to measurable student outcomes such as achievement levels, retention rates, or grade point average (GPA). Moreover, the role of lecturer professionalism as a mediating factor between SUFO feedback and student academic performance has not been sufficiently explored, particularly in longitudinal or multi-semester contexts.

Considering these limitations, there is a pressing need for empirical research that integrates SUFO data with indicators of student achievement to determine online student feedback functions not only as an evaluative instrument but also as a driver of academic success and lecturer professionalism.

Research Methodology
Research Design and Instrument
This study employed quantitative research method to examine how accounting students perceive lecturers' professionalism and teaching activities. Responses from students enrolled in one of the Financial Accounting and Reporting courses for the semester of Mac 2025– August 2025 were extracted from a public university in Malaysia, University A's online feedback system, SUFO. The survey consists of 7 questions that measure the lecturer's

professionalism and 11 questions that measure the lecturer's teaching and learning activities. The survey began two weeks prior to the study week until the formal release of the examination results. The responses were measured using four Likert-scales: Strongly disagree (1), Disagree (2); Agree (3) and Strongly agree (4). Data was analysed using descriptive statistical analysis. A total of sixty-three (63) students, representing the entire population (100%), participated in the survey. This comprised twenty-two (22) students from Group 1, twenty-two (22) from Group 2, and nineteen (19) from Group 3.

Results and Discussion

This study aimed to examine the student's perception in terms of lecturer's (1) professionalism and (2) teaching and learning activities. The first section of the analysis presented a descriptive overview of the respondents in the study. Figure 1 represents the demographic analysis focusing on respondents' gender. It consists of forty-three (43) female and twenty (20) males.
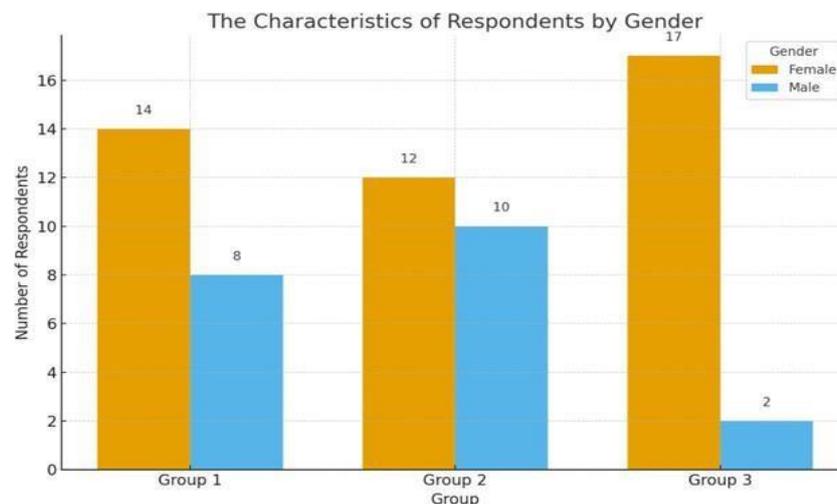

Figure 1: The Characteristics of Respondents by Gender

Descriptive Analysis Results
Table 1
Descriptive Statistics for Variables

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Lecturer professionalism	7	3.83	0.19	0.07
Teaching & Learning Activities	11	3.76	0.21	0.06
Total	18	3.79	0.20	0.05

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for students' perceptions of lecturer professionalism and teaching and learning activities. The mean scores indicate that students generally reported very positive perceptions across both domains, with the highest average score for lecturer professionalism with mean 3.83, standard deviation 0.19 and a slightly lower but comparable score for teaching and learning activities with mean 3.76, standard deviation 0.21. These results suggest that students view their lecturer as highly professional, particularly in areas such as completing scheduled hours, providing academic guidance, and being approachable,

while also value the lecturer's teaching strategies, clarity of course delivery, and involvement of students in the learning process. The low standard deviations in both groups demonstrate consistency in students' responses, indicating a relatively homogeneous perception of lecturer's professionalism and teaching practices among the respondents.

Table 2
Descriptive statistics for ANOVA

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares		Mean Square		Sig.(p)
	(SS)	df	(MS)	F	
Between Groups (Professionalism vs Teaching & Learning Activities)	3.842	1	3.842	5.96	0.018**
Within Groups	19.337	30	0.645		
Total	23.179	31			

Table 2 is a one-way ANOVA, to test whether the differences between the two domains were statistically significant and using the composite scores of lecturer professionalism and teaching and learning activities. The results reveal a statistically significant difference between the two domains, $F(1,30) = 5.96$, $p = .018$, indicating that students rated lecturer professionalism slightly higher than teaching and learning activities. This finding implies that although both aspects were rated positively, students' perceptions of the lecturer's professionalism were comparatively more favourable compared to their perceptions of teaching and learning activities. The significance of the ANOVA result underscores the importance of strengthening teaching and learning activities to achieve parity with the high professionalism standards already perceived by students, thereby enhancing the overall educational experience.

The descriptive and ANOVA results provide important evidence on how students evaluate the dual dimensions of lecturer professionalism and teaching and learning activities. The consistently high mean scores across both domains demonstrate that students generally hold positive perceptions of their lecturer, while the statistically significant difference between the two areas highlights a common pattern in which professionalism aspects slightly outperform teaching-related practices. This outcome aligns with the study's objective of assessing the quality of academic delivery from the students' perspective and suggests that while lecturers are perceived as highly professional, there remains scope to further enhance teaching and learning practices to match these high standards.

Table 3
Students' perceptions on lecturer's professionalism

		Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
1	The lecturer completes the scheduled hours of instruction.	0	0	14.29	85.71
2	The lecturer is ever ready to provide academic guidance to students.	0	0	17.46	82.54
3	The lecturer uses English as a medium of instruction during the lectures except for ACIS and Third Language courses.	0	0	19.05	80.95
4	The lecturer is approachable.	0	0	17.46	82.54
5	The lecturer is accessible for discussion.	0	0	22.22	77.78
6	The lecturer monitors student attendance.	0	0	15.87	84.13
7	Overall, the lecturer exhibits high professionalism.	0	0	17.46	82.54

Professionalism in teaching is described as the knowledge, abilities, and practices required for teachers to be successful educators (OECD,2016). Based on Table 3, the finding on lecturer professionalism reflects an extremely good view among students. Across all seven criteria, most of the respondents strongly agreed that their lecturer was professional, with numbers ranging from 77.78% to 85.71%. Notably, the highest levels of agreement were found when the lecturer completed specified hours of instruction (85.71%) and monitored student attendance (84.13%). These results support the findings by Salzer et al. (2024) who revealed that comprehensive and continuous attendance monitoring is critical for avoiding and reducing student absence, thereby promoting academic performance and engagement. It is also consistent with Bahri et al. (2023) who agreed that lecturer professionalism is demonstrated when the lecturer completes the lecturer's workload. In other words, professionalism in lecturing is demonstrated not just by subject-matter ability but also by adhering to set teaching schedules. These findings indicate that students see their lecturer as committed to performing teaching obligations.

Equally significant is the recognition of lecturer's interpersonal qualities. More than 80% of students strongly agreed that the lecturer is approachable (82.54%) and willing to provide academic guidance (82.54%) even though the percentages for accessibility for discussion is slightly lower (77.78%). These findings are consistent with previous research emphasizing the importance of teacher-student interactions in promoting student engagement and academic performance (Guo et al., 2023)

Another key aspect is the use of English as the medium of teaching, which was largely supported by students (80.95% strongly agree) highlighting the necessity of clear communication in guaranteeing comprehension and inclusion in higher education settings. This is consistent with the study by Lo and Othman (2023) who revealed that lecturers' attitudes toward English-medium instruction (EMI) were positive. Besides that, lecturers who

are prepared to teach in (EMI) contexts improve students' perceptions of teaching quality, particularly in multilingual higher education settings such as Malaysia (Lo & Othman 2023). Overall, this study shows that 82.54% of students strongly agreed that the lecturer demonstrates excellent professionalism in both performing academic commitments and developing supportive relationships with learners. Students strongly agreed that the lecturer completed the scheduled hours of instruction, approachable, accessible for discussion, monitored attendance, and provided academic guidance. Strengthening such processes can improve the quality of teaching and learning in institutions of higher learning.

Table 4
Students' perceptions on lecturer's teaching and learning activities

		Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
1	The lecturer explains the course content.	0	0	15.87	84.13
2	The lecturer explains the outcomes of the course.	0	0	22.22	77.78
3	The lecturer explains the methods of assessment for the course.	0	0	20.63	79.37
4	The lecturer teaches according to plan.	0	0	15.87	84.13
5	The lecturer actively involves students in the learning process.	0	0	17.46	82.54
6	The lecturer creates an environment for students to ask questions and offer opinions.	0	0	19.05	80.95
7	The lecturer delivers the content interestingly.	0	1.59	22.22	76.19
8	The lecturer's delivery style challenges the mind.	0	0	19.05	80.95
9	The lecturer provides feedback for each assessment/assignments/tests/project	0	1.59	15.87	82.54
10	The lecturer helps students master the learning content.	0	0	19.05	80.95
11	Overall, I enjoyed the teaching style of this lecturer.	0	0	19.05	80.95

Regarding lecturer's teaching and learning activities, the findings in Table 4 show consistently high levels of student agreement (Agree and Strongly Agree) ranging between 98.44% to 100%. Notably, the highest levels of agreement (Strongly Agree) were found at 84.13%, when the lecturer explains the course content and teaches according to plan. The remaining items which show more than 80% of the students strongly agreed includes: (1) actively involves students in learning process; 2) provides feedback for assessment, assignments, tests, and project, encouraging student participation 3) delivery style challenges their mind and (4) supporting mastery of learning content. It can be concluded that students enjoyed the interactive components such as the ability to ask questions, voice ideas, and get constructive feedback.

Additionally, this study supports the findings of Bakar and Quah (2023), who found that to enhance the quality of learning, students believed that good lecturers should be able to clearly explain key concepts, possess extensive knowledge, and be readily available for consultation both in-person (face-to-face) and virtually (email, mobile message, etc.). Only three items had slightly lower percentages, that is, in explaining the course content, course outcomes and delivering the content interestingly. Insignificant percentages of 1.59% were shown for two items:(1) The lecturer delivers the content interestingly and (2) the lecturer provides feedback for each assessment, assignments, tests, and projects. Even though the numbers were low, the lecturer should try making some changes to make teaching more effective, get students more interested in learning, and improve the whole learning process as revealed by Zhang et al (2024). For example, use a wider range of teaching methods, make classes more involved, make sure the material is easy to understand, use real-life examples, slow down or speed up as needed, and make sure students understand often. According to Rubeba (2025), perceived content, pedagogical, assessment, and technical competence are important indications of lecturers' teaching abilities, which improves the teaching and learning experience.

Overall, Table 4 shows 80.25% strongly agree of students enjoy the teaching style of this lecturer. This enjoyment will lead to students' good performance. This finding indicates that the lecturer's approaches are consistent with current best practices in higher education, which contributes to student happiness and pleasure of the teaching style. This is in line with Candrasa and Cen (2023) findings who indicated that student achievement is impacted by the teacher's style of instruction and a successful university lecturer combines subject- matter expertise, a desire to assist, and motivating teaching strategies (Su & Wood ,2012).

The combined findings imply that teaching approaches and professionalism work in tandem to increase student engagement. Active teaching techniques create meaningful environment for students to learn while professionalism builds a foundation of respect and trust.

Conclusion, Limitations, and Future Research
This study concludes that overall, the students place a higher score on lecturer professionalism and lecturer's teaching and learning activities, with satisfaction rating of 82.54% and 80.95% respectively. Students strongly agreed that the lecturer was approachable, accessible for discussion, monitored attendance and provided academic guidance. The findings also reveal that while the students appreciated clear explanations of course content, assessment methods, and learning outcome, they also valued interactive elements such asking questions, expressing personal opinions and receiving constant feedback. The findings of the study have shown that lecturer's professionalism is an important variable that determine students' satisfaction.

The study also demonstrates that lecturer professionalism directly supports and amplifies effective teaching strategies such as clarity, engagement, and timely feedback. The findings contribute accounting-specific evidence to the existing body of literature on SUFO, an area where discipline-focused research remains limited. By demonstrating a strong positive perception of lecturer professionalism and teaching effectiveness, this study reinforces the interconnection between professional conduct and high-quality teaching practices. Furthermore, the SUFO results offer practical value as an evidence-based tool for faculty use which can serve both as a means of lecturer recognition to acknowledge exemplary teaching

practices. This study also emphasized the importance of higher education institutions adopting SUFO results, not only for performance evaluation, but also as a reflection mechanism for lecturers to improve professionalism and teaching methods. Ultimately, these findings suggest that a sustained commitment to professionalism and effective teaching contributes to strengthening the institution's reputation, fostering student satisfaction, and enhancing academic performance. By embedding feedback-driven reflection into academic culture, universities can cultivate high-quality educators who demonstrate excellence in both teaching and professional behaviour.

Even though the finding shows positive outcome, there are several limitations that need to consider. First, the study focuses on a single course within the accounting program, which limit the generalisability of the results across faculties or institutions. Second, the use of self-reported students' perceptions may affect by opinion or expectations.

To address these limitations, future research should expand its scope by including multiple faculties and institutions and incorporating qualitative methods such as interview or focus groups. This information can therefore capture deeper insights and examine the relationship between SUFO score and actual students' performance results.

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