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EVALUATING WHAT MATTERS: STUDENT PERSPECTIVES ON PEER EVALUATION IN COOPERATIVE LEARNING

Research article

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Abstract

This study investigates the criteria college students prioritize in peer evaluation within cooperative learning environments, aiming to establish a student-centered evaluation framework to enhance team effectiveness and learning outcomes. Utilizing a phenomenological approach, one of the qualitative research methods, 25 students from an education-related course at a Korean university were sampled for this study with creating and weighting peer evaluation criteria based on their experiences in team-based problem-solving tasks. From their criteria responded, seven primary categories emerged, including task preparation and completion, problem-solving skills, diligence and attendance, responsibility in role performance, communication, proactiveness and contribution, and creativity and originality. Findings indicate that responsibility and trust are fundamental to effective collaborative learning. This study contributes to understanding peer assessment's role in fostering teamwork, with recommendations for integrating responsibility-driven evaluation criteria in colleges and universities.

Keywords: Cooperative learning, Peer evaluation criteria, Qualitative research, Student-centered evaluation, undergraduate students

1. Introduction

Peer evaluation has gained recognition as a powerful educational tool in cooperative learning environments, enabling college students to evaluate each other's contributions and provide meaningful feedback. This process allows students to reflect on their roles and those of their peers and fosters essential skills for collaborative success, such as self-directed learning and mutual accountability (Sambell & McDowell, 1998). Moreover, peer evaluation promotes important team-building attributes, including mutual understanding, responsibility, and respect, which align with the goals of collaborative education and enhance overall group performance (Boud et al., 1999; Falchikov, 2005; Topping, 2009).

In team-based learning settings, the primary objective of peer evaluation is to ensure that learners effectively understand and fulfill their roles, which contributes to the group's collective goals (Gielen et al., 2010). This practice promotes responsibility and active engagement among students, as they recognize the value of their individual contributions to



the team's success. However, traditional peer evaluation models have largely relied on teacher-established criteria, which may not fully capture the standards or priorities deemed important by learners (Lejk & Wyvill, 2001). By imposing a teacher-centered framework, these models may inadvertently limit students' motivation and engagement because they fail to account for the intrinsic values instilled by students in team learning experiences (Dochy et al., 2006; Freeman & McKenzie, 2002).

Recent studies have suggested that incorporating student-generated criteria in peer evaluation can significantly enhance students' engagement and perceived fairness in the evaluation process (Panadero et al., 2013; Sluijsmans et al., 1998). Panadero et al. (2013) asserted that when students are involved in defining the assessment criteria, they are more likely to view the evaluation process, which reflects their standards and priorities, as equitable. Similarly, Sluijsmans et al. (1998) demonstrated that student-made peer evaluation fosters a sense of ownership and accountability, thereby encouraging intense engagement with learning objectives and a strong commitment to team success.

Dochy et al. (2006) emphasized the importance of self-assessment and peer evaluation in creating autonomous learners capable of reflecting on their contributions in team settings. By enabling students to develop and apply their own assessment standards, instructors can empower them to take ownership of the evaluation process, leading to more meaningful learning outcomes. This perspective aligns with the findings of Gielen et al. (2010), who argued that student-centered peer evaluation can promote essential interpersonal skills, such as communication and responsibility.

Moreover, students' understanding of what constitutes effective teamwork is often nuanced, context-specific, and shaped by factors such as trust, responsibility, and shared goals, which are not typically emphasized in teacher-led criteria (Van den Bossche et al., 2006). Van den Bossche et al. (2006) found that trust and mutual accountability were critical for fostering a collaborative team environment and that students emphasized these attributes when evaluating their peers. Conversely, teacher-led criteria often prioritize outcomes or task completion, potentially overlooking the interpersonal dynamics considered essential by students. Freeman and McKenzie (2002) supported this perspective by suggesting that criteria focused on diligence, communication, and accountability are better aligned with students' values and can enhance the cohesion and effectiveness of team-based learning.

Given these insights, research must explore peer evaluation criteria from the learner's perspective, particularly in cooperative learning contexts. This study focused on student-defined evaluation standards to address the limitations of traditional peer evaluation frameworks and developed a model that better reflects student values and expectations. Furthermore, we aimed to formulate a learner-centered peer evaluation framework that encourages college students to define and prioritize evaluation criteria based on their experiences in cooperative learning environments. By integrating assessment practices with students' intrinsic motivation, this framework can enhance students' experience of cooperative learning.

To achieve these objectives, this study was guided by three main research questions: (1) What peer evaluation criteria do college students consider essential for cooperative learning? (2) What are the characteristics of the proposed criteria? (3) What values are expressed using these criteria? This study sought to contribute to a finer understanding of peer assessment by highlighting how students' perspectives and values can inform the development of effective assessment standards in cooperative learning.

This study makes a novel contribution to the existing literature by focusing on students' perspectives and going beyond traditional teacher-centered frameworks. We explored the implicit meanings and orientations embedded within student-defined evaluation criteria to expand our understanding of how peer evaluation can foster self-directed learning, accountability, and mutual respect. Moreover, this study clarified how student-centered criteria in cooperative learning can improve team performance, motivation, and cohesion and offered insights for reshaping peer evaluation practices to be more impactful and reflective of students' values. Through this approach, instructors and educational researchers can develop peer evaluation frameworks that are better suited to students' needs, ultimately enhancing their educational experience in team-based settings.

2. Research Methodology

2.1 Theoretical Basis of the Research Design

This study adopted a phenomenological approach, a method rooted in exploring the essence of subjective experiences, making it particularly suited to understanding how learners perceive and assign meaning to the specific phenomena they encounter (Moustakas, 1994). Developed by Edmund Husserl, phenomenology emphasizes the concept of "intentionality" in consciousness, wherein experiences are directed toward particular meanings. This orientation allows researchers to capture the authentic essence of participants' lived experiences by investigating the phenomena that appear in an individual's natural environment (Husserl, 1970; Moustakas, 1994). In educational research, a phenomenological approach facilitates the delicate exploration of how students interpret and value different aspects of learning, such as peer evaluation criteria (Creswell, 2007).

A key component of the phenomenological method is bracketing, which encourages researchers to suspend their preconceptions and examine the data through a lens that minimizes bias (Giorgi, 2009). Giorgi's work on descriptive phenomenology employed this approach to achieve objective insights, particularly in the study of educational settings where students' subjective experiences are central. Additionally, Smith et al. (2009) underscored the utility of phenomenology in educational research by detailing how it captures complex meanings across individual experiences and allows for systematic data analysis to extract shared themes and essences from diverse perspectives. This approach is instrumental in identifying and describing the essential values and criteria emphasized by learners in peer evaluation contexts.

Employing a phenomenological perspective, this study aimed to explore and capture students' intrinsic values and perspectives concerning peer assessment in an unbiased manner. We followed established phenomenological procedures, which involved several key stages, including topic selection, data collection through semi-structured observations and surveys, and systematic data analysis (Smith et al., 2009). The data were then categorized and interpreted to extract core themes and essences representing students' shared perceptions and priorities in peer evaluation (Merriam, 2009). This process helps identify meaningful values that drive student preferences, thereby clarifying the meanings they attribute to collaborative learning.

As Wertz (2005) highlighted, phenomenology is particularly valuable in educational research because of its ability to interpret subjective experiences in a structured manner. This fosters an understanding of how students engage with peer evaluation criteria at the individual level. We applied phenomenology in this study to enable an objective interpretation of undergraduate students' experiences and meaningful insights into the educational process with



minimal researcher bias. This approach has the potential to uncover students' delicate attitudes and intrinsic motivations for informing more effective student-led evaluation frameworks.

2.2 Participants

The participants included 25 students enrolled in an education-related course at a research university in Korea, comprising 10 males and 15 females. The sample spanned various academic levels, including 1 freshman, 3 sophomores, 8 juniors, and 13 seniors (Table 1). These students were organized into five groups and participated in cooperative learning activities over five weeks, focusing on problem-solving tasks that highlighted the importance of team collaboration.

Table 1. Samples of the study

	Freshmen	Sophomores	Juniors	Seniors	Total
Males	1	2	4	3	10
Females	0	1	4	10	15
Total	1	3	8	13	25

2.3 Data Collection and Analysis

Each student was guided to design four peer evaluation criteria based on their team experiences and assign a weight to each criterion, resulting in 100 criteria. These criteria underwent an iterative classification process to consolidate similar standards into main categories, with each step enhancing the reliability of the student-provided criteria (Patton, 2002). Two education-related faculty members and a post-doc researcher were included. This iterative process identified the standards prioritized by learners and created a structured student-centered peer evaluation framework.

We used a mixed-methods approach, which combined qualitative and quantitative analyses. The qualitative analysis followed the phenomenological framework, and we categorized the students' experiences to reveal the characteristics and meanings of the proposed assessment criteria (Merriam, 2009). Concurrently, a quantitative analysis calculated the relative importance of each criterion based on the students' assigned weights. This enabled an understanding of the students' value hierarchy in peer evaluation. The integration of both methods strengthened the validity and reliability of our findings and provided comprehensive insights into students' evaluation preferences (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003).

2.4 Reliability and Validity

Peer debriefing was conducted to verify the reliability of the study. This process involved sharing research findings and interpretations with colleagues for feedback, which helped refine the interpretations, reduce subjectivity, and enhance the validity of the results (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

3. Results and Interpretation

3.1 Categorization of Peer Evaluation Criteria

Through an in-depth analysis of 100 peer evaluation criteria (25 undergraduates \times 4 criteria) created by students engaged in cooperative learning, we identified 11 subcategories based on similarities, which were further consolidated into 7 main categories (Figure 1). Each category reflected the standards considered essential by students when assessing peer contributions in a cooperative learning setting. This categorization revealed the elements prioritized by students

in their evaluations, providing insights into their perceptions of learning activities (Topping, 2009; Gielen et al., 2010). These categories helped clarify the aspects that college students value in collaborative learning environments. Moreover, they offered an understanding of how learners view their roles and those of their peers, emphasizing the specific factors they deem important for team success.

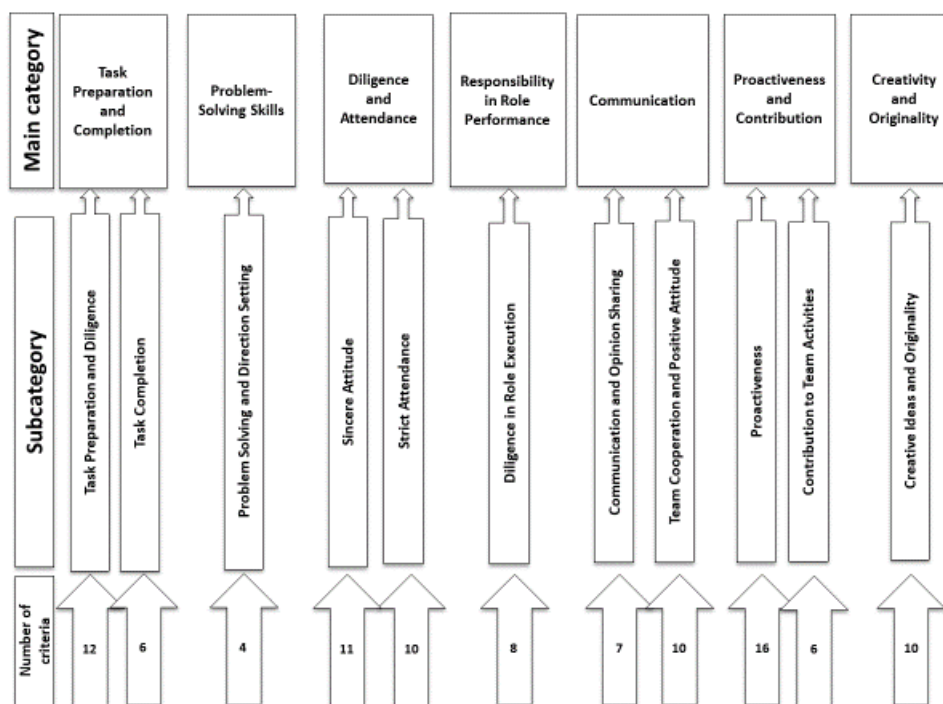


Figure 1. Subcategories and main categories

The formation of subcategories involved grouping students' similar criteria. For instance, the "task preparation and diligence" category was selected by the highest number of students (12 students), followed by the "sincere attitude" category (11 students). The category chosen by the fewest students was "problem solving and direction setting" (4 students), followed by "task completion" and "contribution to team activities."

We organized the 100 peer evaluation criteria, initially divided into 11 subcategories, into 7 main categories: task preparation and completion; problem-solving skills; diligence and attendance; responsibility in role performance; communication; proactiveness and contribution; and creativity and originality.

The "task preparation and completion" category evaluated the degree to which students systematically prepare for and complete tasks to achieve their objectives, reflecting a tendency among learners to value preparedness and completeness in their academic performance (Freeman & McKenzie, 2002). The specific criteria provided by students included the following: "completes assigned tasks diligently" (Student F), "prepares assigned tasks as promised" (Student P), and "meets deadlines consistently" (Student M).

The "problem-solving skills" category assessed students' ability to recognize and propose solutions for the issues arising during team tasks. This comprises creative approaches and problem-solving skills and emphasizes the importance of collaborative thinking and innovative

problem-solving (Van den Bossche et al., 2006). The examples were as follows: “contributes key ideas for task solutions” (Student F) and “provides direction when setting team hypotheses and solutions” (Student A).

The “diligence and attendance” category evaluated students’ regular attendance and a responsible attitude, which foster trust in team activities. Having a consistent attendance and commitment are key qualities that contribute to team reliability in cooperative learning (Boud et al., 1999). Examples included “consistently completes individual tasks” (Student K), “participates earnestly in team meetings” (Student T), and “punctual for classes and meetings” (Student I).

The “responsibility in role performance” category assessed each student’s accountability in fulfilling their designated role and contributing to team goals, thereby emphasizing role clarity and team responsibility (Lejk & Wyvill, 2001). Examples for this category included “performs assigned role diligently” (Student M), “completes allocated tasks reliably” (Student G), and “executes role without issues” (Student V).

The “communication” category refers to the ability to communicate effectively in a team, present ideas clearly, and listen respectfully. Communication skills are essential for collaborative learning (Dochy et al., 2006). The relevant examples were as follows: “listens to peers’ opinions” (Student G), “ensures smooth communication with team members” (Student T), and “maintains respectful interactions” (Student L).

The “proactiveness and contribution” category involved a proactive attitude toward and willingness to contribute to team objectives, reflecting a positive approach toward teamwork and active participation in ensuring team success (Topping, 2009). Examples included “helps team members” (Student Y), “contribution in problem-based learning tasks” (Student O), and “expresses opinions actively” (Student J).

Finally, the “creativity and originality” category assessed students’ capacity for proposing new ideas and engaging in flexible problem solving. These attributes are important in problem-based learning environments, and such students demonstrate a preference for original approaches (Falchikov, 2005). Examples for this category included “displays creativity and expertise in assigned tasks” (Student X), “proposes unique ideas” (Student S), and “ideas are original” (Student J).

3.2 Calculation of the Importance of Peer Evaluation Criteria

To calculate the relative importance of each main category, the students assigned weights to each category, totaling 100 points. The categories of “task preparation and completion” and “proactiveness and contribution” received the highest weights, with 25.6% and 21%, respectively. This indicated that students viewed individual diligence and active participation as critical success factors in cooperative learning (Gielen et al., 2010; Freeman & McKenzie, 2002). Conversely, “creativity and originality” and “problem-solving skills” received lower weights, at 8.8% and 3.4%, respectively, which reflected a preference for task completion and role performance in assignments over innovative thinking (Sambell & McDowell, 1998). Table 2 presents the relative weights assigned to each main category. These results suggested that students valued objective and practical contributions in peer evaluations, highlighting responsibility and diligence as essential for cooperative learning (Topping, 2009).

Table 2. Weights assigned to the main categories

Main category	Weight (%)
Task preparation and completion	25.6%
Proactiveness and contribution	21%
Diligence and attendance	16.4%
Communication	13.6%
Responsibility in role performance	11.2%
Creativity and originality	8.8%
Problem-solving skills	3.4%

3.3 Interpretation of Research Findings

3.3.1 Interpretation of Category Importance

In this study, “task preparation and completion” received the highest weight (25.6%), indicating that students viewed thorough preparation and task completion as crucial to team success. This finding highlighted a goal-oriented way of thinking, with students valuing diligence and accountability in cooperative learning settings (Gielen et al., 2010; Freeman & McKenzie, 2002). This emphasis on preparation signified a collective understanding that consistent effort and commitment contribute to group reliability and effectiveness (Johnson & Johnson, 1999). Conversely, “problem-solving skills” received the lowest weight (3.4%), suggesting that students prioritized task completion and responsibility over collaborative problem-solving. This may reflect a preference for predictable and dependable contributions in a team environment where task stability is valued more than navigating the uncertainties of problem-solving (Van den Bossche et al., 2006).

Similarly, the high weights given to “diligence and attendance” (16.4%) and “responsibility in role performance” (11.2%) underscored students’ emphasis on consistency and accountable role fulfillment as essential factors for building trust. Boud et al. (1999) and Lejk and Wyvill (2001) supported this perspective and reported that reliability fosters a stable team environment in which mutual trust enhances group cohesion. Our results indicated that students perceived responsible behavior as a foundation for establishing trust and collaborative support in teams. In this context, reliable attendance and role accountability helped maintain group stability and mutual respect (Gielen et al., 2010).

The weight assigned to “communication” (13.6%) demonstrated the value students placed on clear and effective interaction, which supports mutual understanding and goal achievement within the team (Dochy et al., 2006). Communication is considered essential for cooperative learning, with active listening and respectful dialogue aligning individual contributions with team goals (Freeman & McKenzie, 2002). This finding supports that of Topping (2009), who argued that effective communication fosters an environment in which students feel valued and included, thereby enhancing team productivity and motivation.

“Creativity and originality” received a moderate weight of 8.8%, implying that while students appreciate innovative thinking, they may consider it secondary to task-related factors such as preparation and communication. Falchikov (2005) stated that creativity in team-based learning is often valued less than task performance because students tend to focus on concrete and measurable contributions. Similarly, the low weight ascribed to “problem-solving skills” indicated that students prioritized direct individual contributions over collaborative problem-solving efforts. This reflects a preference for clarity and role-defined tasks over potentially complex problem-solving processes (Panadero et al., 2013).

Overall, students prioritized contributions in the form of task preparation and consistent role performance over abstract skills such as problem solving and creativity. This highlighted a focus on reliability and responsibility as the primary criteria for peer evaluation, suggesting that students perceive these elements as essential for achieving team success (Sambell & McDowell, 1998; Johnson & Johnson, 1999). These findings reflected a collective preference for stability, accountability, and effective task completion, implying that students viewed dependable behavior as important for fostering successful collaborative environments.

3.3.2 Phenomenological Interpretation of Main Categories

The seven main categories identified in this study reflect the psychological and philosophical orientations valued by undergraduate students in cooperative learning. In phenomenology, the intentionality of consciousness suggests that experiences are directed toward particular meanings, wherein consciousness actively interacts with objects to form interpretations (Husserl, 1970; Giorgi, 2009). This intentionality implied that students internalized specific values in team settings, with each category representing the psychological orientation and phenomenological meaning that learners bring to their roles.

“Task preparation and completion” reflected a psychological desire for achievement, with students prioritizing task completion and preparation as a sign of commitment to personal and team success (Bandura, 1986). In this context, self-efficacy, defined as the belief in one’s ability to perform tasks, acts as a core motivating factor (Bandura, 1997). Students who effectively demonstrate preparation and completion are perceived as trustworthy, which affirms their sense of competence and worth within the team (Freeman & McKenzie, 2002). The philosophical concept of purpose-driven behavior is crucial, as students view task completion as essential to achieving both individual and team goals, embodying an intrinsic desire toward fulfilling a collective purpose (Aristotle, 2009).

The results for “problem-solving skills” suggested that students preferred roles that promote task completion over the unpredictability of problem solving. This indicated a psychological inclination toward stability and control, wherein predictability is favored in team dynamics (Gergen, 1971). The low weight assigned to this category aligns with Tinto’s (1997) social integration theory, which states that students seek stable and secure roles in social groups to reinforce their feelings of belonging and trust.

“Diligence and attendance” represented a psychological mechanism for establishing trust within a team. By demonstrating consistent attendance and diligence, students convey reliability and security to their peers, thereby fostering mutual trust (Erikson, 1950). This is consistent with Bowlby’s (1988) attachment theory, which suggests that secure, dependable relationships enhance social cohesion and reinforce feelings of safety within groups.

Additionally, “responsibility in role performance” revealed students’ internalized sense of responsibility, wherein meaningfully fulfilling one’s role contributes to team success. Psychologically, this category aligns with the need for esteem and self-actualization in Maslow’s (1943) hierarchy of needs. Students who responsibly fulfill their roles perceive themselves as valuable contributors, reflecting an intentional orientation toward achieving personal and collective goals (Maslow, 1943).

The “communication” category highlighted students’ need for social connections, with clear and respectful communication fostering mutual understanding and a sense of belonging (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). According to Vygotsky’s (1978) social constructivist theory, social interaction serves as the foundation of cognitive development, implying that team dialogue supports individual growth and collaborative success.

Furthermore, “proactiveness and contribution” reflected students’ desire for self-assertion in team activities, signifying a psychological drive to affirm individual worth through proactive engagement (Graham & Weiner, 1996). Proactiveness represented the intentional pursuit of identity in a team, with students’ ambitions aligning with the team’s collective goals.

Although valued, the category of “creativity and originality” received less emphasis, indicating a preference for established methods over innovative and potentially unpredictable approaches. This category reflected a balance between self-expression and task stability, with students exercising caution in prioritizing creativity over structured contributions. Moustakas (1994) explained that while creativity is linked to self-expansion, it is often moderated by social expectations in collaborative environments.

In summary, the findings of this study suggested that students perceived the psychological qualities of responsibility, trust, and self-assertion as key attributes in cooperative learning. Peer evaluation in this context reflected students’ orientation toward self-fulfillment and connection with others, which functions as a mechanism to support individual and team success.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

4.1 Discussion

This study provided a comprehensive perspective on the peer evaluation criteria valued by college students in cooperative learning environments. The findings revealed that students prioritized concrete and measurable contributions in the form of task preparation, active participation, and diligence, which are essential for team success. This indicated students’ emphasis on individual responsibility and proactive engagement as the foundation for achieving team goals, which align with the core principles of cooperative learning that highlight accountability, interdependence, and mutual support (Gielen et al., 2010; Johnson & Johnson, 1999).

The high weights assigned to “task preparation and completion” (25.6%) and “proactiveness and contribution” (21%) underscored the value students placed on individual contributions that visibly advance the team’s progress. These findings align with Johnson and Johnson’s (1989) research on cooperative learning, which found that effective teamwork relies on members feeling responsible for their own tasks and the collective success of the group. In collaborative learning, a goal-oriented focus on preparation and proactive engagement fosters a sense of security and reliability, whereby each member’s contribution directly supports the shared objectives (Lejk & Wyvill, 2001).

The categories of “diligence and attendance” (16.4%) and “responsibility in role performance” (11.2%) reflected an orientation toward fostering mutual trust and consistency in the team, reinforcing the importance of reliability for effective teamwork. Freeman and McKenzie (2002) asserted that in team settings, trust is built through consistent, dependable actions that signal each member’s commitment to the group. Furthermore, our finding is supported by Seligman’s (2006) work on social trust, which suggested that reliability and shared responsibility increase cooperative dynamics by encouraging individuals to rely on each other’s commitment. In cooperative learning, such qualities contribute to an atmosphere of accountability in which students feel safe, with the awareness that their peers are similarly committed to their roles and responsibilities (Boud et al., 1999).

Conversely, the low weights assigned to the categories of “creativity and originality” (8.8%) and “problem-solving skills” (3.4%) suggested a preference for practical, task-focused actions



over abstract competencies, such as innovative thinking or complex collaborative problem-solving. Falchikov (2005) discussed a similar trend, observing that students often favor direct, goal-oriented contributions over abstract skills in structured peer evaluation. This tendency demonstrates a desire for clarity and stability in team roles, with students prioritizing actions that visibly support outcomes over the uncertain processes associated with problem solving (Dochy et al., 2006). Dochy and McDowell (2003) argued that in cooperative learning, the perceived value of creative contributions may depend on how well they align with clear and immediate objectives, as students often focus on reliable behaviors that ensure task completion.

Therefore, students viewed peer evaluation as a potential mechanism for recognizing reliable and actionable behaviors that directly support team success. This orientation aligns with Sambell and McDowell's (1998) assertion that when tangible achievements and consistent efforts are rewarded, students engage more deeply in peer evaluation. Additionally, Topping (2009) found that students' investment in peer evaluation increases when predictable, goal-oriented actions are emphasized, as these behaviors reinforce a sense of accountability and trust within the team. Overall, our findings emphasized that students valued peer evaluation criteria that reflected real-world, task-oriented abilities. These abilities support team performance and foster personal accountability and a sense of ownership toward one's contributions.

4.2 Recommendations for Educational Practice

To fully leverage the benefits of peer evaluation in cooperative learning, educators and educational researchers may adopt the following practices. First, clear evaluation criteria must be established. Defining student-aligned criteria ensures the objectivity and perceived fairness of peer evaluation, making evaluations consistent and meaningful. Panadero et al. (2013) stated that when students participate in establishing criteria, they perceive assessments as more equitable, leading to enhanced engagement and satisfaction. Sluijsmans et al. (1998) suggested that clarity in evaluation criteria reduces ambiguity, allowing students to align their actions with explicit expectations and contribute more confidently to team efforts.

Second, reflective evaluations should be encouraged. Integrating reflective components into peer evaluation allows students to thoughtfully consider their contributions and those of their peers, aligning their evaluations with team goals and individual growth. Bloxham and West (2007) stated that reflective evaluation encourages self-awareness and accountability, as students become more mindful of their actions and their impact on team dynamics. Furthermore, reflective evaluation fosters the development of metacognitive skills, enabling students to critically assess their roles and contributions over time (Kolb, 1984).

Third, communication skills must be emphasized. Incorporating communication-focused criteria into peer evaluation promotes active listening, constructive feedback, and mutual respect. Dochy et al. (2006) argued that clear communication enhances collaboration by fostering a respectful and inclusive environment in which students feel valued. Topping (2009) explained that effective communication is essential for maintaining group cohesion because it supports open dialogue and enables students to navigate conflicts constructively. By emphasizing communication, educators can help students build interpersonal skills critical to both academic and professional success (Vygotsky, 1978).

Fourth, personal responsibility must be fostered. Emphasizing diligence, attendance, and task completion in peer evaluation promotes personal accountability and reinforces students' sense of ownership toward their roles. Van den Bossche et al. (2006) stated that responsibility within teams increases trust, as students view their peers as reliable collaborators committed to shared objectives. In cooperative learning, this sense of responsibility creates an environment

of mutual support, wherein each student feels accountable to the team (Graham & Weiner, 1996).

Finally, feedback training should be provided. Teaching students how to provide constructive feedback enhances peer interactions and improves motivation and team outcomes. Falchikov (2005) stated that structured feedback training improves the efficacy of peer evaluation and prepares students for professional environments where feedback is essential for collaboration and growth. Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006) proposed that effective feedback supports self-regulation, as students learn to engage with feedback critically and apply it meaningfully in their future tasks.

4.3 Conclusion

This study offers valuable insights into the peer evaluation criteria prioritized by college students in cooperative learning environments. By focusing on task preparation, proactive engagement, and diligence, the students demonstrated a preference for reliable, task-oriented skills that directly support team objectives. These results revealed that college students regard qualities such as trust and responsibility as crucial for effective teamwork, with communication and consistent role performance seen as critical for collaborative achievement (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Vygotsky, 1978). Their emphasis on reliability and accountability highlights college students' preference for peer evaluation criteria reflective of real-world competencies, contributing to a productive and mutually supportive team environment.

Although these findings offer valuable information, this study has some limitations that must be addressed in future studies. The sample was restricted to a specific academic discipline, which may limit the generalizability of the results. Future studies could extend the scope by including diverse disciplines and providing a broader understanding of peer evaluation preferences across academic areas. Additionally, exploring peer evaluation criteria with a larger sample would provide a more representative view of college students' priorities for cooperative learning. Finally, investigating the long-term influence of peer evaluation on college students' motivation and engagement would provide valuable insights into how it impacts learning outcomes, particularly as digital platforms and tools evolve to support peer evaluation in online environments (Gielen et al., 2010; Freeman & McKenzie, 2002).

This study emphasized the need for peer evaluation that reflects college students' inner values and objectives and provided an educational model associated with their preferences and expectations. By understanding and implementing peer evaluation criteria that resonate with learners, instructors can foster a cooperative learning environment that enhances team success and contributes to college students' personal development and preparedness for their life beyond the campus.

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