A SURVEY OF THE USE OF PEER ASSESSMENT IN BUSINESS SCHOOLS IN KENYAN UNIVERSITIES: A CASE OF SELECTED UNIVERSITIES IN KENYA

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Abstract

Student peer assessment is one example of educational practice which is likely to contribute positively towards the development of employability skills. Despite such compelling justification and some evidence of increasing implementation, it is suggested that many undergraduate courses are still failing to fully incorporate peer assessment for either formative or summative assessment.
The study was guided by the following questions:

- To what extent is peer assessment used in universities in Kenya?
- How do students in universities in Kenya perceive peer assessment?
- Why is peer assessment not a common practice in Kenyan universities?
- What strategies can be used to popularize peer assessment in Kenyan universities?

The research design was descriptive survey research design. The population of interest was all the academic staff and students of business schools in universities in Kenya. There are 16 private and 7 public universities in Kenya. The private universities comprise of 11 universities that have been awarded a charter by

Commission of Higher Education in Kenya and 5 universities that are operating using Letters of Interim Awards. The researcher focused on universities that have been awarded a charter by Commission of Higher Education. Stratified random sampling technique was used, where universities were categorized into two strata, public and private. A sample of 2 private Universities and 2 public universities in Kenya were picked. Data was collected using questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages. Open-ended questions were organized into categories and analyzed qualitatively. Data was presented in form of tables and graphs, and hypotheses were tested using chi-square tests. The study found that peer assessment is practiced in universities to some extent even though it is not fully understood. Peer assessment is more common in private than public universities. The reason for this disparity is the large class sizes in public universities than in private ones. Public universities have large classes which make it impossible to employ peer assessment. The Hypothesis that female lecturers involve students more than male lecturers did not pass the chi-square tests and was therefore rejected while the one on class size and peer assessment was accepted.

Key words: Peer Assessment, Business Schools, Kenya

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the problem

University education in Kenya can be traced to 1956 when the Royal Technical College was established in Nairobi. By 1961, the Royal Technical College had evolved into a university college giving London University degrees. In 1964 it became a college in the University of East Africa under the name Royal College Nairobi. In 1970, the university of East Africa was disbanded and an autonomous University of Nairobi established through an Act of Parliament (Onsongo, 2007).

In Kenya, the need to regulate, coordinate and assure quality in higher education was felt as a result of the rapid growth and expansion experienced in the subsector prior to the establishment of the Commission for Higher Education in 1985. The number of universities has grown from one public university college in 1964 to 7 public and 17 private universities in 2010 (Commission for Higher Education, 2010).

According to a study conducted by Onsongo (2007) the growth of private universities in Kenya can be attributed to internal and external factors. Among the internal factors for the growth of private universities include: One, the increase in the number of qualified secondary school leavers seeking higher education. This increase in the number of qualified secondary school graduates has been triggered in part by the massive expansion of the primary and secondary sub-sectors of education resulting form high population growth.

Another factor for the growth of private universities is the increased economic growth that has led to increased demand for a skilled workforce to meet the needs of a globalised market. There is also the determination by some religious organisations to open tertiary institutions mostly for their followers and to train church workers. This has been instrumental in the emergence of religious sponsored universities in Kenya. Most of the Christian sponsored private universities offer courses mainly geared towards training church ministers.

Onsongo further argues that there are also external factors for the growth of private universities education in Kenya resulting mainly from donor pressure. For example, the World Bank, which is major financier of

education in low income countries advocates for the expansion of private higher education because it regards it as the most effective way of easing pressure on the public expenditure on higher education.

Assessment is a central element in the overall quality of teaching and learning in higher education. Well designed assessment sets clear expectations, establishes a reasonable workload and provides opportunities for students to self-monitor, rehearse, practice and receive feedback. Assessment is an integral component of a coherent educational experience. Assessment of students' learning is clearly at the very centre of universities "core business". It is the function universities carryout on behalf of society; it is, as it were, the product we sell. Students attend our courses leave us with an officially documented judgement on their work, which constitutes both an individualised evaluation and also a public qualification (Pittaway, Hannon, Gibb and Thompson, 2009).

Over the past decade, there have been increasing attempts on the part of university teachers to involve their students in the assessment and evaluation process, to assist teachers in judging student performance. This is partly to help teachers reduce the heavier marking loads which have been brought about by the large increases in university enrolments which have occurred over this period. Many of these attempts have been motivated by a belief that students not only benefit from such involvement, but also can often judge the performance of their classmates quite accurately. There are some teachers who contend that the validity of their marking is improved if it is based partly on students′ assessments of the performance of others in their class; i.e. if peer evaluations contribute to final course marks (Bok, 1990).

1.2 Statement of the problem

Student peer assessment is one example of educational practice which is likely to contribute positively towards the development of employability skills. It is described as engaging with standards and criteria in order to make judgements about the work of peers (Falchikov and Goldfinch, 2000). It is associated with the development of the ability to make judgements, to supervise one's own work and to encourage responsibility for learning (Gibbs, 1995).

Self- and peer assessment is often used as a means of handing over assessment of an individual's contribution to a team task to the team members themselves (Johnston and Miles, 2004). In addition to providing fairer assessment, self- and peer assessment is reported as assisting students to develop important professional skills including reflection and critical thinking (Mello, 1993; Somervell, 1993). Despite such compelling justification and some evidence of increasing implementation, it is suggested that many undergraduate courses are still failing to fully incorporate peer assessment for either formative or summative assessment. The reason for this is likely to be due, in part at least, to reports that the introduction and successful implementation of peer assessment is notoriously problematic, particularly in terms of concerns regarding reliability and validity and resistance from students (Cassidy, 2006).

Several studies have been done on peer assessment, in the UK and Australia among other countries. Orpen conducted a study in 1994 in the UK on the perceived similarity: Its effect on the accuracy of peer evaluations among university students, Cassidy also carried out a study in 2006 in the UK on developing employability skills: peer assessment in higher education. A more recent study was conducted in Australia by Willey and Gardner in 2009 on developing team skills with self and peer assessment: Are benefits inversely related to team function? Peer assessment has been extensively used in the developed countries, and many studies conducted on the same. Following a Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PCAP) course administered to lecturers in Kenyan Universities by York St. John University in the UK, peer assessment has

been implemented by most of these participants in the courses they teach. Despite peer assessment being an active way of engaging students in the learning process through provision of feedback by their peers, it still remains a silent form of assessment in the developing countries. To what extent then is peer assessment used in universities in Kenya?

1.3 Research Questions

- To what extent is peer assessment used in universities in Kenya?
- How do students in universities in Kenya perceive peer assessment?
- What is the practice of peer assessment method in Kenyan universities?
- What strategies can be used to popularize peer assessment in Kenyan universities?

1.4 Hypotheses

H1: Female Academic staff use peer assessment more than their male counterparts

H2: Peer assessment is more widely used in small classes (50 and below).

1.5 Significance of the study

- **Institutions of Higher learning**

The findings of this study will enhance assessment and evaluation in higher education by shedding more light on peer assessment, specifically on the students' perception and strategies that can be used to make the exercise popular, in an attempt to make peer assessment more effective. This will encourage wider use of peer assessment in institutions of higher learning in Kenya.

- **Students**

The findings of the study will reveal students' perceptions and the problems they encounter in peer assessment, which will be addressed to make the exercise more meaningful and fulfilling to them.

- **Future researchers**

They can use the findings of this research to expand the body of knowledge, as they carry out related research.

1.6 Theoretical framework/ Conceptual framework

This study is grounded on the social constructivist theory of learning. The proponent of this theory was Lev Vygotsky. One of the principles of this theory is that learning and development is a social, collaborative activity. It emphasizes how meanings and understandings grow out of social encounters. The most significant bases of a social constructivist theory were laid down by Vygotsky in his theory of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The concept of the Zone of Proximal Development is arguably the most important contribution of Vygotsky's work, the idea that human development is a social process wherein learners use more capable peers to advance their own intellectual development. Vygotsky defines Zone of Proximal Development as "the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers". For Vygotsky, development and learning are not the same; they are dynamic processes that result in these gaps of development level that must be addressed through social cooperation and interaction with more capable peers or adults. Learners with different skills and backgrounds

should collaborate in tasks and discussions in order to arrive at a shared understanding of the truth in a specific field (Duffy and Jonassen, 1992). Most social constructivist models also stress the need for collaboration among learners, in direct contradiction to traditional competitive approaches.

1.7 Scope and delimitations of the study

The study sought to establish the extent of the use of peer assessment in business schools in Kenyan Universities, and it covered business schools in both public and private universities. The focus was on those universities which have been fully accredited by the Commission for Higher Education. The target respondents were the academic staff, third and fourth year students.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Assessment as a principal driver of learning

Assessment is the engine which drives students learning, and that most students are (sensibly) quite strategic in their approaches to learning. Students devote energy to those aspects which count towards their final qualifications, often at the expense of other elements which could contribute significantly to their overall learning experience .In short, students get their heads down to learning when there is some assessed element involved .This means that teaching works best when it is seen by students to relate quite directly to their assessment. Therefore it can be argued that to make teaching really work we need to make systematic and thoughtful use of our students. However although it may be assessment which causes students to get their heads down and do some learning, it is through the associated feedback that we can attempt to improve the nature and quality of that learning. In short, feedback can be the lubricant for the engine which drives student learning. Assessment and associated feedback are key factors impacting on student motivation and commitment (Race, 2005).

2.2 Smarter Assessment and Feedback

Designing assessment and giving students useful feedback on their learning are perhaps the most significant elements of the work of teachers in post-compulsory education. This is where the time is spent, and therefore much can be gained by making assessment and feedback smarter .Too often, in universities and colleges, assessment and feedback processes have changed too little, while student numbers have grown dramatically and the pressures on teachers have increased accordingly (Race and Pickford, 2008).

2.3 Towards fit for purpose assessment

Among the reasons for assessment and feedback being found by students to be the least satisfactory elements of their experience of higher education is the fact that too often assessment is not ‘fit for purpose” Too often the casual assessment processes and instruments which we use cannot be considered the most sensible ways to measure students’ achievement of the intended learning outcomes of their programmes. To assess ‘smarter’ we need to go back to the intended learning outcomes of our programmes, and decide what sorts of evidence of achievement most closely link to the demonstration of successful achievement of these outcomes. We need to be quite selective as to which aspects of this evidence can be successfully demonstrated with pen and paper in exam rooms. We need also to decide how best to use formative feedback to assist students in their journey towards demonstrating their level of achievement of the intended learning outcomes. The five aspects of design of assessment and feedback are: validity, reliability transparency authenticity, and manageability (Race and Pickford, 2008).

2.3.1 Validity

This is about to what extent we are actually measuring with our assessment processes and instruments, exactly what we are intending to measure – students' demonstrated evidence of achievement of the intended learning outcomes. If we are merely measuring what students can remember in exam rooms about what they have been taught, we should worry that we are not assessing smartly. We often need to step back, and ask ourselves how best we can attempt to measure student learning without the undue influence of such factors as pen and paper filters under exam conditions. In many parts of the world it is already well known that face to face question and answer interrogations come closer to finding out to what extent students have got their heads around the principles of a subject.

2.3.2 Reliability

We need to be accountable with our assessment. It has got to be seen by all as being fair and consistent. If we just make subjective judgments on the evidence students give us of their level of achievement of the intended learning outcomes we are in trouble. Students might appeal against our assessment decisions. Not long ago this would have been unheard of . But now that students see themselves much more as consumers of higher education, if they feel that they have not been treated fairly they will complain and their complaints may reach a court of law. Therefore part of assessing smarter is to make sure we have already constructed a robust framework to defend where needed our assessment decisions. We need to be able to prove beyond reasonable doubt that our assessment verdicts can be upheld and that they are firmly linked to the published criteria which we can relate to the quality and nature of students evidence of achievement of our intended learning outcomes.

2.3.3 Transparency

Partly as a consequence of widening participation policies, where there are now many students in post-compulsory education from backgrounds where there is no familiarity with how such higher levels of education actually work, it has become increasingly important that assessment in particular is made transparent to our students. We now need to make it abundantly clear to them exactly what our stands are, and what we expect them to demonstrate to achieve their awards. By far the most effective way to achieve transparency is through formative feedback to students long before such critical assessment elements as final exams. We should reveal to students the fine details of our actual expectations and help them towards becoming better able to provide evidence of their achievement.

2.3.4 Authenticity

At least some of the reforms to assessment in post-compulsory education in recent years are in the direction of making sudden death examinations less significant, and taking more accounts of on-going performance in course work along the way towards awards. However, plagiarism has become ever more of a problem, and course work elements are beset by the possibility of students using other people's work inappropriately. This has increased the need to be able to be seen to be able to guarantee the authenticity of students' course work products. Plagiarism detection software plays a significant part as a deterrent against inappropriate use of others' work by students, but prevention of plagiarism is preferable to detection and subsequent punishment or disqualification. In practice plagiarism is much more easily recognized in face to face context. It only takes a few well directed questions, about a piece of coursework to give indications about the level of authenticity behind that work.

2.3.5 Manageability

This is the dimension of assessment and feedback which has quite rapidly gone out of control. If our lives are taken up with the increased burden of assessing more and more students and giving them feedback, the quality of both processes suffers, and we have too little time and energy left to ensure that our assessment is valid, reliable, authentic and transparent, or that our feedback is timely useful and promotes learning.

2.4 The need to Diversify Assessment

In past times when only a relatively small proportion of the population participated in post-compulsory education, it seemed acceptable to use a quite restricted range of assessment processes and instruments, and exams, essays and reports formed the bulk of the assessment culture . Now that around half of the population is expected to experience post-compulsory education, things have changed .Every assessment format disadvantages some students, so we need to extend and diversify the range of assessment process and instruments that we use so that fewer students are repeatedly disadvantaged by over-used formats. Making teaching work is very much about making assessment work and the latter is best achieved by diversifying the range and scope of the instruments and processes we use to measure and accredit students' achievement.

In relatively recent history, many study programmes were assessed primarily by end-of-course exams with the assessment of coursework playing a relatively insignificant role. It can be argued that this resulted in an examinocracy, with other students whose learning was equally successful, but who were not so good at demonstrating their achievement through the medium of exams. With widening participation this normally has to be addressed and compensation made, so that the success of learning is accredited with much less independence on the particular means of measurement and accreditation.

Smarter assessment, therefore, needs to include appropriate diversification of the assessment agenda, to ensure that all students have the opportunity to demonstrate their achievement in ways which they are comfortable with, rather than in a few prescribed ways (Race and Pickford, 2008).

2.5 Choice of assessment methods

Just as we should inform our choice of teaching methods by the nature of the subject mater we are teaching, so in our choice of assessment methods we should consider our goals for student learning. There are two things to remember in selecting methods of assessment for any course. First, the methods themselves are not what determine learning. It is how students experience the methods that matters. Second there will rarely be one method that satisfies all educational objectives. A willingness to experiment with a variety of methods and monitor the effectiveness of each method in helping students to learn, and in helping the teacher to measure their progress in an area of learning, is characteristic of a thoughtful approach to teaching.

If we see assessment as being about finding out what students have failed to learn, or as a way of comparing the weakest against the brightest, variety in assessment has decided disadvantages. It is so much more difficult to combine the results from different methods than to add up the marks from one method; students have an awkward habit of performing inconsistently on different tasks. It is by no means unusual to find that the marks from practical assignments and project reports correlate poorly with examination results (Ramsden, 2003).

2.6 Self and peer-assessment

Three stages are involved in assessment: Setting the criteria for assessing the work; Selecting the evidence that would be relevant to submit to judgement against those criteria; Making a judgement about the extent to which these criteria have been met.

Traditionally, the teacher is the agent in all three assessment issues. As just noted, level I teaching sees assessment through convergent eyes. The teacher decides in advance that the evidence for learning comprises correct answers to a set of questions that again in the teacher's opinion addresses and represents the core content of the course, and the teacher does the marking.

Self-assessment (SA) and peer-assessment (PA) usually refer to student involvement in stage 3 above, but students can and often should be involved in stages, I and 2 as well. Arguments can be made for all or any of these combinations (Harris and Bell 1986; Boud 1995). Students can be involved in discussing with the teacher what the criteria might be, which need not be the same for all students, as happens in a contract system. Students can also be involved in stage 2 that is, as the ones responsible for selecting the evidence to be put up against the criteria, as happens with assessment by portfolio. Finally, students can be involved in making the summative judgement (stage 3) but whether their involvement is for the value of the experience or is so their judgement can be included in the final grade is another matter (Biggs, 2003).

2.7 Benefits of peer assessment

It is generally accepted that a programme of assessment which incorporates an element of peer assessment is beneficial to learning (Falchikov and Goldfinch, 2000). Specific benefits cited include: increased student responsibility and autonomy; evaluative skill development; insight into assessment procedures and expectations for high quality work; students work harder with the knowledge that they will be assessed by their peers; potential for providing increased levels of feedback without increasing demands on tutors (Walker, 2001); and encourages deep rather than surface learning (Brown et al., 1994).

There is also evidence which suggests that students often fail fully to understand or utilise assessment criteria, do not know what a good or bad piece of work looks like, are focused towards the awarded mark or grade and, as such, fail to read, understand or adequately process tutors' feedback or act upon it (Crème and Lea, 1997; Ding, 1998; Glover and Brown, 2006; Hounsell, 1987; Lea and Street, 1998; Wotjas, 1998). This is further reason for the inclusion of peer assessment given its reputed benefits in terms of skill development and improved learning and performance on assessed work (Brown et al., 1994).

2.8 Problems associated with peer assessment

Despite such compelling justification and some evidence of increasing implementation, it is suggested that many undergraduate courses are still failing to fully incorporate peer assessment for either formative or summative assessment. The reason for this is likely to be due, in part at least, to reports that the introduction and successful implementation of peer assessment is notoriously problematic, particularly in terms of concerns regarding reliability and validity and resistance from students (Cassidy, 2006).

Studies examining peer and self-assessment have raised issues relating to the reliability of marks, the potential for group and gender bias and acceptance by students (Boud and Falchikov, 1989; Falchikov and Goldfinch, 2000).

Cassidy (2006) in his study, found out that while students welcome peer assessment in some form, they are uncomfortable taking on the responsibility of assessment (Walker, 2001). Concerns expressed by students include: lack capability to properly assess and high levels of subjectivity; too much responsibility and uncomfortable with the feeling of 'power'; lack of formal training; confidentiality and the opportunity for other students to use their ideas (Cheng and Warren, 1997; Walker, 2001); and lack of an explicit educational rationale for peer assessment and the belief that assessing work is the tutor's job.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research design

The research design used was descriptive survey research design. Descriptive study was aimed at gaining in depth understanding of the extent to which peer assessment is used in universities in Kenya. The study was a survey since it aimed at exploring respondents' views regarding peer assessment.

3.2 Target population

The population of interest was all the academic staff and students of business schools in universities in Kenya. There are 16 private and 7 public universities in Kenya.

The private universities comprise of 11 universities that have been awarded a charter by Commission of Higher Education in Kenya and 5 universities that are operating using Letters of Interim Awards. The researcher focused on universities that have been awarded a charter by Commission of Higher Education.

3.3 Sample and sampling techniques

Stratified random sampling technique was used, where universities were categorized into two strata, public and private. A sample of two private Universities (one rural,one urban) and two public universities (one rural,one urban) in Kenya was picked using simple random sampling.

respondents who were the academic staff and students (third and fourth year of study) of business schools were selected using stratified random sampling technique, where academic staffs were categorized into departments and 30% of respondents were picked randomly from each department. Students were categorized into their year of study, and thereafter 20% of the respondents were selected randomly from each year of study.

3.4 Data collection methods

Data was collected using questionnaires. In order to explore students' perceptions of peer assessment, a 20-item Student Attitude towards Peer Assessment questionnaire was used. Students responded to each item along a six-point Likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

The questionnaire also included some closed-ended and open-ended questions, and was administered on a drop-and-pick up later basis.

3.5 Data analysis and presentation

Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages. Open-ended questions were organized into categories and analyzed qualitatively. Hypotheses were tested using Chi-square test. Data was presented in form of tables and graphs.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Comparison of responses from private and public university lecturers

The study sought information from both private and public university lecturers concerning the use of peer assessment in business schools in Kenya. The data collected was analyzed separately and the findings were compared with an aim of identifying disparities and similarities that existed between the private and public universities. The following are the discussions from the comparisons.

The study sought to establish the gender distribution among the respondents in both the public and private universities. The findings from the tables below indicate that majority of the respondents in both public and private universities were males. This is an indication that males dominate the career. The males represented 75% and 77.8% of the respondents in both private and public universities respectively.

Table 4.1: Gender of respondents

	Private university lecturers		**Public university lecturers**	
Gender	**Frequency**	**Percentage**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Male	9	75.0	21	77.8
Female	3	25.0	6	22.2
Total	12	100.0	27	100.0

The researcher was also interested in comparing the level of education of the respondents in both the private and the public universities. It is evident from the findings that 83.3% of the respondents from the private universities had Masters Qualifications, while only 16.7% of the respondents had Doctorate degrees. In the public universities, on the other hand 74.1% of the respondents had Masters Qualifications whereas 25.9% of the respondents had Doctorate degrees.

The researcher also sought to test the hypothesis that female lecturers involve students more in peer assessment than male lecturers. From the findings tabulated below it is clear that the male lecturers involve students more in peer assessment than the female lecturers. This therefore leads to rejection of the hypothesis.

Table 4.2: Gender - Frequency of peer assessment in class Cross tabulation

			Frequency of peer assessment in class				
			Always	Occasionally	Rarely	Never	Total
Gender	Male	Count	3	11	4	3	21
		Expected Count	2.3	10.1	3.9	4.7	21.0
		% within Gender	14.3%	52.4%	19.0%	14.3%	100.0%
	Female	Count	0	2	1	3	6
		Expected Count	.7	2.9	1.1	1.3	6.0
		% within Gender	.0%	33.3%	16.7%	50.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	3	13	5	6	27
		Expected Count	3.0	13.0	5.0	6.0	27.0
		% within Gender	11.1%	48.1%	18.5%	22.2%	100.0%

Table 4.3: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3.902[a]	3	.272
Likelihood Ratio	4.120	3	.249
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.406	1	.065
N of Valid Cases	27		

a. 7 cells (87.5%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .67.

Table 4.4: Level of education

	Private university lecturers		**Public university lecturers**	
Level of education	**Frequency**	**Percentage**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Masters degree	10	83.3	20	74.1
Doctorate degree	2	16.7	7	25.9
Total	12	100.0	27	100.0

The study sought to investigate the distribution in terms of the number of years the respondents had served as lecturers in their respective instituttions. The findings as indicated in the graphs below show different trends in both the private and public universities. In the private universiities, it is clear that majority of the lecturers had served for less than five years. This explains the assymetry that is observed from the normal curve for private universities. The public universities however indicate some level of symmetrical balance in all the levels of years worked. Majority of the respondents had taught between 5-15 years.

Figure 4.1: Teaching experience – private universities

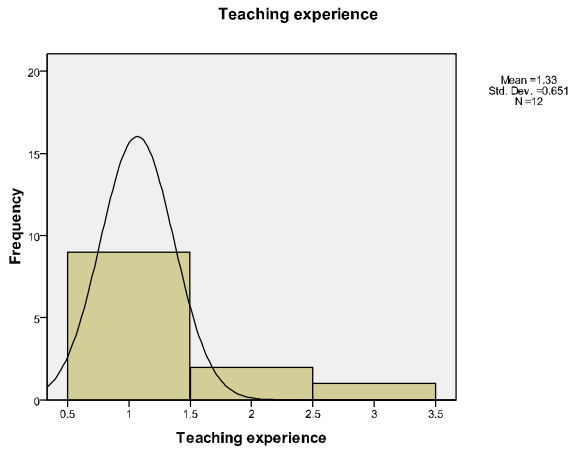
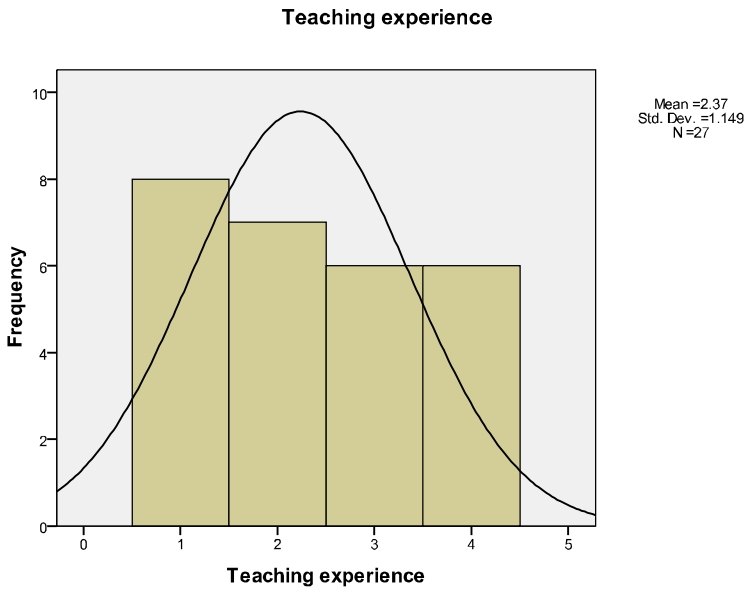


Figure 4.2: Teaching experience public universities



The researcher also wanted to investigate whether the respondents gave students a chance to evaluate their fellow students. In both the private and public universities, there is a clear indication that majority of the respondents agreed that they gave their students a chance to evaluate fellow students. The percentages however show some variation. 83.3% of the respondents in private universities gave chance to students to evaluate fellow students whereas 66.7% of the respondents in public universities did the same. This is a clear indication that peer assessment may not be as popular in public universities as it is in private universities.

Table 4.5: Giving students opportunity to evaluate fellow students

	Private university lecturers		**Public university lecturers**	
Response	**Frequency**	**Percentage**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Yes	10	83.3	18	66.7
No	2	16.7	9	33.3
Total	12	100.0	27	100.0

The study sought to compare the effects of class size on peer evaluation in both the private and public universities. From the findings indicated below, majority of the respondents from Private universities agreed that the size of the class did determine whether to involve students in peer evaluation. Most private universities have fewer students in classes hence the reason why they are able to involve them in peer evaluation. In the public universities majority of the respondents agreed that the class size was quite huge hence was a challenge to peer evaluation.

Figure 4.3: Effect of class size on peer evaluation-private universities

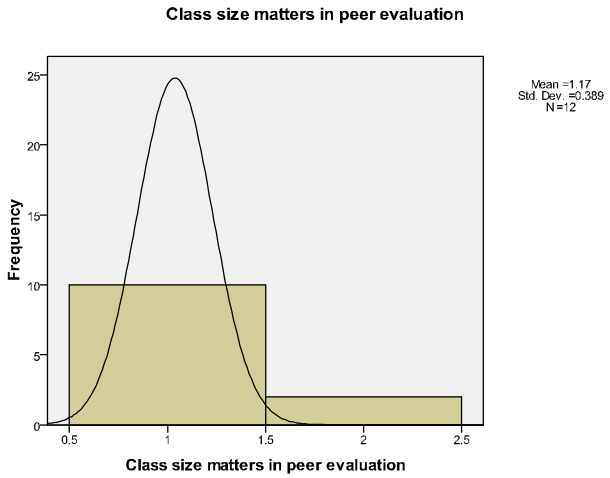
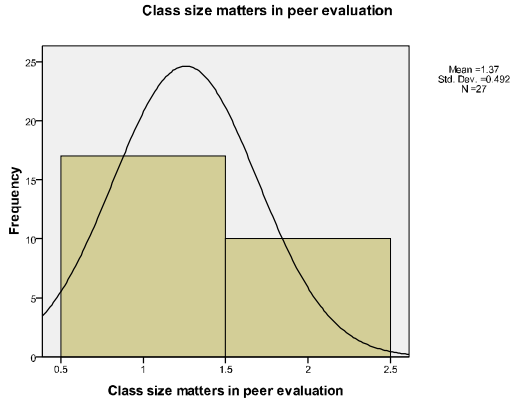


Figure 4.4: Effect of class size in peer evaluation-public universities



It was also established, as shown below that there was a strong negative relationship between the size of the class and the extent to which the lecturer was willing to involve the students in peer assessment. This implies that as the size of the class increases, the extent of student involvement in peer assessment decreases and vice versa. However the relationship between the two variables in public universities was stronger indicating that the class sizes were huge thus making it almost difficult to involve the students in peer evaluation.

The study also tested the Hypothesis that lecturers involve smaller classes in peer evaluation than large classes. Using the Chi-square tests in the tables below it is clear that 4 cells have an expected count of more than 5. In this case we accept the hypothesis that classes of less than 50 students are easily involved in peer assessment.

Table 4.6: Class size matters in peer evaluation * Number of students

		Number of students		Total
Class size matters in peer evaluation		Below 50	Above 50	
	Count	31	6	37

	Expected Count	19.4	5.6	25.0
	% within Class size matters in peer evaluation	80%	20%	100.0%
	Count	1	1	2
	Expected Count	1.6	0.4	2.0
	% within Class size matters in peer evaluation	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
	Count	32	7	39
	Expected Count	32.0	7.0	39.0
Total		77.8%	22.2%	100.0%

Table 4.7: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3.381[a]	2	.496
Likelihood Ratio	3.566	1	.468
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.110	1	.292
N of Valid Cases	39		

a. 4 cells (66.760%) have expected count more than 5. The minimum expected count is .32

Table 4.8: Correlation between class size and extent of involvement

	Private university lecturers	**Public university lecturers**
Variables	**Correlation coefficient**	**Correlation coefficient**
Extent of student involvement		
Class size matters in peer evaluation	-.698	-.851

The researcher wanted to compare the extent to which lecturers involved students in peer assessment in both the private and public universities. The findings from the tables below indicate a sharp variation between the private and public universities. 16.7%, 33.3% and 33.3% of the respondents in the private universities agreed that they involved students in peer assessment to a large extent, moderate extent and less extent respectively. The percentages in the public universities were a bit lower with 25.9%, 25.9% and 7.4% respectively. It is

however important to note that 33.3% of the respondents in public universities indicated that they do not involve students in peer assessment at all.

Table 4.9: Extent of student involvement in peer evaluation

	Private university lecturers		**Public university lecturers**	
Response	**Frequency**	**Percentage**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
To a very large extent	1	8.3	2	7.4
To a large extent	4	33.3	7	25.9
To a moderate extent	4	33.3	7	25.9
To a less extent	2	16.7	2	7.4
Not at all	1	8.3	9	33.3
Total	12	100.0	27	100.0

In public universities, the study established that there exists a strong positive correlation between the opportunity availed to students to evaluate themselves and the extent to which lecturers involve the students in peer assessment as indicated in the table below. This positive correlation indicates that if lecturers involve students more in peer evaluation then the opportunity for students to evaluate themselves increases respectively. The reverse will also happen to the two variables in case there is a decrease in either of the variables. The case in private universities was also similar since it was established that there is a relatively strong positive correlation between the opportunity given to students to evaluate themselves and the extent to which lecturers were willing to involve them in peer assessment. This implies a direct relationship where one variable either increases or decreases.

Table 4.10: Correlation between extent of student involvement and opportunity to evaluate themselves.

	Private university lecturers	**Public university lecturers**
Variables	**Correlation coefficient**	**Correlation coefficient**
Extent of student involvement	.559	.751
Opportunity for students to evaluate themselves		

The study sought to investigate how often the lecturers in both private and public universities used peer assessment in class. The findings represented in the curves below indicate almost a similar trend in both the private and public universities. Majority of the respondents agreed to using the method occasionally. However in the public universities there is a significant number of respondents who admitted that they rarely or never use the method in class as a form of assessment.

Figure 4.5: Frequency of peer assessment-private universities

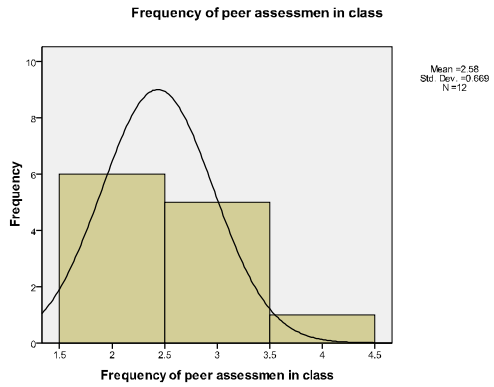
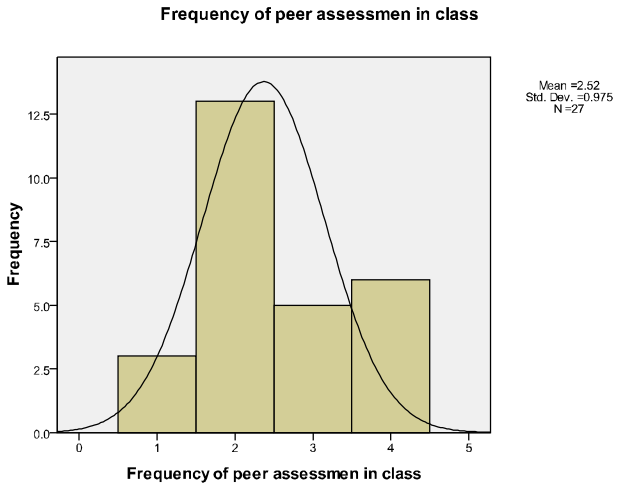


Figure 4.6: Frequency of peer assessment-public universities



The researcher also identified a strong positive correlation between frequency of peer assessment in class and the extent to which the lecturers involve the students in peer assessment. This implies that a positive change in either variable will cause a positive change in the other and the reverse is true. As indicated below, the relationship was positive in both private and public universities even though it was slightly stronger in private than in public universities.

Table 4.11: Correlation between extent of involvement and frequency of peer assessment

	Private university lecturers	**Public university lecturers**
Variables	**Correlation coefficient**	**Correlation coefficient**
Extent of student involvement		
Frequency of peer assessment in class	.712	.607

The researcher wanted to establish if the universities accepted peer assessment as one of the recommended methods of assessment. The findings as tabulated below indicate some similarities and disparities between the private and public universities. The similarities include the acceptance by majority of the respondents in

both cases that the universities have not accepted the method. 58.3% in private and 44.4% in public universities indicated that the universities do not accept peer assessment. It is however worth noting that 33.3% of the respondents in the private universities admitted that the universities occasionally accepts peer evaluation compared to 18.5% in the public universities who had the same feelings.

Table 4.12: Acceptance of peer assessment in universities

	Private university lecturers		**Public university lecturers**	
Response	**Frequency**	**Percentage**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Always			3	11.1
Occasionally	4	33.3	5	18.5
Rarely	1	8.3	7	25.9
Never	7	58.3	12	44.4
Total	12	100.0	27	100.0

4.2 Student responses

The researcher wanted to establish the distribution by gender among the students. The findings tabulated below indicate that 79.4% of the respondents were male students who participated in the study.

Table 4.13: Gender of respondents

Gender	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Male	250	79.4
Female	65	20.6
Total	315	100.0

The study sought to establish the year of study of the respondents. It is evident from the findings as tabulated below that majority of the respondents were from the fourth and third year students. The study targeted them because they have been in the university long enough hence gone through various assessment methods.

Table 4.14: Year of study

Year of study	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
First	31	9.8
Second	40	12.6
Third	104	33.2
Fourth	140	44.4
Total	315	100.0

The researcher was also interested in understanding the distribution of respondents among the four course specializations indicated in the table below. The findings indicate that majority of the respondents were students specializing in finance option.

Table 4.15: Specialization

Course specialization	Frequency	Percentage
Finance	131	41.6
Accounting	40	12.7
Human resource	42	13.3
Marketing	102	32.4
Total	315	100.0

The study sought to investigate whether the respondents had ever been given an opportunity to evaluate each other's work. The findings as represented in the table below testify that 59.6% of the respondents had been able to evaluate a fellow student's work. This is evidence of peer evaluation in the universities.

Table 4.16: Opportunity to evaluate fellow student

Opportunity to evaluate fellow student	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	188	59.6
No	127	40.4

The study sought to investigate the extent to which the students understood the peer assessment criteria. The findings as tabulated below indicate that majority of the students did not have a clear understanding of the criteria employed in peer assessment. It is only 26.7% of the respondents who indicated that they understand the concept to a moderate extent.

Table 4.17: Understanding of peer assessment criteria

		Frequency	Percent
	Not at all	50	15.9
	To a less extent	52	16.5
	To a moderate extent	84	26.7
	To a large extent	48	15.2
	To a very large extent	33	10.5
	Total	267	84.8
Missing	System	48	15.2
Total		315	100.0

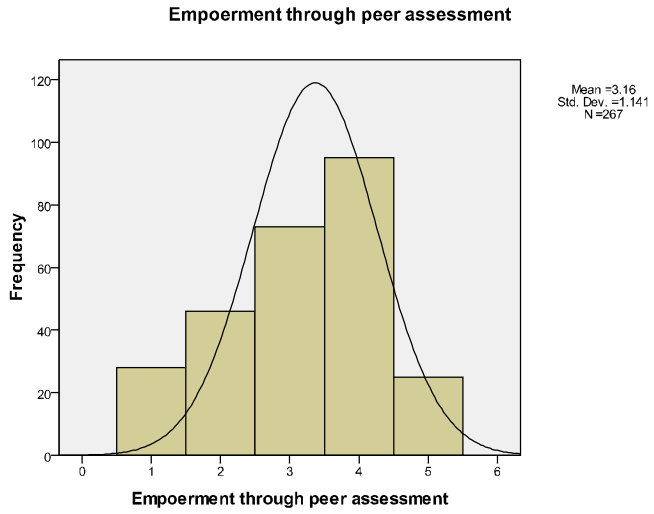
There was a strong positive relationship between not fully understanding peer evaluation criteria and development of skills out of the exercise. This implied that when there was low understanding of the criterion, the level of skills development was also low. The reverse is also true.

Table 4.18: Correlation between skill development and criteria

Variable	Criteria not fully understood
Skills development out of exercise	.601

The researcher wanted to investigate whether the students who had participated in peer assessment felt empowered in any manner after going through the exercise. The findings indicated below show that majority of the respondents felt empowered to a large extent after peer assessment.

Figure 4.7: Empowerment through peer assessment



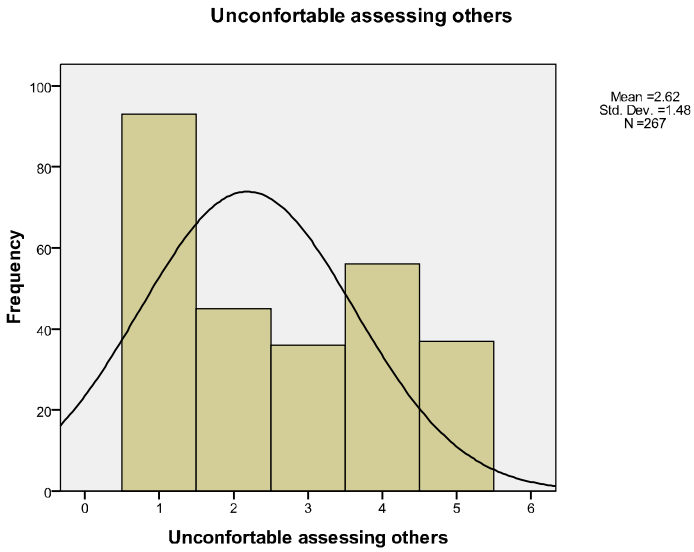
The study sought to investigate if the students considered themselves having learnt from assessing other students. The findings as tabulated below indicated that majority of the respondents agreed that learning took place either moderately or to a large extent. This was represented by 27.3% and 20.3% respectively.

Table 4.19: Learning from the exercise

		Frequency	Percent
	Not at all	62	19.7
	To a less extent	19	6.0
	To a moderate extent	86	27.3
	To a large extent	64	20.3
	To a very large extent	36	11.4
	Total	267	84.8
Missing	System	48	15.2
Total		315	100.0

The researcher sought to establish whether the respondents were in any way feeling uncomfortable while assessing fellow students. The findings in the above curve indicate that majority of the respondents did not feel uncomfortable at all. The curve indicates that in general, the students felt uncomfortable to a less extent. This is an indication that they were willing to participate in peer assessment.

Figure 4.8: Uncomfortable assessing others



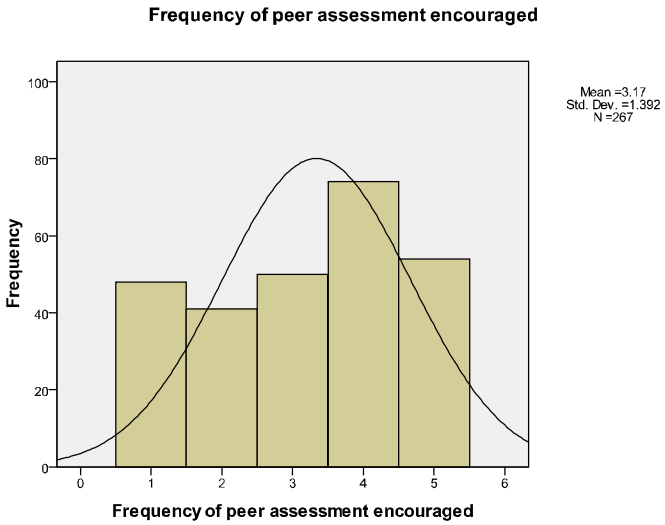
The study also investigated whether the respondents enjoyed the peer assessment exercise. The findings tabulated below indicated that 28.6 of the respondents agreed that they did enjoy the peer assessment exercise. It was evident that most of the respondents did enjoy the exercise though the level is what differed.

Table 4.20: Enjoying peer assessment

		Frequency	Percent
	Not at all	26	8.3
	To a less extent	50	15.9
	To a moderate extent	53	16.8
	To a large extent	90	28.6
	To a very large extent	48	15.2
	Total	267	84.8
Missing	System	48	15.2
Total		315	100.0

The research sought the views of the respondents on whether they would prefer to have frequent peer assessments in class. The findings as presented in the curve below indicate that majority of the respondents agreed to a moderate and large extent that the same should be frequently done or practiced.

Figure 4.9: Frequency of peer assessment encouraged



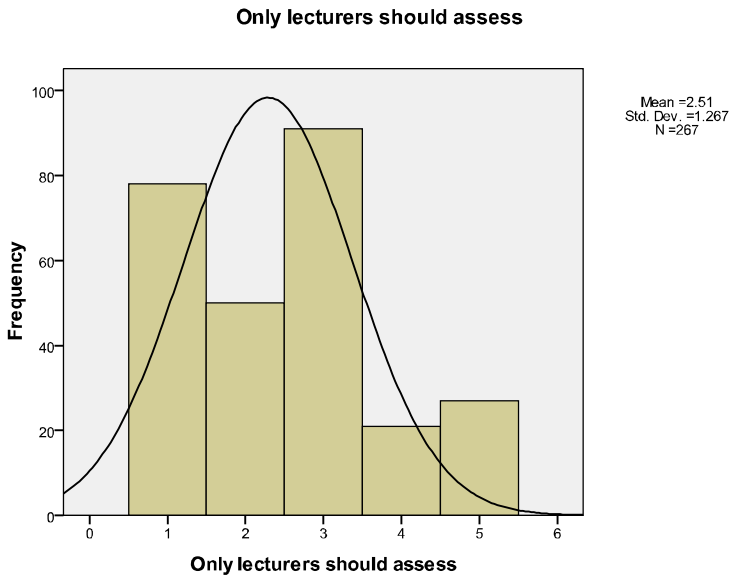
The study sought to know if the respondents considered their own assessment as being unreliable. The findings as tabulated below indicated that majority of the respondents represented by 34% disagreed with this idea. This therefore implies that they actually feel that their assessment was reliable.

Table 4.21: Assessment unreliable

		Frequency	Percent
	Not at all	107	34.0
	To a less extent	63	20.0
	To a moderate extent	72	22.9
	To a large extent	21	6.7
	To a very large extent	4	1.3
	Total	267	84.8
Missing	System	48	15.2
Total		315	100.0

The researcher wanted to establish the views of the respondents concerning the idea that only lecturers should be allowed to assess students. The findings as represented in the graph below indicate that majority of the respondents moderately agreed to the suggestion while others disagreed totally or agreed to a less extent. This was a clear indication that the students were very much willing to participate in peer evaluation.

Figure 4.10: Only lecturers should assess students



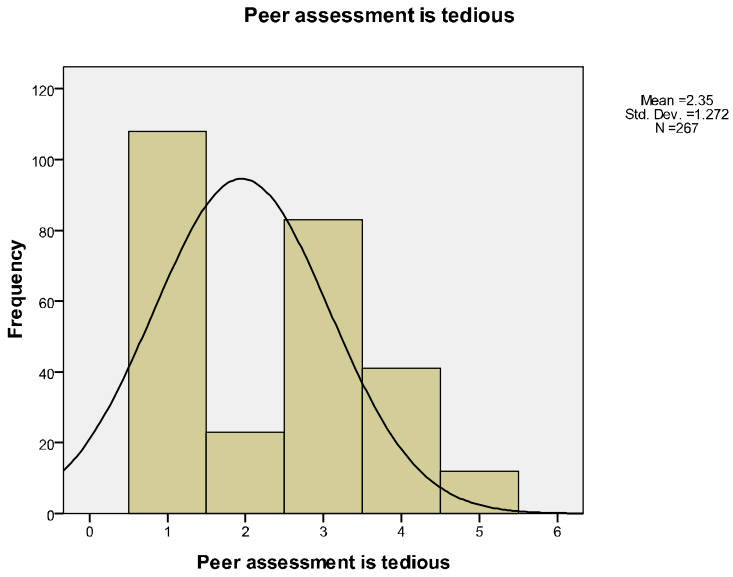
The question whether peer assessment is able to create mutual trust between the student and the lecturer was also of paramount importance to the study. It is evident from the findings tabulated below that majority of the respondents agreed that it actually does promote mutual trust between the lecturer and the students. This was represented by 25.1% of the respondents who participated in the study.

Table 4.22: Creation of mutual trust

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Not at all	51	16.2
	To a less extent	30	9.5
	To a moderate extent	79	25.1
	To a large extent	59	18.7
	To a very large extent	48	15.2
	Total	267	84.8
Missing	System	48	15.2
Total		315	100.0

The researcher was also interested in knowing from the respondents whether they viewed peer assessment as a tedious exercise. It is evident from the graph below that majority of the respondents totally disagreed with this idea. This therefore indicate that the students do not perceive peer assessment as a tedious exercise.

Figure 4.11: Peer assessment is tedious



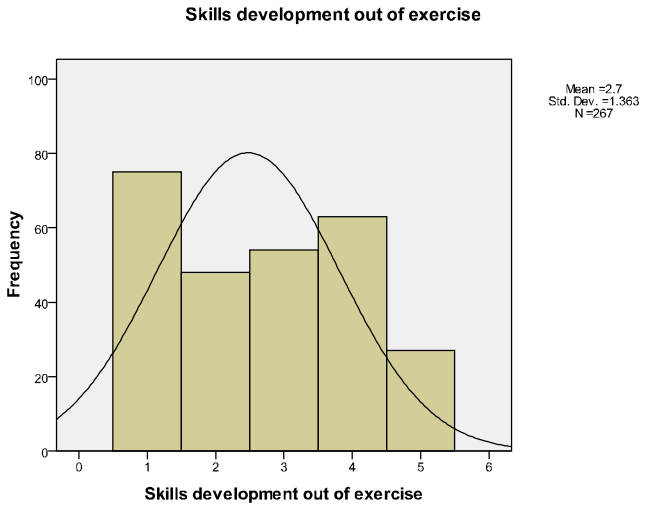
The study sought to establish the seriousness which the students gave the peer assessment exercise. The findings tabulated below indicated that 22.5% of the respondents agreed that to a large extent the exercise was not taken seriously. This is an indication that more has to be done to enable the students take the exercise with a lot of seriousness.

Table 4.23: Seriousness given to peer assessment

		Frequency	Percent
	Not at all	63	20.0
	To a less extent	62	19.7
	To a moderate extent	55	17.5
	To a large extent	71	22.5
	To a very large extent	16	5.1
	Total	267	84.8
Missing	System	48	15.2

The researcher was interested in knowing if the students considered themselves having developed any skills through the peer evaluation exercise. The research findings in the graph below testify that a number of the respondents agreed that they developed some skills through the exercise. However, it is worth noting that the largest number of respondents thought that they do not develop any skills at all. This could be tied to the fact that they do not understand the peer evaluation criteria.

Figure 4.12: Skills development out of exercise



A moderate negative relationship was established between the availability of an opportunity to evaluate a fellow student and the skills development out of the exercise. This is a confirmation that an increase in the opportunities to evaluate other students may not necessarily lead to skills development from peer evaluation. This negative relationship can be attributed to the fact that by providing an opportunity for students to evaluate themselves will not lead to skills development. There are other factors that must be observed in order for the students to develop skills out of the exercise. They include fully understanding of the criteria used in peer assessment, lack of biasness, transparency and cooperation between students and lecturers.

Table 4.24: Correlation between opportunity and skill development

Variable	Skills development out of exercise
Opportunity to evaluate fellow student	-.558

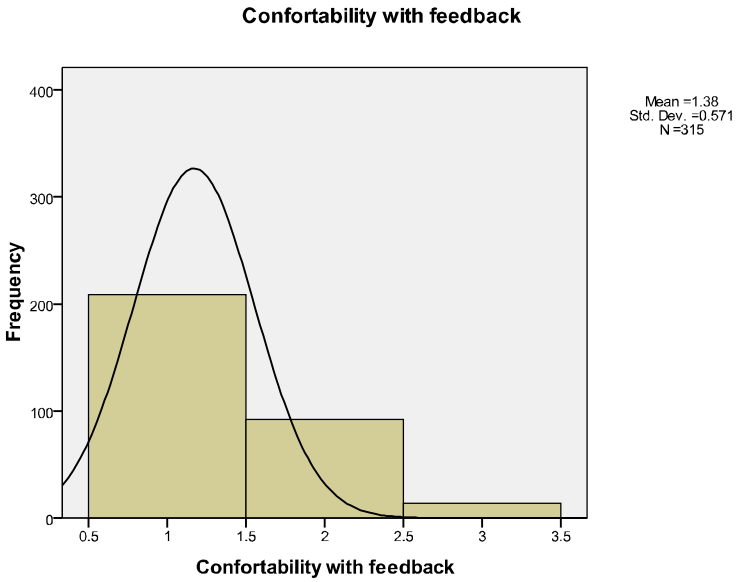
The study sought to find out from the respondents whether they ever had an opportunity to be evaluated by their fellow students. The findings which have been tabulated below indicated that 69.8% of the respondents testified that this had actually happened.

Table 4.25: Opportunity to be evaluated by fellow student

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	220	69.8
No	95	30.2
Total	315	100.0

The researcher was also interested in finding out if the students were comfortable with the feedback they received from peer assessment sessions. It is evident from the findings in the curve below that majority of the respondents were not comfortable with the feedback.

Figure 4.13: Comfortability with feedback



The study sought to establish whether the respondents found the feedback from peer evaluation reliable. The findings tabulated below indicate that 58.7% of the respondents believed that the feedback they received from peer assessment was reliable. This is an indication that peer assessment is objective to some good extent.

Table 4.26: Reliability of feedback

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	185	58.7
No	130	41.3
Total	315	100.0

The study sought to find out if there was lack of trust in the feedback delivered from peer assessment. It is evident from the findings in the table below that 24.8% of the respondents accepted that there is lack of trust to a moderate extent. The general perception from the findings is that there is lack of trust in the feedback.

Table 4.27: Trust in feedback

	Frequency	Percent
Not at all	75	23.8
To a less extent	26	8.3
To a moderate extent	78	24.8
To a large extent	55	17.5
To a very large extent	31	9.8

	Total	265	84.1
Missing	System	50	15.9
Total		315	100.0

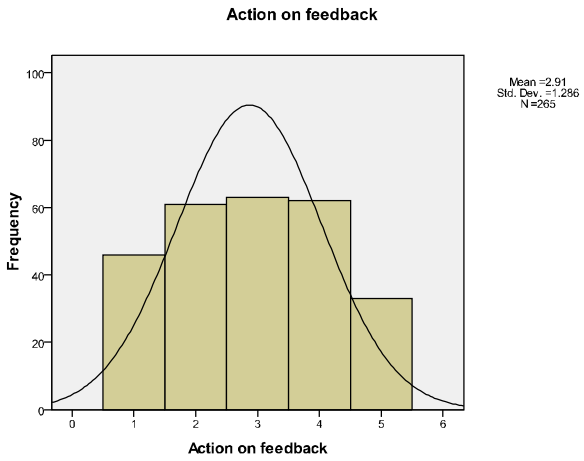
The researcher was also interested in finding out whether the respondents considered the feedback received from peer assessment as helpful to them. The findings as tabulated below indicate that 30.2% of the respondents were in agreement that the feedback was helpful to them.

Table 4.28: Feedback helpful

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Not at all	24	7.6
	To a less extent	37	11.7
	To a moderate extent	47	14.9
	To a large extent	95	30.2
	To a very large extent	62	19.7
	Total	265	84.1
Missing	System	50	15.9
Total		315	100.0

The researcher wanted to investigate whether the respondents were in any way willing and ready to act on the feedback they got from peer assessment in order to improve on their performance. From the findings in the graph below, majority of the respondents who fall between less extent and large extent agreed to act on the feedback from peer assessment.

Figure 4.14: Action on feedback



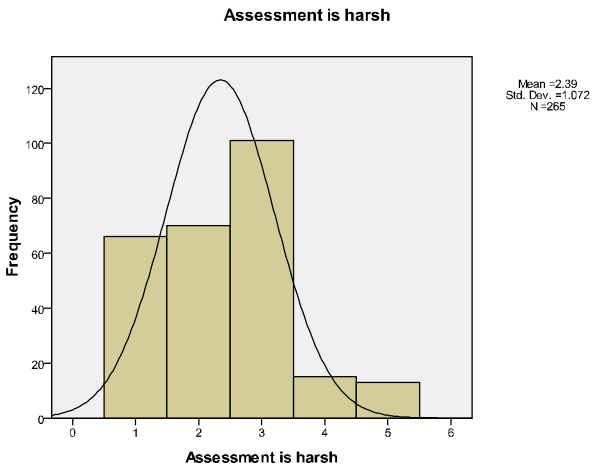
The study sought to find out if the criterion for peer assessment was not fully understood by the students. The findings which have been tabulated below indicated that 28.3% of the respondents agreed to a less extent that the criterion was not fully understood.

Table 4.29: Peer assessment not fully understood

		Frequency	Percent
	Not at all	57	18.1
	To a less extent	89	28.3
	To a moderate extent	61	19.4
	To a large extent	39	12.4
	To a very large extent	19	6.0
	Total	265	84.1
Missing	System	50	15.9
Total		315	100.0

The researcher wanted to know if the respondents viewed the peer evaluation as being harsh to them. The findings as presented in the curve below indicated that majority of the respondents were between less extent and moderate extent. This is an indication that the evaluation was in some way harsh on the students.

Figure 4.15: Peer assessment is harsh



The study sought the views of the respondents on whether they would be comfortable if peer assessment was introduced on a regular basis. It is evident from the table of findings below that 33.3% of the respondents agreed to a moderate extent that peer evaluation should be introduced on a regular basis. It is also important to observe that 20.3% of the respondents were not in support of the idea.

Table 4.30: Introduction of peer assessment on a regular basis

		Frequency	Percent
	Not at all	64	20.3
	To a less extent	30	9.5
	To a moderate extent	105	33.3
	To a large extent	43	13.7
	To a very large extent	23	7.3
	Total	265	84.1
Missing	System	50	15.9
Total		315	100.0

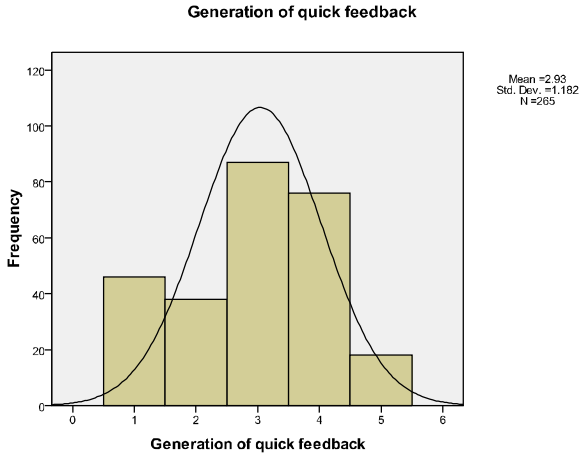
The study also established that there was a moderate direct relationship between frequency of peer assessment and skills development from the exercise. This was an indication that if peer assessment was introduced regularly in the universities, then the students were also likely to develop skills from the exercise.

Table 4.31: Correlation between frequency and skills development

Variable	Skills development out of exercise
Frequency of peer assessment encouraged	.544

The researcher was also investigating on whether peer evaluation was considered as generating quick feedback to the respondents. The findings as they have been presented in the graph below demonstrated that majority of the respondents agreed that it does generate quick feedback. This implies that the respondents are able to get quick feedback on their performance from peer evaluation.

Figure 4.16: Peer evaluation generates quick feedback



The study sought to establish from the respondents how frequently their lecturers used peer assessment in class. The findings that have been tabulated below indicate that 41.6% of the respondents agreed that their

lecturers do use the method occasionally. It is however worth mentioning that 29.2% and 25.1% of the respondents had rarely and never respectively seen their lecturers employ this method as a form of evaluation.

Table 4.32: Lecturers' use of peer assessment in class

	Frequency	Percent
Always	13	4.1
Occasionally	131	41.6
Rarely	92	29.2
Never	79	25.1
Total	315	100.0

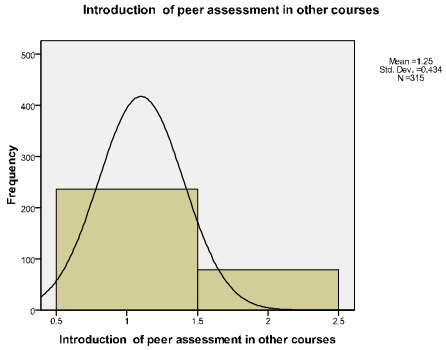
The researcher was also interested in establishing whether the students were also involved in peer assessment in many other courses. The findings as tabulated below indicate that 70.8% of the respondents said they are not involved in peer assessment in many courses. This is therefore an indication that peer assessment is yet to be incorporated in many courses.

Table 4.33: Peer assessment in other courses

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	92	29.2
	No	223	70.8
	Total	315	100.0

It was important for the researcher to get the views of the respondents on whether they would prefer peer assessment to be introduced in other courses. The findings as presented in the graph below indicate that the learners largely supported the idea of introducing peer evaluation in the other courses.

Figure 4.17: Introduction of peer assessment in other courses



The study sought to establish whether lecturers involved sudents in peer assessment in every course they teach. The findings in the table below indicate that majority of the lecturers did not practice peer assessment in every course they taught. This was an indication that not all courses had peer evaluation in place.

Table 4.34: Peer evaluation in other courses

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	14	35.9%
No	25	64.1%
Total	39	100%

The study sought to find out if smaller class size led to more involvement of students in peer evaluation. It was clear from the findings as shown in the table below that 64.1% of the respondents agreed that they do involve smaller classes of less than 50 students in peer assessment.

Table 4.35: Number of students

Response	Frequency	Percent
Below 50	26	66.7%
More than 50	13	33.3%
Total	39	100%

4.4 Problems encountered in peer assessment

The respondents indicate that lack of cooperation from both the students and the lecturers was a major problem that they experienced during the peer assessment exercise. They argued that the level of cooperation was wanting and there was need to improve the same to enable the method work better. There is need to have an agreement between the students on how to conduct peer evaluation, how to mitigate biasness and the measures to put in place in order to increase its transparency and efficiency.

Another problem the respondents identified was lack of proper understanding of the criteria used in peer evaluation. The respondents indicated that they do not fully understand the criteria and much needs to be done to sensitize them on how the method should be used.

Lack of trust among the students themselves was also mentioned as one of the problems that were experienced during the peer evaluation exercise. Some respondents did not fully trust that their fellow students could be able to do a proper and reliable assessment of their work.

4.5 Reasons why lecturers do not involve students in peer assessment

The respondents indicated that there was lack of awareness as far as peer evaluation is concerned. This lack of awareness made most lecturers not to involve the students in this kind of exercise.

The class sizes were also cited as one of the major reasons. The respondents indicated that the class sizes were at times not manageable. This made the lecturers not to use some methods of evaluation such as peer evaluation. Time was also mentioned as another reason that made the lecturers not to involve students in the exercise. The respondents indicated that they have so much work that cannot allow them to practice peer evaluation.

The respondents also indicated that the method may not be relevant to undergraduate students because they are just learning basic concepts. They however agreed that this method of evaluation would be more relevant and applicable at postgraduate level where students are learning more complex content.

The respondents also indicated that the peer evaluation is not part of the university examination policy. They argued that it was difficult for them to employ a method which was not recommended by the university. In order to have the method work, they suggested that the universities needed to amend their exam policies in order to incorporate the method.

Status quo was also mentioned as one of the major reasons why lecturers are not keen on this method. Most lecturers want to follow tradition that has always been there. They do not want to embrace change. They also mentioned that even students themselves are reluctant to fully accept the method.

4.6 Ways of improving peer assessment

The respondents indicated that there was need to conduct training sessions for lecturers in order to make them understand how the method works. This could easily enable them to understand how to employ this method in class.

The need to change university exam policies was also mentioned as an important factor that needs to be considered. The universities need to change their policies to include peer assessment as one of the recommended methods of assessment at university level.

The respondents also suggested that there is need to create forums where lecturers can be able to deliberate on some of the evaluation methods before they are fully adopted into the university system.

The respondents suggested that there is need to provide information materials such as brochures to the students with details on how peer assessment should be effected. This will enable them to better understand how the method works. The respondents also suggested that there is need to conduct some training on how the method works.

5. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of findings

The study established a strong negative relationship between the size of the class and the extent to which the lecturer was willing to involve the students in peer assessment. The class sizes were said to be large in public universities than in private universities. This made it impossible for lecturers to involve the students in peer evaluation as a method of assessment.

The extent to which lecturers involved students in peer assessment produced variable results in both private and public universities. The extent of involvement in private universities was slightly higher than in public universities. There were also a significant number of lecturers in public universities who indicated that they never involved students in peer evaluation.

It was observed that in both private and public universities, there was a clear indication that majority of the lecturers agreed that they gave their students a chance to evaluate fellow students. The percentages however showed some variation since they were higher in private universities than in public. This is a clear indication that peer assessment may not be as popular in public universities as it is in private universities.

A strong positive correlation between the opportunity availed to students to evaluate themselves and the extent to which lecturers involve the students in peer assessment was evident in both private and public universities. This positive correlation indicates that if lecturers involve students more in peer evaluation, then

the opportunity for students to evaluate themselves increases respectively. The reverse will also happen to the two variables in case there is a decrease in either of the variables.

It was also evident that majority of the lecturers in private and public universities admitted that they used peer evaluation occasionally in class. However, in the public universities there was an indication that a number of lecturers never used the peer assessment method in class at all. This was because it was not part of the exam rules and policies of their respective institutions. There was a strong positive correlation between frequency of peer assessment in class and the extent to which the lecturers involved students in peer assessment. This implies that a positive change in either variable will cause a positive change in the other and the reverse is true.

The study also established that both private and public universities have not fully accepted peer evaluation as among the assessment methods. This was an indication that peer evaluation is not yet officially accepted in most universities as a method of evaluating students. Students also agreed that they were occasionally given an opportunity to evaluate each other in class. It was however clear that even though students had the opportunity to evaluate each other, they did not fully understand the peer evaluation criteria. This lack of understanding of the criteria had a positive correlation with the level of skills the students were able to develop from the exercise. The better understanding of the criteria, the higher the level of skills developed from the exercise and vice versa.

Students who had participated in peer evaluation indicated that they felt empowered after going through the exercise. They also agreed that they were able to learn from the peer evaluation exercise. The students also indicated that they were comfortable evaluating or assessing fellow students. Being comfortable with the exercise, made them enjoy it.

On frequency of peer assessment in class, it was established that students did not have any issues if the same was introduced regularly. The students also believed that their assessment was reliable and objective. They also disagreed with the idea that only lecturers should be allowed to evaluate students thus a clear indication that the students were much willing to participate in peer evaluation because it created mutual trust between the lecturers and students.

The idea of introducing peer assessment in other courses was well supported by students. They argued that peer assessment should be embraced in all courses at the university level. It is however notable that the students showed some level of mistrust in peer assessment feedback due to biasness.

A number of problems faced by students during the peer assessment exercise were also mentioned. Lack of cooperation from both the students and the lecturers was a major problem that they experienced during the peer assessment exercise. Students argued that the level of cooperation was wanting and there was need to improve the same to enable the method work better. Another problem the respondents identified was lack of proper understanding of the criteria used in peer evaluation. The respondents indicated that they do not fully understand the criteria and much needs to be done to sensitize them on how the method should be applied.

Lack of trust among the students themselves was also mentioned as one of the problems that were experienced during the peer evaluation exercise. Some respondents did not fully trust that their fellow students could be able to do a proper and reliable assessment of their work.

5.2 Conclusions

Based on the findings from the study, the researcher was able to arrive at the following conclusions concerning peer evaluation in universities.

Peer evaluation is practiced in universities to some extent even though it is not fully understood. Most lecturers and students have not clearly understood the peer evaluation criterion and this makes it difficult to adopt the method as one of the assessment methods. The reason why peer evaluation is not fully understood is that there are no appropriate forums for lecturers to deliberate on new assessment methods.

Peer assessment is more common in private than public universities. The reason for this disparity is the large class sizes in public universities than in private ones. Public universities have large classes which make it impossible to employ peer assessment.

The university exam policies have also been rigid since they do not recognize peer evaluation as one of the assessment methods. Maintaining the status quo or the traditional way of assessment is among the reasons why lecturers do not seem to accept peer evaluation.

Undergraduate students are viewed by lecturers as learning basic concepts thus peer evaluation may not be relevant to them. They are also considered not to be objective enough to give reliable assessment.

The Hypothesis that female lecturers involve students more than male lecturers did not pass the chi-square tests and was therefore rejected while the one on class size and peer evaluation was accepted.

5.3 Recommendations

Training is very important when introducing new concepts or change in an organization. There is need for universities to conduct training to the academic staff and sensitize them on what peer assessment is and how it is supposed to be carried out. Through training, the lecturers will be able to effectively adopt the system and reduce any inefficiency that may be associated with its implementation.

The need to change university exam policies was also mentioned as an important factor that needs to be considered. The universities need to change their policies to include peer assessment as one of the recommended methods of assessment at university level.

There is need to create forums where lecturers can be able to deliberate on some of the evaluation methods before they are fully adopted into the university. This will assist lecturers to critically examine various evaluation methods before they are adopted. The forums will also enable the academic staff to understand new assessment methods better.

The respondents suggested that there is need to provide information materials such as brochures to the students with details on how peer assessment should be effected. This will enable them to better understand how the method works. The respondents also suggested that there is need to conduct some training on how the method works.

Change of culture is also important if new methods of assessment have to be embraced. The academic staffs in universities have always stuck to traditional assessment methods and feel uncomfortable trying new ones that they consider inferior to the existing ones. It will be important for universities to embrace culture change among the academic staff to enable them easily adapt to new methods of evaluation.

5.4 Limitations of the study

The researcher intended to collect data from two public universities and two private universities, but unfortunately the private universities were not very cooperative, hence the researcher collected data from two public universities and only one private university.

5.5 Suggestions for further studies

A similar comparative study can be conducted to establish the peer assessment practice among the newly established universities (less than twenty years in operation) and those that have been in existence for twenty years and above. A larger sample could also be considered.

A study can also be conducted to determine the perception of the university policy makers on peer assessment exercise, since it emerged from the current study that most universities do not recognize peer assessment as an assessment method.

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