BENCHMARK PRACTICES IN ONLINE DISTANCE LEARNING AMONG SELECTED PRIVATE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN SAN MIGUEL, BULACAN

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Article history:		Abstract:
Received:	7th July 2021	This study focused on the benchmark practices of Online Distance Learning among selected private elementary schools in San Miguel, Bulacan. A total of 5 selected private elementary schools were chosen in San Miguel, Bulacan, with primary respondents of 20 teachers and secondary respondents of 131 learners and 131 parents. The study aimed to answer the questions on the profile of the teacher-respondents; benchmark practices of teachers in Online Distance Learning be which may be described by themselves, by their learners and by the parents in terms of Preparation Phase, Implementation Phase and Evaluation Phase; difficulties encountered by the teachers in Online Distance Learning; relationship between profile of the teacher-respondents and their benchmark practices in Online Distance Learning; relationship between profile of the teacher-respondents and their difficulties encountered in the implementation of Online Distance Learning and difference among the assessments on the benchmark practices of Online Distance Learning of the teacher-respondents as assessed by themselves, by their learners and parents.
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A Quantitative study which employed Descriptive method was used with the utilization of survey questionnaire in a Google form. Upon the assessment of the researcher and statistician, most of the teacher-respondents were 21-30 years old, dominated by females, majority were bachelor's degree holders and have rendered less than 5 years in teaching with 3-4 seminars attended in online technology, and majority used Google Meet as ODL platform using laptop connected with PLDT Fiber.

Moreover, the results manifested that the given practices of the teacher-respondents in Online Distance Learning in terms of Preparation Phase, Implementation Phase and Evaluation Phase were all rated as "Always Practiced" according to teachers themselves, their learners and parents. Furthermore, the teacher-respondents assessed all the given difficulties they encountered in Online Distance Learning as "Slightly Difficult".

It was also concluded that the profile of the teacher-respondents and their benchmark practices in Online Distance Learning have no significance. Likewise, their profile and the difficulties they encountered in Online Distance Learning have also no significance.

Lastly, the results of the test of difference among the assessments on teacher-respondents' benchmark practices in Online Distance Learning as assessed by themselves, by their learners and by their learners' parents were on the same level.

1. INTRODUCTION

Children's learning from traditional face-to-face has profoundly changed as it goes beyond the four corners of the classroom and greatly expanded its access and shifted to home setting or even virtual classroom.

This "new normal" in the educational setting is actually being introduced and implemented at present time due to the current global health crisis. Consequently, the emergence of extraordinary challenges is inevitable primarily the risk of having learning continuance and sustainability of quality education.

In response to this, the Department of Education released on June 19, 2020 DepEd Order No. 012, s. 2020 entitled "Adoption of the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan for School Year 2020-2021 in Light of the Covid-19 Public Health Emergency" developed Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan (BE-LCP) to "Ensure learning continuity through K-12 curriculum adjustments, alignment of learning materials, deployment of multiple learning delivery modalities, provision of corresponding training for teachers and school leaders, and proper orientation of parents or guardians of learners."

Specifically, anchored from the same DepEd Order No. 012, s. 2020, memorandum DM-CI-2020-00162 entitled "Policy Guidelines on the Implementation of Learning Delivery Modalities for the Formal Education" was released on July 21, 2020 stated that "The Distance Learning Delivery Modalities (DLDM) shall be implemented this School Year 2020-2021."

Moreover, as defined by DepEd Order No. 021, s. 2019 released on August 22, 2019, "Distance Learning refers to a learning delivery modality where a learner is given materials or access to resources and he/she undertakes self-directed study at home or in another venue." Furthermore, Distance Learning may be implemented through different delivery modalities namely Modular Distance Learning (MDL), TV Based Instruction (TVBI)/Radio-based Instruction (RBI), Blended Distance Learning (BDL) and Online Distance Learning (ODL) which is the main focus of this study.

Online Distance Learning (ODL) features the teacher as facilitator, engaging learners' active participation through the use of various technologies accessed through the internet while they are geographically remote from each other during instruction. The internet is used to facilitate learner-teacher and peer-to-peer communication (DepEd, 2019).

Additionally, as mentioned in a research conducted by the US Department of Education (2010) entitled "Evaluation of Evidence-Based Practices in Online Learning: A Meta-Analysis and Review of Online Learning Studies" that online learning has become popular because of its potential for providing more flexible access to content and instruction at any time, from any place.

Although many people like to rely on traditional methods of teaching, the possibilities that open when online learning through the help of technology is brought into the classroom are endless.

Markovic (2010) revealed that both students and administrators believe that the quality of online learning responds to the traditional teaching methods in terms of quality. More so, three quarters of leaders in state faculties and universities trust Interned-based learning quality to be the same or even better than face to face learning.

However, Sun and Chen (2016) stressed out that the best practices of an effective online instruction are dependent on well-designed course content, motivated interaction between the instructor and learners, well-prepared and fully supportive instructors and parents.

Undoubtedly, the assistance that Online Distance Learning (ODL) can offer is unprecedented in scope. But as a result, greater challenges and adjustments such as new strategies, techniques and styles of the teachers should be practiced to consistently offer quality education to the learners which is primarily important. Furthermore, the need for alternative learning delivery modalities is uncertain. However, the teaching learning process should not sacrifice instead may offer commendable practices especially of the teachers which can be beneficial and helpful in providing same value of education considering the changes and challenges in the present educational setting.

With this, the researcher decided to determine the benchmark practices of Online Distance Learning among selected private elementary schools in San Miguel, Bulacan.

2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study aimed to determine the benchmark practices in Online Distance Learning among selected private elementary schools in San Miguel, Bulacan.

Specifically, the study sought answers to the following questions:

1. How may the profile of the teacher-respondents be described in terms of:
   1.1 age;
   1.2 sex;
   1.3 highest educational attainment;
   1.4 years of teaching experience;
   1.5 Online Distance Learning platform used;
   1.6 gadget/s mostly engaged in;
   1.7 internet service provider at home; and
   1.8 number of seminars attended on online technology?

2. How may the benchmark practices of teacher-respondents in Online Distance Learning be described by themselves, by their learners and by the parents in terms of:
    2.1 Preparation Phase;
    2.2 Implementation Phase; and
    2.3 Evaluation Phase?
3. What are the difficulties encountered by the teacher-respondents in Online Distance Learning?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the profile of the teacher-respondents and their benchmark practices in Online Distance Learning?
5. Is there a significant relationship between profile of the teacher-respondents and their difficulties encountered in the implementation of Online Distance Learning?
6. Is there a significant difference among the assessments on the benchmark practices of Online Distance Learning of the teacher-respondents as assessed by themselves, by their learners and parents?
7. Based from the findings of this study, what practices may be proposed as benchmarks to enhance Online Distance Learning in Grade 6 for other schools utilizing the same learning modality?

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research employed Descriptive method using survey questionnaire to determine benchmark practices in Online Distance Learning among selected private elementary schools in San Miguel, Bulacan. The primary respondents in the study were the teachers and the secondary respondents were the learners and parents of selected private elementary schools in San Miguel, Bulacan.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS
Profile of the Teachers
1.1 Age

Fourteen or (70%) teacher-respondents were 21-30 years old, two or (10%) were 31-40 years old, three or (15%) were 41-50 years old and only one or (5%) was 51 years old and above.

1.2 Sex

Fifteen or (75%) teacher-respondents were female and only five or (25%) were male.

1.3 Highest Educational Attainment

In terms of educational attainment, 16 or (80%) of them were bachelor's degree holders and only four or (20%) were master's degree unit earners.

1.4 Number of Years in Teaching

Seven or (35%) of the teacher-respondents had rendered 5 years and above in teaching, five or (25%) had rendered 3 years in teaching, three or (15%) had rendered 1 year in teaching, another three or (15%) had rendered 2 years in teaching, and two or (10%) had rendered 4 years in teaching.

1.5 Number of Seminars in Online Technology Attended

Eleven or (55%) had attended 3-4 seminars in online technology, five or (25%) had attended 1-2 seminars in online technology and the remaining four or (20%) had attended 5-6 seminars in online technology.

1.6 Internet Service Provider at Home

In terms of Internet Service Provider at Home, eight or (40%) of the teachers used PLDT Fiber, seven or (35%) used Globe and five or (25%) used mobile data.

1.7 Online Distance Platform Used

For the Online Distance Learning platform used, 14 or (70%) of the teachers used Google Meet and six or (30%) used Zoom.

1.8 Gadgets Used

Nine or (45%) of the teacher-respondents used laptop in Online Distance Learning, eight or (40%) used computer and the remaining three or (15%) used mobile phone.

Benchmark Practices of the Teacher-Respondents in Online Distance Learning

In terms of Preparation Phase, the teachers themselves rated their practices as "Always Practiced" with an average weighted mean of 3.81 while the learners rated their teachers' practices as "Always Practiced" with an average weighted mean of 3.59. Likewise, the parents rated the teachers' practices as "Always Practiced" with an average weighted mean of 3.64.

In terms of Implementation Phase, the teachers themselves rated their practices as "Always Practiced" with an average weighted mean of 3.65 while the learners rated their teachers' practices as "Always Practiced" with an

average weighted mean of 3.62. Finally, the parents rated the teachers' practices as "Always Practiced" with an average weighted mean of 3.66.

In terms of Evaluation Phase, the teachers themselves rated their practices as "Always Practiced" with an average weighted mean of 3.66 while the learners rated their teachers' practices as "Always Practiced" with an average weighted mean of 3.61. Lastly, the parents rated the teachers' practices as "Always Practiced" with an average weighted mean of 3.66.

Difficulties Encountered by the Teacher-Respondents in Online Distance Learning

Among the difficulties encountered by the teacher-respondents in Online Distance Learning, item 1, "Adaptability in switching from traditional classroom and face to face instruction to virtual classroom and online learning" obtained the highest weighted mean of 2.60 verbally described as "Difficult" while item 4 "Direction or support given by the school" obtained the lowest weighted mean of 1.55 verbally described as "Not Difficult".

Correlational Analysis between the Profile of the Teacher-Respondents and their Benchmark Practices in Online Distance Learning

The correlational analysis between the profile of the teacher-respondents and their benchmark practices in online distance learning has no significance or p-values less than .01 or .05. which implies that the benchmark practices of the teacher-respondents in online distance learning did not depend on their profile.

Correlational Analysis between the Profile of the Teacher-Respondents and their Difficulties Encountered in Online Distance Learning

The correlational analysis between the profile of the teacher-respondents and their difficulties encountered in online distance learning has no significance or p-values less than .01 or .05. which implies that the difficulties encountered by the teacher-respondents in online distance learning had nothing to do with their profile.

Results of the Test of Difference Among the Assessments on Teacher-Respondents' Benchmark Practices in Online Distance Learning as Assessed by Themselves, by their Learners and by the Learners' Parents

The results of the test of difference among the assessments on teacher-respondents' benchmark practices in online distance learning as assessed by themselves, by their learners and by their learners' parents have F-values for preparation phase, implementation phase and evaluation phase such as 2.169, 0.287 and 0.189 respectively. They are all less than the critical value 3.028 which implies that the assessments of teacher-respondents, learners and parents on the teachers' benchmark practices in online distance learning were on the same level.

Proposed Benchmark Practices to Enhance Online Distance Learning in Grade 6

Based on the findings and observed results of the study, benchmark practices to enhance Online Distance Learning in Grade 6 for other schools utilizing the same learning modality were proposed. The proposed benchmark practices will address the teacher-respondents' practices in terms of preparation, implementation and evaluation phase in Online Distance Learning.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. The profile of the respondents basically indicates that majority of the teacher-responders were 21-30 years old and majority of the total population were women. In addition, majority of the respondents were bachelor's degree holders and had rendered 7 years and above in teaching. In terms of seminars attended, majority of the respondents had already attended 3-4 seminars in online technology. Further, most of the respondents used PLDT Fiber as internet service provider, Google Meet as learning platform and laptop in teaching Online Distance Learning.

2. The given practices of the teacher-respondents in Online Distance Learning in terms of Preparation Phase, Implementation Phase and Evaluation Phase were rated as "Always Practiced" by the teachers themselves, learners and parents.

3. The teacher-respondents assessed the given difficulties they encountered in online distance learning as "Slightly Difficult" with an average weighted mean of 2.02.

4. The null hypothesis "There is no significant relationship between the profile of the teacher-respondents and their benchmark practices in online distance learning" is not rejected.

5. The null hypothesis "There is no significant relationship between the profile of the teacher respondents and their difficulties encountered in online distance learning" is not rejected.

6. The null hypothesis "There is no significant difference among the assessments on teacher-respondents' benchmark practices in online distance learning as assessed by themselves, by their learners and by their learners' parents" is not rejected.

7. Based on the findings, benchmark practices of teachers in Online Distance Learning were proposed.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the above conclusions, the researcher hereby offers the following recommendations:

1. Teachers may continue to pursue post graduate studies and attend seminars or training related to Online Distance Learning and enhancement of computer literacy skills. Teachers may continuously and consistently execute the different benchmark practices in terms of Preparation Phase, Implementation Phase and Evaluation Phase not only in Online Distance Learning but in all types of learning delivery modalities, if applicable.

2. Teachers may be flexible and adaptable with difficulties that they may encounter not only in Online Distance Learning but in all types of learning delivery modalities and in their entire teaching profession through effectively responding and managing to these difficulties such as sudden change in learning environment and identifying the most appropriate strategy to address these challenges.

3. Similar or further studies may be conducted and this study may be used as a reference which deal specifically with benchmark practices in Online Distance Learning.

4. Research results and findings of this study may be highly recommended by the education-related training institutions for reference purposes as it proposes benchmark practices in Online Distance Learning.

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