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Accessible Feedback in Research Project

Dr Thomas Evans, Roksana Sobolak, Magda Skubera

Background

- Structurally embedded inequalities in feedback and support systems contribute to the "leaky pipeline", characterised by marginalised groups being underrepresented in higher-ranking positions¹.
- Barriers such as privileged gatekeeping, delays, and exclusion during peer review, lab meetings and conferences contribute to why only approximately 27% of UK professors are women, and less than 1% are of Black heritage².
- Feedback is often delayed until research completion, emphasising outcomes over process, with late-stage peer review being particularly ineffective for early career researchers who require ongoing guidance³⁻⁴.

¹Jackson M. A. (2023). The Leaky Pipeline in Academia. *Missouri medicine*, 120(3), 185–187.

²Higher Education Staff Statistics: UK, 2018/19

³Hamilton, D. G., Fraser, H., Hoekstra, R., & Fidler, F. (2020). Journal policies and editors' opinions on peer review. *Elife*, 9, e62529.

⁴Tennant, J. P., & Ross-Hellauer, T. (2020). The limitations to our understanding of peer review. *Research integrity and peer review*, 5(1), 6.

Aims

Increase awareness and engagement with diverse feedback practices across disciplines and regions, specifically supporting early-career and marginalised researchers in gaining valuable feedback to incorporate into their research practices across the whole research cycle.

- **RQ1:** Where in the research cycle, and how, do researchers solicit feedback on their research?
- **RQ2:** What low-cost, high-potential, opportunities exist to increase the accessibility and impact of feedback across the research cycle?



Method

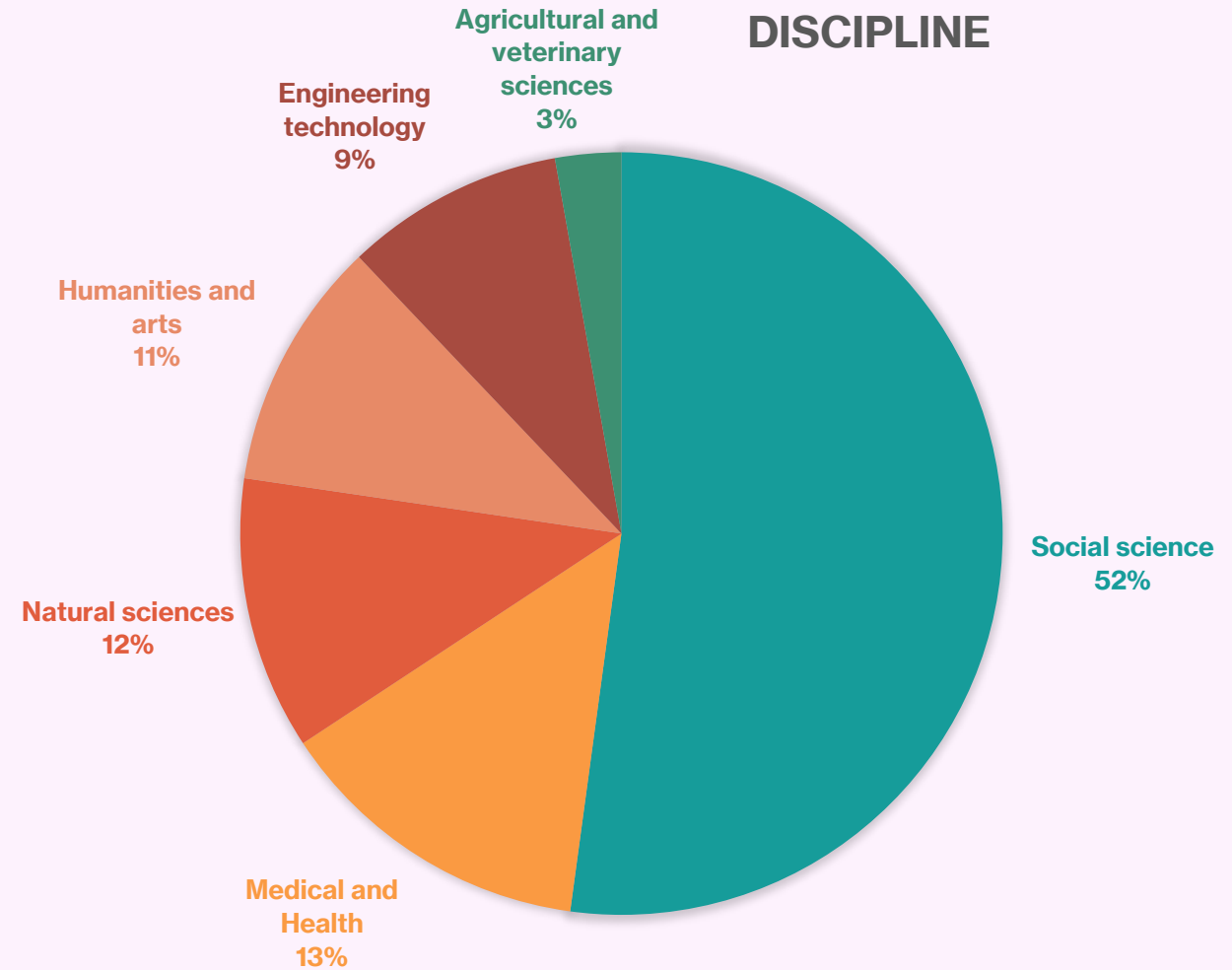
2 stages of recruitment, stage 1 was voluntary participation and stage 2 was incentivised with £20 (or equivalent) or a charity donation.

5–15-minute survey with 5 main sections:

1. 'Feedback Mechanisms' asked about feedback strategies used at each stage of the research cycle.
2. 'Improving the Feedback Experience' aimed to gather qualitative insights and recommendations for enhancing feedback practices.
3. 'Project Focus' aimed to capture aspects of the participants' research including their contributions to the project.
4. General demographic information aimed to better understand the sample and analyse trends and potential disparities in feedback mechanisms across different demographic groups.
5. 'Sensitive Demographic Information' aimed to better understand the sample and analyse trends and potential disparities in feedback mechanisms across different demographic groups.

Participants

- 881 participants.
- Mean age: 40.3 years (SD= 10.9).
- 373 males. 387 females. 19 individuals identified as non-binary, and remaining did not specify their sex.
- Career stage:
 - 46.7% early career
 - 33.9% mid-career
 - 18.1% late career
 - 1.3% retired



Results

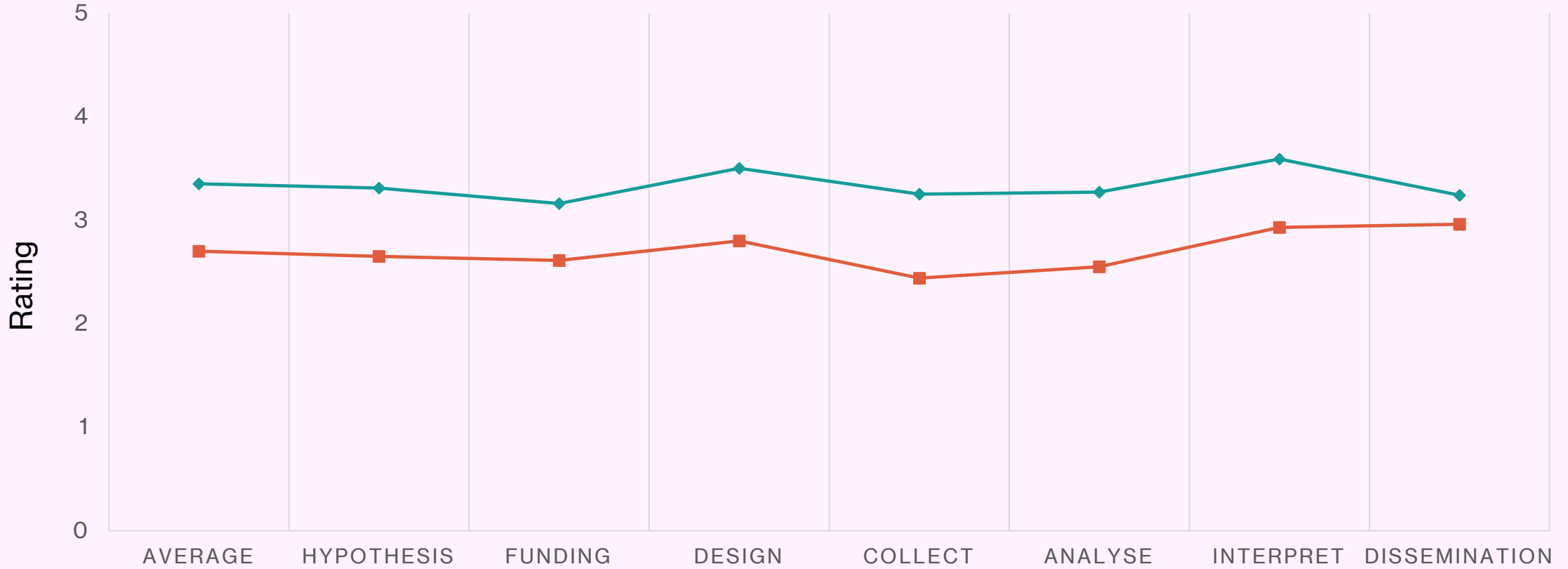
On average, participants reported using a mean of 4.66 feedback strategies per research project.

52 feedback practices were identified.

Stage	N of Reported Strategies	N of Strategies without Mixed
Hypothesis	804	732
Funding	360	336
Design	683	640
Collection	421	397
Analysis	604	571
Interpretation	541	513
Dissemination	556	521

DISCUSSION WITH COLLEAGUE

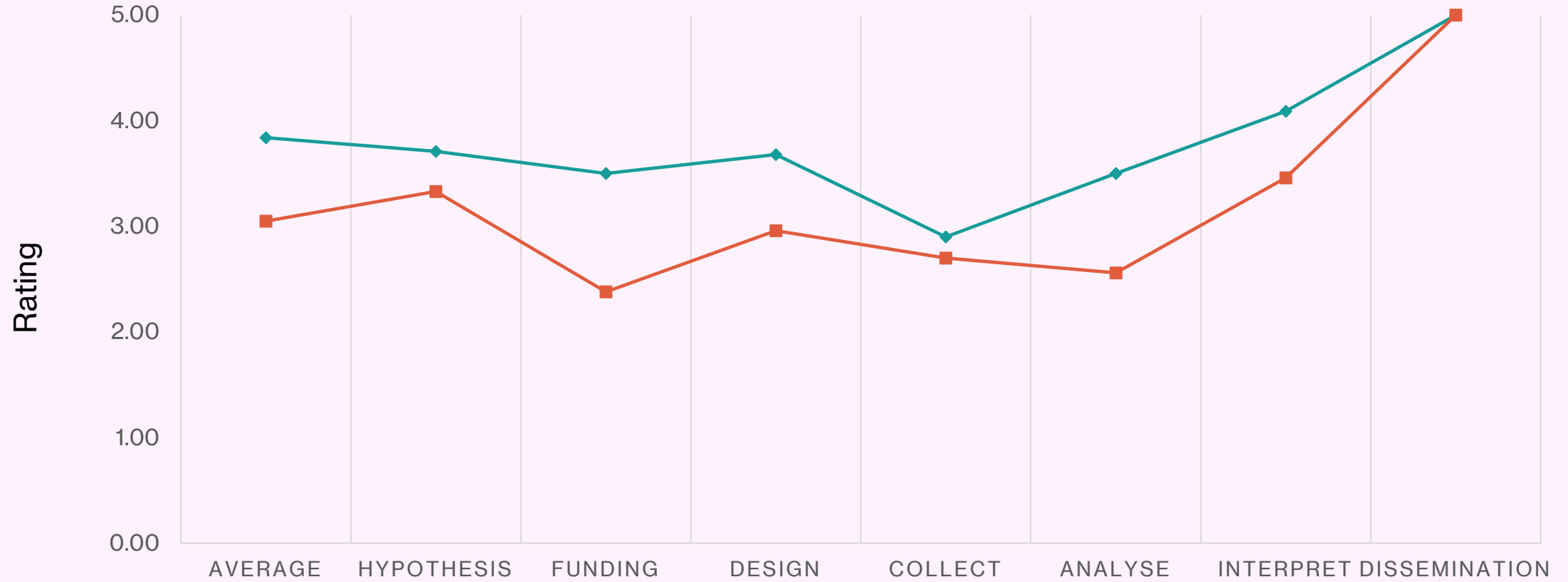
Professional development Personal development



Total 784

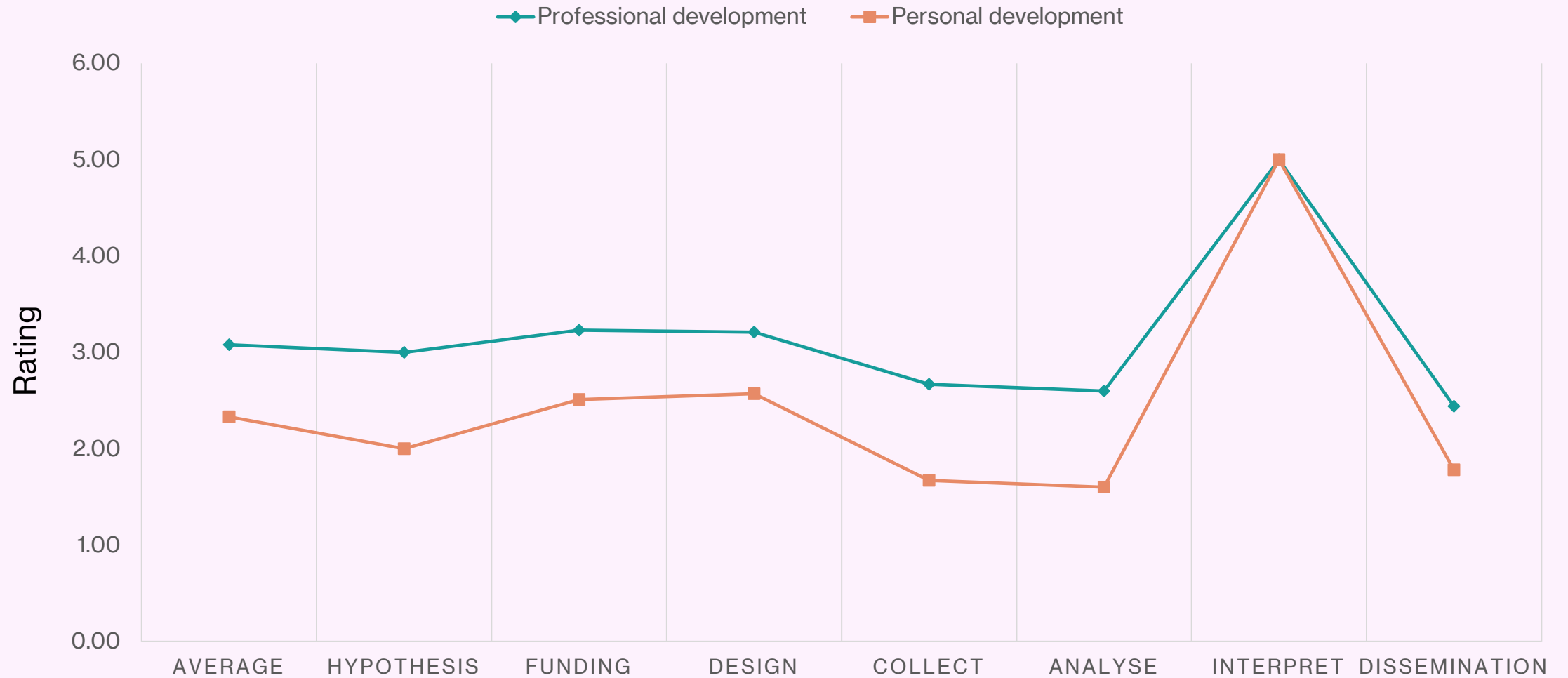
SELF- DIRECTED LEARNING

Professional development Personal development



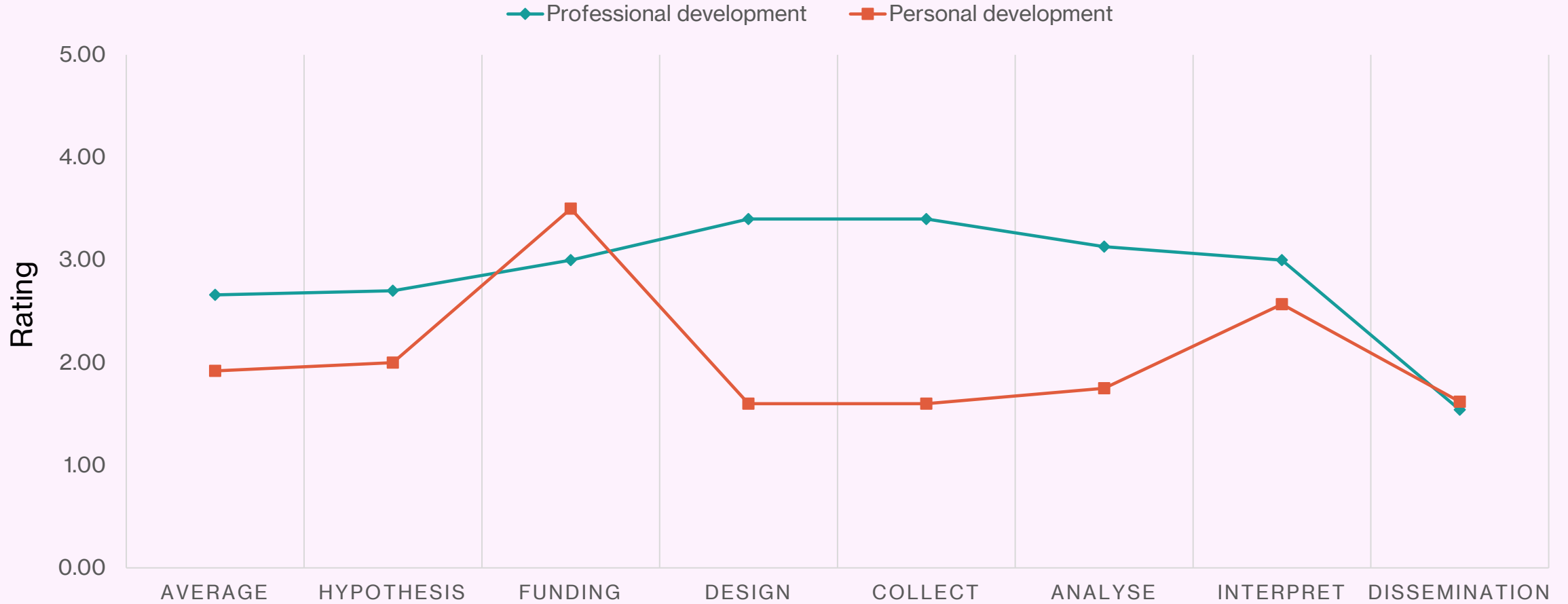
Total 118

INTERNAL UNIVERSITY STRUCTURES



Total 78

SOCIAL MEDIA/ FORUM FEEDBACK



Total 50

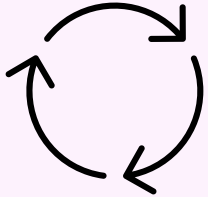
Recommendations for asking for feedback



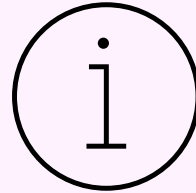
Concluding remarks

- Results showed how researchers engage with feedback strategies throughout the research cycle and how useful they are for professional and personal development.
- Findings of this study highlight a persistent reliance on existing academic networks and privilege in obtaining feedback across the research process.
- Discussions with colleagues, core research team members, and supervisors emerged as some of the most frequently reported and highly rated feedback sources.
- Identify gaps and opportunities for more accessible and timely feedback practices.

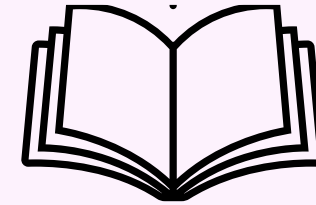
Coming soon..



**Mapping Opportunities for Feedback
Across the Research Cycle:
Quantitative Findings of a Global
Transdisciplinary Survey**



**Making the Most of
Feedback in
Research:
Recommendations
from the Hidden
Curriculum**



Guided by open scholarship principles, this project will culminate in an e-book offering actionable strategies to improve research quality, foster cross-disciplinary collaboration, and support an inclusive feedback culture.



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