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Moderation Practices And Processes For Quality Assurance In Public Universities In The South-East Geopolitical Zone Of Nigeria

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ABSTRACT
This study investigated moderation practices as mechanisms for promoting quality assurance in public universities in Nigeria's South-East geopolitical zone, with particular emphasis on peer scrutiny, single marking, and double marking. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population comprised 7,360 academic staff from the fourteen public universities in the zone, while a sample of 736 lecturers, representing 10% of the population, was selected through stratified random sampling. Data were collected using the researcher-developed: Moderation Practices and Process for Quality Assurance in Public Universities Questionnaire (MPPQAPUQ), validated by experts and yielding a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.88. Of the 736 questionnaires administered, 678 valid copies were retrieved and analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions, while z-test statistics were used to test the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that peer scrutiny, single marking, and double marking significantly enhance quality assurance by promoting fairness, consistency, accountability, transparency, and reliability in assessment practices. Significant differences were found between professors and non-professors on peer scrutiny and double marking, whereas no significant difference existed on single marking. The study concluded that effective implementation of moderation practices strengthens assessment credibility, improves student learning outcomes, and enhances institutional quality assurance. It was recommended that Universities should strengthen quality assurance by organising regular peer review workshops, supporting reflective teaching, providing standardised marking rubrics and calibration sessions for single marking, conducting periodic assessment audits, and implementing compulsory double marking for final-year projects, professional examinations and borderline cases to ensure fairness, accuracy and accountability in assessment.

Keywords: Moderation Practices, Peer Scrutiny, Single Marking, Double Marking, Quality Assurance, Public Universities, South-East Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

University education is the level of education pursued after secondary school and is designed to develop high-level manpower, intellectual capacity, practical skills, scholarship, and community service. Nigerian universities pursue these goals through teaching, research, and knowledge dissemination across undergraduate and graduate programs. Despite rising enrollment and graduation rates, the university system continues to face

challenges such as inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, insufficient staffing, ineffective teaching methods, inconsistent grading practices, and political interference. These challenges have contributed to concerns about declining educational standards, graduate quality, and global competitiveness.

Quality assurance has therefore become an essential mechanism for maintaining academic standards and ensuring that university graduates possess the knowledge, skills, and competencies expected by society and employers. It refers to the systematic processes through which institutions monitor, evaluate, and improve teaching, learning, and assessment to achieve established standards (Kpolovie, 2019; Audu, 2019). One of the major indicators of quality assurance is the quality of student output, reflected in graduates' academic achievement, professional competence, ethical conduct, and ability to contribute meaningfully to national development (Iroegbu & Oleforo, 2019). However, persistent concerns over declining graduate performance have strengthened the need for more effective quality assurance mechanisms.

Among these mechanisms, moderation practices have gained significant attention as a means of ensuring fairness, consistency, validity, and reliability in assessment. Moderation is a systematic review process that verifies whether assessment criteria have been applied consistently across students' work and whether academic standards are maintained (University College Birmingham, 2020; University of Strathclyde, 2023). It provides confidence that assessment outcomes accurately reflect students' achievements and promotes comparability of standards across courses and programmes. Moderation may be conducted internally by academic staff or externally by appointed external examiners. Internal moderation focuses on ensuring consistency in marking within the institution, while external moderation provides independent verification that institutional assessment standards align with national and professional expectations (Dill, 2019). Common moderation practices include peer scrutiny, single marking, consensus moderation, consideration of grade distribution, allocation of scripts, and external peer review. Collectively, these practices strengthen accountability, enhance the credibility of assessment outcomes, and contribute to improved quality of university education and student outputs. Nevertheless, this study focused on peer scrutiny, single marking, and double marking.

Peer scrutiny, also known as peer moderation or peer assessment, is seen as a process where markers meet to review their marking. This occurs early in the marking and preferably at other times during the marking to keep markers 'on track'. In this situation, two or more markers or teachers come together to assess students' examinations at the same time and give feedback. It is found to be a unanimous decision of grading test or exam by two assessors to reaffirm the view that a student has to save teachers' time. In peer scrutiny, two or more teachers or assessors are assigned to compare student-assigned grades or those assigned by their peers. This practice seems to have been found as some form of 'moderation' accountability for assessment design was a common feature of institutional quality assurance and control requirements (Barrie et al., 2021).

Single marking has to do with a specified sample of the range of assessed work reviewed by a member of academic staff other than the first marker (or team of markers) to assess the standard and consistency of the marks and feedback allocated by the markers, with reference to the marking criteria. In this moderation practice, it is important to check back over scripts that have been marked to ensure that scripts marked earlier and later have been treated similarly. This is because markers may be inconsistent within themselves, especially if there are many assessments to mark, which takes several marking sessions. When this is done, it ensures output quality and standard (University of Southern Queensland, 2022).

Double marking is another moderation practice also known as second marking. It is seen as a process where two or more markers make independent judgments concerning the relative merit of a student's examination response, and each allocates a mark in accordance with the approved marking scheme, with each maker being aware or unaware of the mark allocated by the first maker. Where all pieces of work are marked by two or more markers, and the marks and annotations of the first marker are available or are made known to the second marker/s, it is called Non-blind double marking. On the other hand, where all pieces of work are marked by two or more markers, but the marks and comments of the first marker are not available or made known to the second marker/s, it is called blind double-marking (Barrie et al., 2021).

Statement of the Problem

University education is expected to produce graduates with the knowledge, skills, competencies, and ethical values required for national development. However, despite increased enrolment and graduation rates in Nigerian universities, there are growing concerns about the declining quality of graduates, inconsistencies in

assessment practices, and reduced public confidence in university qualifications. Reports of poor graduate performance, inability to defend awarded grades, and complaints from employers regarding graduates' competencies suggest that quality assurance mechanisms may not be achieving their intended objectives. These concerns have been attributed partly to inconsistencies in the assessment and grading processes, which undermine the credibility and comparability of academic standards across universities.

Moderation practices have been introduced as important quality assurance strategies to enhance fairness, consistency, validity, and reliability in assessment. Through practices such as peer scrutiny, single marking, and double marking, universities are expected to ensure that assessment criteria are uniformly applied and that students' grades accurately reflect their academic performance. However, evidence suggests that these moderation practices are not consistently implemented across Nigerian universities due to factors such as inadequate staffing, heavy workloads, limited institutional commitment, and insufficient monitoring. Consequently, variations in marking standards, grading inconsistencies, and concerns about the quality of student outputs continue to persist.

Although previous studies have examined quality assurance and assessment practices in higher education, limited empirical attention has been given to the specific influence of peer scrutiny, single marking, and double marking on students' output quality in Nigerian universities. This gap has created uncertainty regarding the extent to which these moderation practices contribute to improving academic standards and graduate quality. Against this background, this study sought to investigate how moderation practices (peer scrutiny, single marking, and double marking) promote students' output quality in public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study was to examine moderation practices for quality assurance in public universities in Nigeria's South-East geopolitical zone. Specifically, the objectives of the study sought to:

1. examine ways the practice of peer scrutiny promotes quality assurance in public universities in the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria.
2. ascertain ways the practice of single marking promotes quality assurance in public universities in the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria.
3. examine ways the practice of double marking promotes quality assurance in public universities in the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. In what ways does the practice of peer scrutiny promote quality assurance in public universities in the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria?
2. What are the ways the practice of single marking promotes quality assurance in public universities in the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria?
3. In what ways does the practice of double marking promote quality assurance in public universities in the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested in the study at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant difference in the mean rating scores of professors and non-professors of public universities on the ways the practice of peer scrutiny promotes quality assurance in public universities in the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean rating scores of professors and non-professors of public universities on the ways the practice of single marking promotes quality assurance in public universities in the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria.
3. There is no significant difference in the mean rating scores of professors and non-professors of public universities on the ways the practice of double marking promotes quality assurance in public universities in the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study because it enabled the collection and analysis of data to describe the existing state of moderation practices for quality assurance in public universities. The population comprised 7,360 academic staff (4,137 males and 3,223 females) from the fourteen (14) public

universities in the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria, based on the National Universities Commission (NUC, 2025). A sample of 736 academic staff, representing 10% of the population, was drawn from seven public universities using the stratified random sampling technique. Data were collected using a researcher-developed questionnaire titled: Moderation Practices and Process for Quality Assurance in Public Universities Questionnaire (MPPQAPUQ), which contained 21 items structured on a modified four-point Likert scale. The instrument was validated by the researcher's supervisors and three experts in Measurement and Evaluation, while its reliability was established using Cronbach's alpha, yielding an overall reliability coefficient of 0.88. The questionnaire was administered personally by the researcher with the assistance of four trained research assistants, resulting in 678 valid copies retrieved, representing a 92% response rate. Data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions, while the z-test was used to test the null hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance, with a criterion mean of 2.50 used for decision-making.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Research Question One: *In what ways does the practice of peer scrutiny promote quality assurance in public universities in the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria?*

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation Scores on the Ways Practice of Peer Scrutiny Promotes Quality Assurance in Public Universities in the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria

S/N	Items	Professors N = 322		Non-Professors N = 356		Mean Set	Decision
		$\bar{x}_1$	SD	$\bar{x}_2$	SD	$\bar{x}_1\bar{x}_2$	
1	Peer review encourages instructors to reflect on their teaching practices which leads to improved teaching methods for quality assurance.	2.94	0.95	2.99	0.99	2.97	Agree
2	Peer review promotes a focus on student learning outcomes, leading to enhanced student learning experiences.	2.91	0.91	2.09	0.25	2.50	Agree
3	Peer review holds instructors accountable for their teaching practices promoting a culture of excellence.	2.98	0.98	2.96	0.98	2.97	Agree
4	Peer scrutiny promotes academic integrity by encouraging instructors to uphold high standards of academic conduct.	2.96	0.95	2.83	1.35	2.90	Agree
5	Peer scrutiny encourages instructors to continuously improve their teaching and research practices.	3.27	1.09	2.24	0.39	2.76	Agree
6	Peer scrutiny enhances transparency and accountability in academic practices, promoting a culture of trust and respect.	3.01	1.02	2.90	0.97	2.96	Agree
7	Peer scrutiny informs quality enhancement initiatives which promotes evidence-based decision-making.	2.81	0.86	2.62	0.85	2.72	Agree
	Average Mean/Standard Deviation	**2.98**	**0.97**	**2.58**	**0.83**	**2.78**	**Agree**

Data on Table 1 show that all the items (1-7) had mean set rating scores above the criterion mean of 2.50 and were adjudged as the ways the practice of peer scrutiny promotes quality assurance in public universities in South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

In summary, with average aggregate mean of 2.78, which is above the criterion mean of 2.50, it implies that both professors and non-professors agree that, the ways the practice of peer scrutiny promotes quality assurance in public universities in South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria include: peer review encourages instructors to reflect on their teaching practices which leads to improved teaching methods for quality assurance, peer review promotes a focus on student learning outcomes, leading to enhanced

student learning experiences, peer review holds instructors accountable for their teaching practices promoting a culture of excellence, peer scrutiny promotes academic integrity by encouraging instructors to uphold high standards of academic conduct, peer scrutiny encourages instructors to continuously improve their teaching and research practices, peer scrutiny enhances transparency and accountability in academic practices, promoting a culture of trust and respect, and peer scrutiny informs quality enhancement initiatives which promotes evidence-based decision-making.

Research Question Two: *What are the ways the practice of single marking promotes quality assurance in public universities in the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria?*

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation Scores on the ways the practice of single marking promotes quality assurance in public universities in the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria

S/N	Items	Professors N = 322		Non-Professors N = 356		Mean Set	Decision
		$\bar{x}_1$	SD	$\bar{x}_2$	SD	$\bar{x}_2\bar{x}_2$	
8	Single marking ensures that the same standards and criteria are applied consistently to all students' work.	3.29	1.24	3.17	1.13	3.23	Agree
9	Single marking reduces the likelihood of errors in grading to ensure that students receive accurate feedback	3.31	1.11	3.19	1.17	3.25	Agree
10	Single marking ensures that students receive accurate and consistent feedback to improve student outcomes.	3.00	1.02	3.02	1.04	3.01	Agree
11	Single marking enables instructors to provide timely feedback to students to support their learning and development.	2.99	0.91	2.92	0.92	2.96	Agree
12	Single marking promotes accountability among instructors as they are responsible for ensuring that their grading is accurate and consistent.	3.11	1.16	2.90	0.88	3.01	Agree
13	Single marking enhances clear and transparent grading criteria to ensure that students understand what is expected of them.	1.70	0.22	1.63	0.39	1.67	Disagree
14	Single marking helps reduce bias and subjectivity in grading by promoting fairness and equity for all students.	3.16	1.19	3.13	1.16	3.15	Agree
	Average Mean/Standard Deviation	**2.94**	**0.98**	**2.85**	**0.96**	**2.90**	**Agree**

Data on Table 2 show that items 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 14, had mean set scores of 3.23, 3.25, 3.01, 2.96, 3.01, and 3.15, respectively, which is above the criterion mean of 2.50, and were agreed on as the ways the practice of single marking promotes quality assurance in public universities in South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria. Differently, item 13 had a mean score of 1.67 below the criterion mean of 2.50, and it indicates that respondents disagree on that as the way the practice of single marking promotes quality assurance in public universities in the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

In summary, with an aggregate average mean of 2.90, which is above the criterion mean of 2.50, the respondents (professors and non-professors) agree that, the ways the practice of single marking promotes quality assurance in public universities in South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria include: single marking ensures that the same standards and criteria are applied consistently to all students' works, reduces the likelihood of errors in grading which ensures that students receive accurate feedback, ensures that students receive accurate and consistent feedback which leads to improved student outcomes, enables instructors to provide timely and constructive feedback to students which supports their learning and development, promotes accountability among instructors as they are responsible for ensuring that their grading is accurate and consistent, and helps reduce bias and subjectivity in grading by promoting fairness and equity for all students.

Research Question Three: *In what ways does the practice of double marking promote quality assurance in public universities in the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria?*

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation Scores on the Ways the Practice of Double Marking Promotes Quality Assurance in Public Universities in the South-East Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria

S/N	Items	Professors N = 322		Non-Professors N = 356		Mean Set	Decision
		$\bar{x}_1$	SD	$\bar{x}_2$	SD	$\bar{x}_1\bar{x}_2$	
15	Double marking ensures that two or more markers evaluate student work to promote consistency in grading.	3.20	1.18	1.92	0.22	2.56	Agree
16	Double marking helps ensure that students receive accurate feedback to improve student outcomes.	3.27	1.20	2.96	0.92	3.11	Agree
17	Double marking provides students with comprehensive feedback from multiple markers by supporting their learning and development.	2.97	0.96	2.81	0.86	2.89	Agree
18	Double marking promotes accountability among instructors as they are responsible for ensuring that their grading is accurate and consistent.	3.10	1.08	3.10	1.15	3.10	Agree
19	Double marking requires clear and transparent grading criteria to ensure that students understand what is expected of them.	3.20	1.11	1.92	0.21	2.56	Agree
20	Double marking ensures that assessments are based on objective criteria rather than personal opinions or biases.	3.27	1.19	2.96	0.94	3.12	Agree
21	Double marking helps reduce bias and subjectivity in grading by promoting fairness and equity for all students.	2.97	0.98	2.71	0.80	2.84	Agree
	Average Mean/Standard Deviation	**3.14**	**1.11**	**2.63**	**0.73**	**2.89**	**Agree**

Data on Table 3 show that all the items (15-21) had mean set scores above the criterion mean of 2.50 and were adjudged as the ways the practice of double marking promotes quality assurance in public universities in the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

In summary, with an aggregate weighted mean of 2.89, which is above the criterion mean of 2.50, the respondents (professors and non-professors) agreed that, the ways the practice of double marking promote quality assurance in public universities in South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria include; double marking ensures that two or more markers evaluate student work which promotes consistency and accuracy in grading, help ensure that students receive accurate and consistent feedback which leads to improved student outcomes, provides students with comprehensive feedback from multiple markers by supporting their learning and development, promotes accountability among instructors as they are responsible for ensuring that their grading is accurate and consistent, ensures that students understand what is expected of them through clear and transparent grading criteria, ensures that assessments are based on objective criteria rather than personal opinions or biases, and helps reduce bias and subjectivity in grading by promoting fairness and equity for all students.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One (Ho_1): There is no significant difference between the mean rating scores of professors and non-professors of public universities on the ways the practice of peer scrutiny promotes quality assurance in public universities in the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

Table 4: Summary of z-test Analysis of the Difference between the Mean Rating Scores of Professors and Non-Professors of Public Universities on the Ways the Practice of Peer Scrutiny Promotes Quality Assurance in Public Universities in the South-East Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria

Variable	n	$\bar{x}$	SD	df	z-cal.	z-crit.	Level of Significance	Decision
Professors	322	2.98	0.97					
				676	5.77	1.96	0.05	Ho_1 Rejected (Significant)
Non-Professors	356	2.58	0.83					

Data on Table 4 reveal that the value of z-cal. is 5.77, while the value is z-crit. was 1.96. Since the value of z-cal. of 5.77 is higher than the values of z-crit. of 1.96, the null hypothesis (Ho_1) was rejected, and this implies that there is a significant difference between the mean rating scores of professors and non-professors of public universities on the ways the practice of peer scrutiny promotes quality assurance in public universities in the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

Hypothesis Two (Ho_2): There is no significant difference in the mean rating scores of professors and non-professors of public universities on the ways the practice of single marking promotes quality assurance in public universities in the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria

Table 5: Summary of z-test Analysis of the Difference between the Mean Rating Scores of Professors and Non-Professors of Public Universities on the Ways the Practice of Single Marking Promotes Quality Assurance in Public Universities in the South-East Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria

Variable	n	$\bar{x}$	SD	df	z-cal.	z-crit.	Level of Significance	Decision
Professors	322	2.94	0.98	676	1.20	1.96	0.05	Ho_2 Accepted (Not Significant)
Non-Professors	356	2.85	0.96					

Data on Table 5 reveal that the value of z-cal. Is 1.20, while the value of z-crit. is 1.96. Since the value of z-cal. of 1.20 is less than the value of z-crit. of 1.96, the null hypothesis (Ho_2) was accepted, and this implies that there is no significant difference between the mean rating scores of professors and non-professors of public universities on the ways the practice of single marking promotes quality assurance in public universities in the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

Hypothesis Three (Ho_3): There is no significant difference between the mean rating scores of professors and non-professors of public universities on the ways the practice of double marking promotes quality assurance in public universities in the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

Table 6: Summary of z-test Analysis of the Difference between the Mean Rating Scores of Professors and Non-Professors of Public Universities on the Ways the Practice of Double Marking Promotes Quality Assurance in Public Universities in the South-East Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria

Variable	n	$\bar{x}$	SD	df	z-cal.	z-crit.	Level of Significance	Decision
Professors	322	3.14	1.11	676	7.01	1.96	0.05	Ho_3 Rejected (Significant)
Non-Professors	356	2.63	0.73					

Data on Table 6 reveal that the value of z-cal. is 7.01, while the value of z-crit. is 1.96. Since the value of z-cal. is 7.01 higher than the value of z-crit. which is 1.96, the null hypothesis (Ho_3) was rejected, and this implies that there is a significant difference between the mean rating scores of professors and non-professors of public universities on the ways the practice of double marking promotes quality assurance in public universities in the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The first finding of the study revealed that peer scrutiny promotes quality assurance in public universities in the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria by encouraging lecturers to reflect on and improve their teaching practices, enhancing student learning outcomes, strengthening academic integrity, promoting accountability and transparency, fostering continuous professional development, and supporting evidence-based quality enhancement initiatives. The corresponding hypothesis further revealed a

significant difference between the mean ratings of professors and non-professors on the ways peer scrutiny promotes quality assurance. This finding is consistent with the studies of Dochy et al. (2019), Topping (2019), Booth (2021), Barrie et al. (2021), Hailikari et al. (2021), Smith et al. (2022), Hancock et al. (2023), Krause et al. (2023), and Brawley et al. (2023), who reported that peer scrutiny enhances teaching effectiveness, accountability, and institutional quality assurance. A plausible explanation for the finding is that peer scrutiny provides a systematic platform for lecturers to evaluate and improve their teaching and research practices, thereby promoting continuous professional development, accountability, and academic excellence. The significant difference between professors and non-professors may be attributed to differences in academic experience, institutional responsibilities, and exposure to peer review processes. The findings imply that sustained implementation of peer scrutiny will strengthen teaching quality, academic integrity, and student learning outcomes while promoting a culture of transparency and continuous improvement. However, the observed difference between professors and non-professors underscores the need for regular orientation and capacity-building programmes to ensure uniform understanding and effective participation in peer scrutiny practices.

The second finding of the study revealed that single marking promotes quality assurance in public universities in the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria by ensuring consistency in the application of assessment standards, reducing grading errors, providing accurate and timely feedback, enhancing student learning outcomes, promoting accountability among lecturers, and minimising bias and subjectivity in grading. The corresponding hypothesis further revealed that there was no significant difference between the mean ratings of professors and non-professors on the ways single marking promotes quality assurance. This finding is consistent with the studies of Magno and Ouano (2020), Oriondo and Dallo-Antonio (2021), Hogan (2021), and Jorgenson and Jorgenson (2023), who affirmed that single marking enhances fairness, consistency, and reliability in university assessment. An explanation for this finding is that single marking provides a standardised assessment process that ensures fairness, accuracy, and consistency in grading while facilitating timely feedback and improving accountability among lecturers. The absence of a significant difference between professors and non-professors suggests a common understanding of the value of single marking in promoting quality assurance, regardless of academic rank. The findings imply that sustained implementation of single marking will strengthen the credibility of assessment practices, improve student learning outcomes, and reinforce confidence in the quality assurance system of public universities.

The third finding of the study revealed that double marking promotes quality assurance in public universities in the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria by ensuring that two or more assessors independently evaluate students' work, thereby improving the consistency, accuracy, fairness, and transparency of grading. It also provides comprehensive feedback, promotes accountability among lecturers, ensures adherence to objective assessment criteria, and minimises bias and subjectivity in marking. The corresponding hypothesis further revealed a significant difference between the mean ratings of professors and non-professors on the ways double marking promotes quality assurance. This finding corroborates the studies of Dracup (2019), Hood and Houston (2019), Swann and Eccleston (2019), Brooks (2022), Bloxham et al. (2022), Handley et al. (2023), and O'Hagan and Wigglesworth (2024), who reported that double marking enhances the fairness, reliability, and credibility of university assessment. A plausible explanation for these findings is that double marking strengthens the objectivity and dependability of assessment by involving multiple evaluators, thereby reducing errors and personal bias while promoting consistency and accountability in grading. The significant difference between professors and non-professors may be attributed to variations in academic experience and involvement in assessment moderation processes. The findings imply that sustained adoption of double marking will enhance the credibility of assessment outcomes, improve students' confidence in grading, and strengthen quality assurance practices in public universities.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that moderation practices, particularly peer scrutiny, single marking, and double marking, play significant roles in promoting quality assurance in public universities by enhancing fairness, consistency, accountability, and credibility in assessment. These practices contribute to improved teaching effectiveness, reliable assessment outcomes, and better student learning experiences. Therefore, strengthening the implementation of moderation practices is essential for sustaining quality assurance and improving the quality of graduates in public universities in the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Universities should organise regular peer review workshops and communities of practice to deepen lecturers' reflective teaching skills, promote academic integrity and encourage evidence-based quality enhancement across faculties and departments.
2. While retaining the efficiency of single marking, institutions should provide detailed marking rubrics, calibration sessions and periodic audits to minimise bias, improve grading accuracy and enhance the reliability of feedback given to students.
3. For final-year projects, professional examinations and borderline cases, universities should adopt compulsory double marking to improve grading accuracy, accountability and fairness, thereby strengthening confidence in assessment outcomes.

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