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ARTICLES

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Full Length Research Paper

Teachers' practices and beliefs regarding peer assessment in L2 writing classrooms at Jimma town, South-Western Ethiopia

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This study aims at investigating practices and beliefs of teachers regarding the use of peer assessment in EFL writing in Jimma Seto Semro and Jiren preparatory and high schools in South Western Ethiopia. In this study, a descriptive survey based on both qualitative and quantitative data were used. To achieve the objective, all (13) EFL instructors in Seto Semro and Jiren high schools and participated in the study. Questionnaire consisting of closed and open-ended questions were utilized as a main data collection tool which was substantiated by an interview. The findings of the study showed that the majority of teachers are practising peer assessment in EFL writing. The findings of this study revealed that peer feedback was found to be beneficial, for it increased teachers' positive beliefs and motivation in English writing class. Participants also liked peer review and the majority liked to carry out this peer assessment. Peer evaluation was helpful for improving students' writing in lay out, content, organization, language use, spelling, capitalization, mechanics, grammar and vocabulary. Based on the findings, it was recommended that teachers of writing should use peer assessment to help students improve their writing in the areas of spelling, mechanics and grammar. It is further recommended, that there is a need to train EFL teachers to make them aware of the idea that peer assessment develops students' writing skills.

Key words: Second language (L2) writing, peer feedback, teachers' practices, teachers' beliefs, benefits of peer assessment.

INTRODUCTION

Even if previous studies have substantiated the contributions of peer assessment to L2 writing revisions and development (de Guerrero and Villamil, 2000; Hu, 2005; Tsui and Ng, 2000), and these findings also indicate that students' attitudes towards peer feedback play a central role in its implementation and effectiveness (Yang et al., 2006; Zhao, 2010; Zhu and Mitchell, 2012), whether to use peer feedback as a learning activity and

how to use it depends on the teachers rather than students in writing classes. Teachers' beliefs have been showed to have an important influence on teachers' practices (Borg, 2003; Tsui, 2003), both of which "have a direct effect on the teaching and learning process" (Griffiths, 2007, as cited in Lee, 2008: 13). From this point of view, teachers' beliefs and practices with regard to peer feedback are central to its implementation and efficacy in L2 writing classes and will determine whether students have the opportunity to engage in and benefit from peer reviewing activities. Much work has been done to explore issues in L1 and L2 writing feedback in recent decades. Among the literature, some research works have investigated teachers' beliefs and practices regarding teacher feedback while some other studies examined students' views on teacher and peer feedback (Lee, 2008; Yang et al., 2006; Zhao, 2010). Nevertheless, little attention has been given to teachers' practices and beliefs about peer assessment, more especially in L2 writing classes contexts. We still know little as to the relationship between L2 writing skill teachers' practices and beliefs about peer feedback in the Ethiopian context. Therefore, EFL teachers' beliefs and practices with regard to peer feedback are worth exploring to fill this research gap and enable teachers to have a voice about peer feedback in L2 writing instruction.

Research questions

1. What are Seto Semero and Jiren preparatory and High school English language teachers' practices of peer assessment in EFL writing skill development?
2. What are Seto Semero and Jiren preparatory and High school English language teachers' beliefs/attitudes about peer assessment in EFL writing skill development?
3. What are the opinions of Seto Semero and Jiren preparatory and High school English language teachers' about the benefits of peer assessment in EFL writing skill development?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference between Seto Semero and Jiren preparatory and High school English language teachers' concerning practices of peer assessment in EFL writing skill development.
2. There is no significant difference between Seto Semero and Jiren preparatory and High school English language teachers' beliefs/attitudes concerning peer assessment in EFL writing skill development.
3. There is no significant difference between Seto Semero and Jiren preparatory and High school English language teachers' opinion concerning benefits of peer assessment in EFL writing skill development.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Design of the study

The design of this study is cross-sectional descriptive survey where questionnaire was used as a main data collecting tool. In addition, a mixed methodology was selected to use the advantages of both the qualitative and quantitative techniques (Dornyei, 2007).

Participants

The participants were 13 (100%) English teachers who work were working in the various schools in Ethiopia. Their ages ranged from 43 to 46 and their experiences of teaching English reading and writing to students ranged from one to more than 20 years. Two of the teachers had MA degree and 11 had Bachelor degrees in English or related fields.

Data collection and analysis

In this study a questionnaire and interview were used for data collection. A questionnaire was mainly used as instrument of data collection. The role of the questionnaire is to elicit the information that is required to enable the researcher to achieve the objectives of the research (Brace, 2004). To insure the validity and reliability of the data tools, pilot study by using Cronbach Alfa (the result is 0.929 which is a high internal consistency coefficient) and expertise comment was employed. Interview is used to complement or strengthen the data gathered through the questionnaire. An interview guide was used to elicit teachers' perspectives about peer feedback, their experiences of implementing peer feedback in their own classes, the reasons for using or not using peer feedback, and the effectiveness of peer feedback. The interview data was coded according to Miles and Huberman's (1994) qualitative data analysis scheme. We first categorized the interview items and the participants' responses into the relevant research questions and then read the answers again and again. From the extensive reading of the responses, it is possible to identify the common patterns and themes as to the nature of the responses. Based on the preliminary coding analysis, we summarized the teachers' perspectives, practices, roles and reasons respectively.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data obtained through observation on practices and beliefs of teachers regarding the use of peer assessment in writing development

Classroom observations were held in 18 classes for 9 h in each class of grade ten in both high schools. The teachers employed the peer assessment strategy to teach students conceptualize language use, grammar, vocabulary and mechanics at Seto Semero and Jiren High schools. While the researcher was observing different EFL writing classes, some teachers told their students as to why they included peer assessment in teaching of EFL in writing classes. They told their students that, we do not always use teacher assessment in our English writing classroom because we know that peer assessment is important since it reduces anxiety, develop confidence, and increase motivation as well as

critical thinking. And we know that students are very alert when we use peer assessment. The use of L1 dominated students' converse. They were more relaxed and able to express themselves when using L1. They often conversed in L1 when they were seeking or providing clarification. Students used L1 to elaborate their points of view to their peers. L1 in peer interaction assisted them in understanding peers and being understood by them. L2 was a difficult mean to use in order to justify their context. According to Vygotsky (1978), the facilitative role of L1 in peer interaction supports the view in socio-cultural theory that language is the most essential tool to mediate language development with social interaction which corroborates the present study.

EFL beliefs **and** practices **of** teachers regarding peer assessment **in L2** writing **classrooms**

Benefits of peer assessment in the teaching of English writing

The result of the survey showed that while 13 teachers in both high schools replied that peer assessment developed the skills to use standards while making assessments, seven of teachers in Seto Semero and that of five in Jiren preparatory and high schools benefited from peer assessment as it improves their competences. Besides, 12 of teachers in general responded that peer assessment provided them the opportunity to make comparisons whenever practice diversity happened. More importantly, it enables teachers to focus on teaching. From Table 1, 11; 13; 10; and 12 of teachers perceived that peer assessment has benefits by improving openness to criticism, developing assessment skills, enhancing empathetic skills, and improving critical thinking skills, respectively. In general, it can be concluded that peer assessment has substantial benefits in teaching of English writing.

In support of the present finding Cok (2011) reported that among the many benefits of peer assessment, this assessment would enable to develop the skills to use standards while making assessments, improves teacher competences, provides the opportunity to make comparisons, enables a focus on teaching, improves openness to criticism, develops assessment skills, improves empathetic skills and critical thinking skills. In support of this finding, Cok (2011) pointed out that peer assessment improves cooperation, communication, empathy and openness to criticism. According to the same author the positive impact of peer assessment on critical thinking can be explained by the fact that students make a reflective criticism of their peers' works and performances by using predetermined standards in the peer assessment process. Topping et al. (2000) state that peer assessment can improve many social and communication skills such as verbal lecturing skills as well as an ability to criticize and an openness to criticism.

Practices and beliefs of peer assessment in the teaching of English writing

All the sample teachers (13) in both high schools taught writing course (Table 2). The feedback that peers gave focused on different aspects. Six and four of the teachers in Seto Semero and Jiren preparatory and high school, respectively, responded that they used peer feedback in their writing classes. The different mechanisms that the teachers followed to practice peer feed were as follows:

1. Making students exchanging their exercise books and check for spelling, punctuation, capitalization, structure and layout of what they have written, and putting marks.
2. Splitting students into group and checking by themselves, and giving his feedback.
3. Giving opportunity for team in order to check their exercise by each other.
4. Writing on the board and then letting students discuss in pairs and writing individually.

On the other hand, some of the teachers who did not apply peer assessment in writing lesson raised the reason of time factor. According to them since conducting peer assessment is time consuming it is difficult to conduct it in writing lesson. Despite this, teachers' classroom research shows that alternative feedback practices can lead to better student motivation, more effective learning, and even improvement in student writing (Lee, 2007). In Seto Semero high school 1, 3, one of teachers said that feedback focused mainly on organization, grammar, and vocabulary. From this, majority of the feedback focused on grammar. Three of the teachers in Seto Semero preparatory and high school replied that feedback targeted on all aspects. In general, four respondent teachers said that the feedback focused on grammar, four of the feedback is on combination of organization, content, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics. This finding is in line with the finding of Lee (2008) who pointed out that teachers should put more emphasis on grammar and vocabulary and students write to practice the grammar and vocabulary they have learnt.

Teachers were also asked their beliefs regarding peer feedback in EFL writing classes and forwarded different perspectives. Some of the teachers perceived that peer assessment has a lot of advantages in improving the writing skills of students. Others said that students can feel free and relax when they receive feedback from their peers. On the other hand, some individuals (fast learners) may not accept feedback from others. As each group has different skill and knowledge in writing, students in peer groups' can correct themselves on grammar, spelling mechanics, and other writing elements. It is very good to increase the capacity of students. Peer feedback can be

Table 1. Benefits of peer assessment in the teaching of English writing.

Benefits of peer assessment	Seto Semero (N= 8)	Jiren (N = 5)	Total (N =13)
Q1. Does peer assessment develop the skills to use standards while making assessments? (Yes).	8	5	13
Q2. Does it improve teacher competences? (Yes).	7	5	12
Q3. Does it provide the opportunity to make comparisons (practice diversity? (yes)	7	5	12
Q4. Does it enable a focus on teaching? (yes).	6	3	9
Q5. Does it improve openness to criticism? (yes).	7	4	11
Q6. Does it develop assessment skills? (yes).	8	5	13
Q7. Does it improve empathetic skills (yes)	6	4	10
Q8. Does it improve critical thinking skills? (yes)	7	5	12

Table 2. Practices and beliefs of peer assessment in the teaching of English writing.

Practices and beliefs of peer assessment		Seto Semero (N= 8)	Jiren (N = 5)	Total (N =13)
Q 9. Have you ever taught writing course?(yes).		8	5	13
Q10. Do you use peer feedback in your writing classes? (yes).		6	4	10
Q11. What do the feedback the peers give focus on? (yes).	Organization	1	2	3
	Content	0	1	1
	Grammar	3	1	4
	Vocabulary	1	0	1
	Mechanics	0	1	1
	All	3	0	4
Q14. How much did your students like peer feedback?	Very little	2	0	2
	Little	0	1	1
	Some	2	0	2
	Much	2	2	4
	Very much	2	2	4

an option to assess the English writing skills. But most of the students are poor in writing skill, in terms of organizing, grammar usage, vocabulary and mechanics. It also helps students to exchange their ideas and to know what other's know and share to those who do not know. It is essential as it involves all of the students in participation and then helps them to correct mistakes.

In some way, to practice this peer feedback need enough time; lack of time may influences the practice and effectiveness of it. The problem of poor communication with friends and poor relationship between students, and lack of confidence are problems that might affect peer assessment negatively. Some perceive that students must have competence using their intelligence. Some of the perspectives influence teachers to positively practice peer assessments and helped students by developing their day to day practice. Their perspectives would have also positive influence if it is applied effectively and carefully. When teachers were asked whether their students like peer feedback, four of them replied that students liked the peer feedback very much. In addition, another four teachers replied

Table 3. Guideline in using peer assessment in developing the writing skill.

Guidelines		Seto Semero (N= 8)	Jiren (N = 5)	Total (N =13)
Q12. Do you give guidelines to students on how to exchange peer assessment before they practice in writing? (Yes).		6	5	11
	Can	4	3	7
Q13. Can you trust the feedback provided by your students for their peers?	Not sure	3	2	5
	I cannot	1	0	1

that students liked it much. Two of the total sample teachers responded that students liked peer feedback to some extent. In general, these findings agree with the previous report of Liu and Chai (2006) who obtained that peer feedback focused on peer assessment of grammar and vocabulary. In general, our findings on teachers' practices and beliefs on peer assessment agrees with the finding of Borg (2003) and Tsui (2003) who reported that teachers' practices and beliefs on peer feedback "have a direct bearing on the teaching and learning process" (Griffiths, 2007, as cited in Lee, 2008: 14).

Guidelines in using peer assessment in developing writing skill

It has been expected for teachers to provide guidelines for students helping them to practice peer assessment accordingly. The survey result revealed that five of teachers from Jiren and 6 in Seto Semero high schools gave guidelines to students on how to exchange peer assessment before they practice it in writing skill (Table 3). According to Brown (2004), peer assessment is among the best possible formative types of assessment and possibly the most rewarding but it must be carefully designed and administered for it to reach its potential. According to the same author, four guidelines namely, telling students the

purpose of peer assessment, defining the tasks, encouraging impartial evaluation of performance or ability and ensuring beneficial wash back through follow-up tasks will help teachers bring this intrinsically motivation into the classroom usefully.

Trust of teachers on the feedback provided by students for their peers

While conducting peer assessment; sharing feedbacks among students are common. Teachers were asked to reply on whether or not to rely up on the feedback provided by students for their peers. Only four and three of teachers in Seto Semero and Jiren preparatory and high schools, respectively, trusted the feedback provided by students for their peers (Table 2). In general, while five of the total interviewed teachers are not sure of the feedback shared among students, only one of sample teachers could not trust the students' feedback. The reasons mentioned by teachers for not trusting and/or not being sure of the feedback came from students because sometimes students demoralized each other; students have no background of knowledge; most of the students cannot give genuine feedback, students give feedback without being interested; and only few students are capable of giving accurate feedback.

Implementing of peer assessment by EFL writing class teachers

Many factors affected teachers while implementing peer assessment. Shortage of instructional time (time taking/consuming), lack of (less) attention by some of the students, some students are careless enough to improve their skill, lack of interest (some students are not volunteer) and poor knowledge (ability) of students, lack of trust on the students' feedback, infrastructural problem and (class size). This finding is in line with finding of Ofsted (2008) considering time taking nature of peer assessment only. Students being unable to assess properly their peer's work, time taking nature of peer assessment, and shortage of materials are some of the factors affecting the implementation of peer assessment. Thus, for the successful implementation of peer assessment, issues raised above better be solved by the concerned bodies.

The role of peer feedback in students' writing development

The role of peer feedback in students' writing development includes overcoming anxiety, shyness; increase autonomous learning and motivation, cooperative learning, develop communication skill. All these improves listening,

reading, speaking and writing), increases students critical thinking. In support of this study, Walkabayashi (2013) reported that through peer feedback, learners engage in critical evaluation of peer text for the purpose of exchanging helps for revision. Because learners can learn more about writing and revision by reading other's drafts critically, their awareness of what makes writing successful and effective can be enhanced. In addition, Maarof et al. (2011) pointed out that learners eventually become more autonomous writers through peer assessment agreeing with this study.

The interview of teachers

1. Regarding the EFL teachers use peer feedback in their classes. The interview data showed that most of the teachers (11/13) have used peer assessment in their classes, but the frequency of use varies. Most of the participants (12/13) stated that they frequently used peer assessment/ feedback in their classes. These teachers always required their students to work in pairs or small groups to comment on each other's L2 writing. Mostly, they implemented such activities in the classroom and sometimes they asked the students to give peer feedback outside the classroom. For instance, teacher 'A' mentioned that "I usually use peer feedback in my classes. I ask my students to work in pairs or small groups to do peer feedback activities in the classroom usually. Sometimes they are required to finish this task after class at their home. I ask the students to point out the problems in the essays, correct, layout, the grammatical errors, mechanics, capitalization, and spelling and write comments and provide scores. I like using this activity in my classes." "Before peer feedback, the teachers always presented instructions as to how to give comments and for each round of peer feedback they usually asked the students to focus on one aspect of their writing, such as tense, subject-verb agreement, and the use of conjunctions.

All of them reported that they included peer feedback as one part of the students' final scores of this course". For example, Teacher 'B 'responded that "Peer feedback is often used in my writing classes and it is one form of the formative assessment in this EFL writing class. I give a guideline to students before they start to review the different essays. I usually ask the students to focus on several aspects of writing in each review. For example, I request my students to comment on the content, structure, the grammatical errors and vocabulary use of the essays. I will collect all the essays and the students' written comments and have a look when they finish their reviews. However, the minority of the teachers (2/13) answered "not so often" when asked how often they used peer feedback. They used peer feedback twice or three times a semester. For example, teacher 'C' has not often used peer feedback in her classes due to the limited in-

class time and differences in the background of the students. She answered that "I used peer feedback in my previous classes, but there were many teaching tasks and I didn't have much time to ask students to comment on their peer's writing in class. I usually comment on my students' writing in the final weeks of each semester." Teacher 'D' also responded that "Sometimes I encourage the students to comment on their classmates' essays, but not so often since the in-class time is too limited." For those teachers who do not often adopt peer feedback activities in their classes, they do not train the students to give comments during peer assessment in EFL writing class. For example, teacher' E 'pointed out that "I seldom use peer feedback in the writing class. I haven't provided any training yet.

With regards to the role of teachers in peer assessment in EFL writing class they worked as: trainers, actors/actress, organizers, demonstrators, guidance, coach, models, checkers and commentators.

Although, the minority of the teachers did not train their students as to how to give effective feedback, the majority of them tended to intervene in the peer feedback process or give instructions and training before peer feedback and summarize the problems involved in peer feedback when students finished the activities. Some teachers preferred to demonstrate as a model how to give peer comments and what aspects of writing should be given attention to. From the interview data, we also know that most of the teachers would collect students' essays with peer comments and give another round of teacher feedback before they explained the problems in students' writing and comments in classes. Besides, two teachers stated that they had never used peer reviewing as an activity in the teaching and learning of L2 writing. For these teachers, they showed concerns about the effectiveness of peer feedback and the students' ability to identify problems and language errors in their classmates' essays.

2. Considering the beliefs of teachers on the role of peer assessment in student writing development the teachers focused on the effectiveness and benefits of peer feedback, and students' competency to give peer comments. As for the effectiveness of peer feedback and to what extent peer feedback can benefit students and their learning, teachers' belief is similar too. The interview data indicates that the majority of the teachers think peer feedback is useful. For the majority of participant teachers, peer feedback is helpful for their students to become aware of the common errors in their writing, to learn from their peer's writing, to raise the audience's awareness, to enhance their own writing quality, to promote interest and to overcome fear and shyness, to develop confidence, to increase critical thinking, to improve four skills, to develop their communication skills and motivation in L2 writing. For instance, Teacher 'F'

responded that "I don't think only the teacher is the reviewer of the students' essays. Students shouldn't hold a belief that they write essays in English because their teachers ask them to do so. By means of peer feedback, the students can see that not only their English teachers but also there are other readers/peers who may read, review, appreciate and comment on their work. So...my students like peer assessment activity and want to be recognized by their peers … The students can identify the basic errors (such as grammar, spelling, etc.) in their peers' essays...I think peer feedback can help students to improve their English writing." Teacher 'J' also mentioned that "I would like to use peer feedback in my classes and it is also effective in improving the students' writing skill .

In addition, for the majority of teachers, peer feedback is a peer interactive process that can promote their learning. For instance, teacher 'K' responded that "I think peer feedback has good potential to improve students' writing. Learning can take place when students participate in group discussion." Teacher 'L' mentioned that "During peer reviewing, students have opportunities to make use of knowledge like the grammatical rules, vocabulary, and writing skills to make comments. In this way, students can improve their learning and enhance their own writing skills. Moreover, peer feedback can motivate their interest in writing." In addition, majority of the teachers think that peer feedback could benefit both feedback givers and feedback receivers. Teacher 'M' replied negatively with the following questions: First, can students make appropriate comments? Second, will students take peer reviewing seriously? How can a student with a low English proficiency help the other one with a high English proficiency? Teacher' N' also doubted the students' ability to give comments on their peer's writing, "I have used peer feedback in my class for spelling correction only.

3. Regarding the beliefs of teachers on types of feedback used and most beneficial types of feedback. Majority teachers responded as follows: Error identification, writing comment and conferencing were used. However, taped commentary was not used by the participant teachers in the EFL writing class. Error identification, writing comment and conferencing were the most beneficial types of feedback in EFL writing class but not taped commentary. Teacher 'M' and 'N' have used error identification since they doubted students ability to use types of feedback in peer assessment. In addition, both teachers do not use taped commentary.

4. Concerning advantages and disadvantages of peer assessment, teachers' interview data showed the following advantages of peer assessment: students are responsible and this has an effect on the motivation of the students. It has also positive effect on the efforts to learn and giving and receiving feedback is also a learning process. In addition, it has been mentioned that peer assessment stimulates higher order thinking. Moreover, it saves time for teachers. Further, peer assessment has positive effects on the development of social and communication skills, that is, it has positive effects on skills for learning, how to cooperate in group, active learning, negotiate, evaluate and giving feedback.

According to Petty (2009), as cited in White, (2009), peer assessment results in collaborative learning where the responsibility for assessment is being shared, enable students to become more aware of their strengths, weaknesses and needs and teaches students that mistakes are avoidable and that improvement is possible. Moreover, according to White (2009), it is also helpful in improving students' ability, identify the gap between their present skills and their learning goals, to understand the nature of good work and how marks are gained and lost, students become more engaged in their learning, and it enables teachers to work collaboratively with their students toward appropriate and attainable outcomes. According to interview data the disadvantages of peer assessment includes favouritism which leads to higher scores and collusive marking. Another disadvantage of peer assessment is that there is little differentiation between the scores of the students and decibel marking. Moreover, dominant group members get higher scores and subjective marking. Furthermore, someone takes advantage of the work and scores of the others students/group score. The process of converting group scores to individual scores by means of co-assessment seems to be a good way to avoid this (Dochy et al., 2002, as cited in Davina and Stefanie, 2014).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Teachers' respondents in this study found both peer feedback and teachers' feedback were practised and found to be interesting and useful in English writing classroom. With careful examination of the responses from peer assessment, the majority of students evaluated their peers' writing in the area of content, organization, mechanics, and grammar, spelling, capitalization, layout and vocabulary and peer feedback was found to be helpful mainly for improving all these. Teachers found that peer evaluation is a useful strategy in polishing their writing skills, enhancing students' interaction, arousing and motivating their interests in English writing. Majority of teachers had positive beliefs to peer evaluation activity. Peer feedback had a role to keep the students to communicate using the comments. Thus, it has a beneficial effect in teaching writing as a process. Finally, the majority of teachers responded that peer assessment is important in writing skill development. Currently, teaching is becoming important in helping students to learn by themselves. One way of doing so is by letting students learn from each other through peer assessment

on writing skill. Thus, writing teachers are strongly advised to employ pear feedback technique to have students comment on each other's content, organization, mechanics, and grammar, spelling, capitalization, layout and vocabulary. There is the need to train EFL teachers on the importance and principles of peer feedback.

Conflict of Interests

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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Full Length Research Paper

Participant observation research of a Korean basketball club as a leisure and culture community: With a focus on self-identity

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This study comprises a participant observation of a Korean basketball club as a leisure culture community. The study developed a theoretical discussion using the symbolic interactions of Mead. The SPADE basketball club was selected for case study. Research methods took advantage of participant observation and in-depth interviews, among different qualitative research methods. The members of the basketball club were analyzed in terms of how the activities of basketball clubs have a positive social effect and contribute to the formation of self-identity. The members of the basketball club formed a new social relationship because of its activities, which was a very positive outcome. It is clear from the analysis that the members believe that they have a role to play within the club and they are expecting others. Subsequently, it was found that these club activities realized self-identity as a serious leisure culture. They invested much time and money and continued their leisure activities despite the occurrence of injury and suffering, thus realizing self-identity as a serious leisure culture. However, there is the possibility that this may lead to leisure addiction, such as being hindered by the activities of the club through the activity of the club.

Key words: Serious leisure culture, basketball club activity, symbolic interactionism, identity, qualitative research.

INTRODUCTION

The importance of leisure activities is increasing day by day, and social perceptions toward them are also changing. In general, leisure activities have many positive effects, such as stress reduction, improvement in the quality of life, self-realization, and the sense of freedom that comes through escaping daily life (Lee and Kim, 2016). However, it cannot be said that types and effects

of leisure activities are the same for all people. Leisure activities can be a simple activity on which to spend some time, and can be an activity to relieve stress. However, it can also lead to manifesting a self-identity that produces self-satisfaction. In other words, the extent to which people participate in various types of leisure activities differs according to individuals and depends on various

factors such as one's life circumstances and leisure activity purposes.Stebbins (2012) categorized leisure activities into serious leisure/project-based leisure and casual leisure according to the degree of participation and the specific situation. Here, serious leisure refers to an activity that enables a person to build his/her career and feel fulfilled through special technology, knowledge, and experience. In other words, it is an activity associated with a sport or art in which a person participates as an amateur level; a leisure activity could lead to a career as the participating individual becomes skilled and accumulates sufficient experience and knowledge (Stebbins, 2012).

Ham et al. (2016) conducted a study of serious leisure and sports clubs. In their paper, satisfaction and happiness through a bicycle MTB club acted as a factor for occupational change. Additionally, Baek (2016) proved that a traditional art club activity as serious leisure was an effective mechanism for the transmission of traditional and intangible culture. However, these studies did not mention the importance of interactions through social symbols in creating self-identity. Accordingly, the present study aims to examine self-identity manifested through serious leisure from the symbolic interaction perspective.

Today, many people take part in sports-for-all club activities as a way to spend their leisure time because they can maintain physical and mental health and form positive relationships through such activities. Furthermore, through positive club activities, they can realize self-identity, which can provide an opportunity to improve the quality of life (Ahn et al., 2015).

The symbolic interaction theory is a methodology to measure a theoretical premise of self-identity, and some of the representative scholars are G. H. Mead, H. Blumer, and E. Goffman. Among them, Mead prepared the groundwork for and codified the symbolic interaction theory; he valued symbols as media for individuals to understand each other and communicate. Babies are known to form personalities through symbolic gestures; as to symbolic interactions, meanings are exchanged through gestures or language in a social situation. Society has been evaluated as an organization in which adaptive interactions occur between individuals, and it has been argued that a society is born by adaptive interactions between individuals; further, their egos are created during socialization (Kim, 2006).

This study is a qualitative in nature, based on in-depth interviews and participant observations of eight members of a basketball club S who were selected as study subjects. G. H. Mead's symbolic interaction theory was adopted for analyzing the results of the qualitative study. The symbolic interaction theory is a micro theory that focuses on individuals instead of society and an interaction theory, which suggests that individuals influence each other through symbols such as language, gestures, and facial expressions. This theory is a

theoretical concept for measuring self-identity as it addresses the fundamental issues of communication; humans create symbols and symbols define humans' egos (Kim, 2013).

Mead (1922) focused on how to accept the symbolic mind and the genesis of symbolism, He said that "The significant symbol is then the gesture, the sign." That means, "It is addressed to the self when it is addressed to another individual, and is addressed to another, in [the] form [of] all other individuals, when it is addressed to the self" (p.162).

Mead (1934) classified ego into two aspects, "I" (subjective ego) and "Me" (objective ego), and explained the continuous interactions between the two. According to Mead, people internalize the conventional standpoint of the society to which they belong and consider it as an object of perception. This action points to the very objective ego (Me), which contrasts with the subjective ego (I) that acts as the subject of perception. "I" cannot be predicted or structured by others. Therefore, Mead thought that self-identity was formed through a reflexive process through interactions between I and Me (Mead, 1934).

From the perspective of symbolic interaction theory, the situation plays a crucial role in self-identity formation (Lee et al., 2015), because an individual is a being who acts subjectively depending on the situation. Relationships with others are formed amid such subjective behavior; one's behavior is affected by social relationships. Yet, one's behavior also affects others' behavior. Lee et al. (2015) studied members of a baseball club. By utilizing the study results of Park (2015), Burke (1988), and Hewitt (2000), Lee et al. (2015) stated that individuals can play various roles in the same situation because their egos interpret it differently. An empirical verification of baseball club members, situational evaluations, social relationships, and others' expectations regarded these as factors associated with self-identity. Self-identity formed in this way was manifested by more actively investing time and resources in the baseball club activity.

This idea is applicable to baseball, as interactions between club members occur during games and practice. The manner in which players interpret and accept various situations is important for building self-identity within their club. Therefore, this study addresses questions through an empirical analysis of a basketball club activity. In particular, to explain participants' behaviors, an analysis of club members' situations focused on the actual sites of games and practice. Lee et al. (2015) investigated the self-identity of baseball club members, but there were limitations in terms of an in-depth survey and analysis of each member, as the researchers used a quantitative study method through an empirical paradigm.

The purpose of this study was to inquire analytically into how situations associated with basketball activity affect the manifestation of self-identity and how the identity of

club members affects their participatory behavior. That is, the basketball club members' activities and experiences were analyzed through the theoretical premise of a self-identity study, which explains humans' social behavior from the perspective of the symbolic interaction theory. Study questions to achieve the purpose of this study were as follows:

(1) What kind of social impact does the club activity have as the basketball club members', "serious leisure," and how does this social impact form self-identity?
(2) How is self-identity manifested as "serious leisure" from the perspective of participant behavior through qualitative analytical tools of participant observations and in-depth interviews?

METHODOLOGY

Characteristics of researchers and research participants

Denzin and Lincoln (2014) argued that the role of researchers is very important, as they perform the role of mediator and deliver meaning. Because the researcher of this study has been a member of SPADE basketball club for six years, serving as a manager since 2012, it was possible to have a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of this club. Mutually beneficial relationships were formed between the researcher and research participants. Accordingly, the researcher could perform efficient in-depth interviews as he was aware of the environment and context of the research participants' lives and organize the club activities for continuous participant observation. However, the researcher did not include himself in the participant group and was faithful to his role as a researcher.

Selecting research participants for a qualitative study is a crucial matter. In this study, eight members from S club were selected using purposive sampling: those selected had been members for more than five years and had high attendance rates in club activities (e.g., regular gatherings and events). Thus, they have been very active. Accordingly, the best study participants to address the study questions were selected as shown in Table 1.

Data collection and research ethics

Regarding data collection tools to address the study questions, the qualitative study methods of participant observation and in-depth interview were used. Participant observation refers to a researcher actively participating in the lives of research participants and studying their daily lives by forming continuous and close relationships with them (Lee et el., 2012). The club experience of the researcher enabled him to perform in-depth participant observations, thereby conforming to the opinion of Geertz (1998), who insisted that an analysis of culture should be considered as an interpretative science that pursues meaning. The in-depth interview, carried out for three days between June 10 and June 12, 2016, was conducted by one individual. As to interview methods, the non-structuralized interview based on the conversational interview method and semi-structuralized interview were used. The interview duration ranged from 50 to 70 minutes per individual. Interview locations included interviewees' houses or coffee shops near their office buildings, at their convenience. Interviews were based on prepared questions as shown in Table 2, but were conducted in a relaxed atmosphere to encourage open conversations.

This study abided by research ethics throughout the processes of collecting data, including interviews and participatory observation. Before interviewing the participants, the researcher explained the research purpose and the expected effects of the research. Also, interviews were conducted after obtaining participants' written consent on the research participation agreement form. Even after the interview, the researcher continued to participate in club activities to maintain close relationships with interview participants. Finally, this paper uses the basketball club's name, SPADE, in this case study as the club members gave the researcher permission to do so.

Data analysis

In this study, a textual analysis was conducted on data collected through participant observations and in-depth interviews. First, in-depth interview data and a participant observation journal were systematically recorded through transcription and documentation. Then, a keyword to connote the meaning of text content was selected and coded. Finally, an effort was made to create scope and meaning to cover the content of coded data.

RESULTS

Social effect of basketball club activity and formation of self-identity

Kim et al. (2013) categorized leisure benefits of the members of a tennis club obtained through club activities as mental benefits, physical benefits, and social benefits; therefore, it is thought that the members of a basketball club can also be the same from their club activities. However, because Mead's (1934) self-identity, the theoretical background of this study, is manifested through interactions between the subject and object, simple individual effects that appeared among the individuals (participants) were excluded from this study. Accordingly, this chapter investigates what kind of self-identity is formed by the social effects of the basketball club.

The researcher applied triangulation to increase the reliability and validity of the research, employing research design, data collection and analysis, and a member check. Furthermore, the researcher conducted peer debriefings to review the data with a peer researcher and examine whether the data analysis was consistent; it was thus possible to overcome misinterpretations that may have occurred because of the researcher's subjective interpretation. To grasp the actual meaning of this research through the aforementioned method contributes to presenting the most objective data for analyzing the research.

Forming new social relationships

A club is a gathering of people with similar thoughts and

Table 1. Research participants.

Name (assumed)(Age)	Position	Occupation	Active period (years)	Interview date/time
Pyo Chang-min(38)	Vice chairman (8 years)	Pharmaceutical salesman	10	2016.06.10/45 min
Kim Seung-hyeon(40)	General member	Company employee	9	2016.06.10/60 min
Kim Hyeong-jin(37)	General member	Factory manager	7	2016.06.10/40 min
Jang Seong-ho(36)	Manager (6 years)	High school science teacher	10	2016.06.11/40 min
Choi Jin-ho(34)	General member	Cram school math teacher	6	2016.06.11/50 min
Kwon Yong-ju(38)	General member	University faculty	8	2016.06.11/30 min
Choi Wu-jeong(46)	Chairman (11 years)	Insurance manager	11	2016.06.12/40 min
Lee Chang-su(52)	General member	Factory production worker	5	2016.06.12/50 min

Table 2. Interview questions.

Type	Questions
Information of participants	The time and period of basketball club activity The motivation to participate in the basketball club activity
Club activities	Why do you participate in club activities? Which role do you think you play in the club's activities? Please tell us what you liked about the club activities. Please tell us what you did not like about the club activities. What kind of club do you want this club to be in the future?

interests, enabling them to easily socialize and bond with each other, and a venue where information is actively exchanged (Kim, 2012). Basketball is a team sport that cannot be played alone. Therefore, basketball club members can easily find opportunities to form new social relationships through regular and occasional gatherings.

Through activities, the members in S club are also forming new relationships within the club, meeting people in various age groups and occupations whom they did not have the chance to encounter in their workplaces or among existing friends. People in this type of community are not simply involved business-wise or interest-wise, but they are forming a common culture, sharing information, and creating new social relationships through encounters with new people in sports venues using their spare time (Kim, 2012). Some of their comments follow:

"*I really like Seung-hyeon when we play games. He's a guard, but he is well aware of our strengths and weaknesses and reflects them in games. He also excels at defense, making other players play more comfortably. He is more concerned about passing the ball than scoring himself. Because he is always keen about whom to pass the ball to, I get to throw more shots when I play with him (Lee Chang-su [male, 52, a member for five years]).*
I met a lot of people here. I've been working at a cram school as a teacher after graduating from college and

haven't met that many people there. There isn't anyone related to the people in this club. How will I ever meet people like them elsewhere? I can't. It is only here where I can encounter people like them, become brothers, and introduce my girlfriend (Choi Jin-ho [male, 34, a member for six years]).
I think an interpersonal relationship is really important. It may not be so important in the basketball club, but to me, it's very important and the team plays better when the members are emotionally connected with each other (Kim Hyeong-jin [male, 37, a member for seven years])."

During the basketball game, participant Lee Chang-Su was being positively influenced by another participant, Kim Seung-Hyun. Kim Seung-Hyun, with his excellent basketball skills, raised the morale of other team members, rather than his own. His playing style was encouraging to other players. Participant Choi Jin-Ho came to know the people that he had become acquainted with through the club, and the relationships with these people showed that they are affecting him through a very positive relationship. Participant Kim Hyung-Jin also considered interpersonal relationships as the most important aspect of club activities, and indicated he had positive interpersonal relationships through the club.

The result of the researcher's participant observation also showed that many people were having positive

relationships with each other through club activities. Indeed, they shared many parts of their daily lives with club members, beyond the club activities. They also organized small groups among themselves to enjoy their common hobbies such as traveling and visiting gourmet restaurants. Moreover, when family events such as funerals and weddings took place, they attended these events and gave condolences and support. Therefore, as time went on, the bonds among club members became stronger, and seem to have formed positive interpersonal relationships in their lives.

All study participants had positive opinions about new interpersonal relationships they had formed with others. The newly formed relationships were presented in various forms such as a group tour, get-togethers, and shared hobbies. They were positive about forming relationships because they had more fun in activities if they had formed strong emotional relationships with others in situations in which they could judge people based on personality rather than social status, educational background, or annual income. Additionally, it is thought that because there is no conflict of interest between them, they can more easily form social relationships with each other than with those in their workplaces or schools.

My role and others' expectation in the club

A club activity is not performed in isolation but by a community that is formed amidst social relationships between strangers. Therefore, there are roles and duties for each person as a club member. The members of SPADE basketball team also had roles and duties. First, the management staff included the chairman, vice-chairman, and secretary. The chairman led the club and had the final say regarding various agendas associated with club operations; the vice-chairman was in charge of planning and operating internal events, and the secretary managed the budget and handled a variety of club issues.

Besides the management staff, all other members thought they had their own roles, depending on their ages and basketball abilities. Older members supported the management staff for the stability of club operations and helped new members adapt to the club activities. A member who was great at playing basketball played the role of leader during games or practices, and other members had a high regard for him. Comments from club members are as follow:

"My role is to participate. I think that is my role. Actually, although I'm the oldest, I always want to participate regardless of my age. Basketball is not a sport that can be played by one person. You can't play basketball if there isn't anyone to play with. Participation is what maintains any team. Besides participation, everyone pays the same money and participates in the activity to get rid

of stress and heal themselves. Basketball is a group sport so things don't always happen the way you want. At first, you get to comfort team members but when you repeat the same words, it becomes nitpicking. Then, at the end, it becomes an accusation. I go up to those people and comfort them. I cheer them up by saying, "It's okay. Play." I console those who feel bad when playing games. My role is to participate and comfort those members (Lee Chang-su [male, 52, a member for five years]).
Well, I think I'm good at basketball. And, there are times when games don't work as expected when we meet up for regular gatherings. At those times, I comfort team members, work to make goals and good passes, and I think those are my roles (Pyo Chang-min [male, 38, a member for 10 years]).
I pass the ball to Chang-yong when our team struggles with play because he's really good at basketball. Then, things get better (Kim Seung-hyeon [male, 40, a member for nine years])."

As a result of the in-depth interviews, among the eight study participants, seven replied that they had roles in the club according to others' expectations. Because the study participants had been active in the club for a long time, they helped new members adapt to the club and its gatherings through participation. Further, when things did not work out well during games, it turned out that participants volunteered to be problem solvers.

Manifesting self-identity through "serious leisure" participation

As a result of in-depth interviews with the eight participants of this study, all participated in the basketball club activities based on different contexts and factors. Additionally, they formed new social relationships within the club and had expectations from others within the club. By performing their roles, they manifested a sense of self-identity.

Therefore, it is evident that the club activities provided the opportunities for members to discover their identity through newly formed social relationships and roles within the club. Their self-identity was revealed through "serious leisure" participation as defined by Stebbins, and it was manifested as a psychological element: putting on basketball gear and attempting to continue participating in leisure activity in spite of injuries and physical pain.

Manifesting self-identity through investment

With regards to "serious leisure," Stebbins (2012) stated that people tend not to spare money, time, and energy to the extent that family and friends have difficulty in understanding them. However, people have a strong

desire to improve their skills for serious leisure. Therefore, they have a clear wish to get a better golf club and buy a better telescope with higher performance. Given that people have a tendency to wish to have a dance lesson from a professional dancer who is famous and therefore more expensive to receive a lesson from, everyone has the desire to improve their abilities (Stebbins, 2012).

SPADE basketball club members were revealing their self-identities and meeting their needs by investing a great deal of financial resources into their basketball activities. They were equipped with as much gear as professional players. In addition to basketball shoes and uniforms, they wore various types of gear, such as arm sleeves, knee pads, basketball socks, sports glasses, wrist bands, and hairbands, and they engaged in typical basketball behavior. They wear the gear to protect their bodies and prevent injury, and people who sweat considerably wear them to absorb perspiration. Some said they wear them as fashion accessories to look like professional basketball players. That is, they express their identity as basketball club members through such behavior.

In particular, among the participants, Kwon Yong-ju purchased about 50 pairs of basketball shoes during his eight years in the club, estimated to have cost 8 to 10 million won. Therefore, considering the club fee (240,000 won per year) plus the uniform fee and money spent on various gatherings, it can be assumed that he invested a lot of money in club activities, as he described:

"Even as a child, I was interested and liked shoes, and when I started playing basketball, I fell in love with basketball shoes. So, I have bought about 50 pairs of them to date (Kwon Yong-ju [male, 38, a member for eight years])."

Investing a great deal of money into purchasing basketball equipment, as indicated earlier, was also apparent with participants Kim Seung-Hyun and Kim Hyung-Jin. Kim Seung-Hyun was investing an average of 10 to 20% of his monthly income into basketball shoes and clothes. While being involved in club activities, Kim Hyung-Jin was collecting basketball shoes to the extent that he had a shoe rack only for basketball shoes.
In a study targeting participants of a baseball club for ordinary workers, Kim (2013) investigated the relationship between serious leisure and the professionalism of recreational players. Kim (2013) found that it was very significant to invest a great deal of money into leisure activities, which would be seen by others as showing determination and the effort required to become an expert. In a study exploring the leisure experiences of fishermen, Oh and kim (2014) reported that amateur fishermen invested as much time, money, and effort into fishing as professional fishermen did. The amateur fishshermen were also found to hone their personal fishing skills

through extravagant investments and build their fame by participating in fishing tournaments, thus manifesting an aspect of serious leisure.

Through the aforementined cases, it can be seen that identity is manifested through investing money in basketball shoes and gear. With that said, Lee et al. (2015) results indicated that the sense of self-identity of members of an amateur baseball club was affected by their use of such gear. Study results revealed that time spent and resources invested in the club activity increased the sense of identity.

Serious leisure activity continues regardless of injury and pain

Stebbins (2012) described that in addition to investing financial resources, participants of serious leisure activities demonstrated the characteristic of active participation, which sometimes led them to an uncontrollable situation. Oh and Kim. (2013) claimed that hikers experience pain and negative feelings during their participation in serious leisure activity, but they participate because of the physical changes, effects, and fun that they experience in the midst of pain.

Among the members of the SPADE club, the cases where people continuously participated in leisure activities in spite of physical injuries also existed. The members of SPADE basketball club were also suffering from serious to minor injuries of the knee, ankle, or head. Among the study participants, in May 2016, Pyo Chang-min collapsed after hurting his knee in a collision with another player when he was landing after a jump. As a result, his cruciate ligament was torn. He is currently recovering from an operation, and the experience has caused some changes in his life. As a salesman, he must travel frequently on business trips and work outside of the office; therefore, his knee injury exerts a negative impact on his job.

In January 2014, another participant, Kwon Yong-ju, was seriously injured and received 12 stitches on his head after losing his balance and banging his head on an obstacle upon landing after a jump. His injury at that time did not directly impact his work in a negative manner as he is mostly engaged in administrative work in his office, but he has suffered inconveniences in daily activities, such as not being able to wash his hair. Moreover, since returning to the basketball court after recovering from the injury, he said he experiences emotional trauma every time he lands after a jump.

Kim Seung-hyeon was hurt badly as he played in a basketball game in March 2008. His Achilles tendon was torn when he caught the ball in an offensive attempt. It took him a year to recover and his life was substantially altered, as he was out of a job during the rehabilitation period. He describes his experience as follows:

"I fell down only a minute and 30 seconds after the game started. The offensive player was humbled because I pressured him while defending. I ran with the ball and someone "banged" my elbow with a hammer. I could hear the sound. You can't walk when your Achilles tendon gets torn; this part was torn [said as he points at his heel]. It really hurt. It curled up. When the Achilles tendon gets torn, this part curls up and gets sunken. I knew the injury would be serious. It was Sunday that day and I had surgery two days after. It took me a year to recover. I didn't get any rehab treatment (Kim Seung-hyeon [male, 40, a member for nine years]).
I hit my head before. At that time, my first thought was "Oh I cannot play basketball for the time being." This kind of thinking made me feel really awful, so I came back to the basketball court right after I got better. However, I cannot run and play basketball like the old days because of the memory of the injury (Kwon, Yong-Ju [Male, 38, a member for eight years])."

He had completely recovered a year after the accident. He could have quit basketball because of the injury, but he returned to the court and began playing games as soon as he recovered. This behavior coincides with Oh et al. (2013) study finding that serious leisure activity is accompanied by physical pain, but people continue with it for the pleasure that arises when overcoming the pain.

As can be seen in the cases of the SPADE basketball club, many basketball club members get hurt during games. As a result of an injury, one's lifestyle and relationships can be impacted negatively, and there may be difficulties in the workplace or loss of a job. Club members could have quit after their injuries, but they continued to enjoy leisure activity for the pleasure of playing basketball. This finding suggests that leisure activity is helpful for relieving stress (Lee et al., 2016), but situations resulting from serious leisure are generally uncontrollable (Stebbins, 2012).

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to analyze the relationship between club activities, social effects, and members' egos in the behavior of basketball club members from the perspective of symbolic interaction theory. Therefore, a qualitative study was conducted with eight members of the SPADE basketball team through in-depth interviews and participant observations. The following conclusions were derived from the results of this study.

First, it was revealed that club members' participation in club activities generated social effects. The club's activities can be categorized into regular gatherings for games and occasional gatherings for other purposes, and members form new social relationships through such activities. Within the club, each member had roles

according to the expectations of others that they performed, each in his/her own way. The management staff included the chairman, vice-chairman, and secretary, and the rest of the club members manifested their self-identity through understanding and fulfilling the expectations of others. Although, they did not directly talk about other members, they seemed to feel that it was their responsibility to participate faithfully in regular club gatherings, verifying that identity was formed through symbolic interactions between the individual and basketball.

Second, SPADE basketball club members' sense of self-identity can be explained with Stebbins (2012) "serious leisure" cultural theory. Identity was affected by club participation behavior and the degree of immersion. Members spent a lot of money on basketball uniforms and gear, and wearing the gear was a factor in protecting their bodies and creating their identity as basketball players. Additionally, continuing with club activities despite injuries and pain indicates that community activity is serious leisure. However, such behavior also points to the possibility of a leisure addiction.

Kim (2015) stated that the level of leisure addiction increases with an increase in the level of serious leisure activity. In other words, serious leisure activity and leisure addiction are directly proportional to each other. SPADE basketball club members demonstrated certain behaviors, such as spending 10 million won on basketball goods over eight years in the club and continuing to play basketball despite the negative impact on one's job following an injury, that could lead to a leisure addiction, which would be harmful to family and friends. Accordingly, more discussion on this issue should take place in the future.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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